

Dear Friends

I look forward to seeing you at the Representative session of Synod and it is my pleasure to write this foreword to the synod handbook.

By the time you read this I will have returned to his role as Chair refreshed and ready to continue giving direction and oversight to our District. This will be the last synod in active ministry for Reverends Goh Peng Beh, Christine Kettley and Caroline Homan who are given permission to sit down at the Presbyteral Session. It will be the last time we share fellowship with Revs Paul and Alex Dunstan, Andrew Charlesworth, Andy Clark, Mike Grimsley. As usual there are some changes to people who take particular responsibilities within the life of our District. Rev Peter Bates will be taking on Probationers Secretary from Andrew Charlesworth and you will want to know that Rev Caz Hague is our new Presbyteral Synod Secretary. This will be my last synod as Deputy Chair as I complete six years in this role. We have yet to recruit my successor.

This synod will be addressing significant issues in the life of our church and the wider community. We will hear about issues of tax justice and how we are engaging with the refugee crisis. I will be reporting on the One Mission Forum that I attended in April. We will hear from the Mission Strategy Group suggestions as to how we support local churches evaluating their effectiveness in mission, questioning their vision, viability and vitality while offering resources to engage in new areas of mission.

Through the day we will be focussing on how the Methodist Church is advancing our role as a Discipleship Movement Shaped for Mission. We will hear from our circuits on how they have engaged with the task across all the generations and in different contexts. This will include workshops where we can share good practice and stimulate each other.

I am grateful for all the work done by Deborah Webb, Richard Hamilton-Foyne and many others organising the day.

Yours in Christ

Richard Wilde
Deputy District Chair

Spring Representative Synod

The principal aims of Synod will be to carry out necessary business and to explore the second (of three) elements of the new District Policy - Growth Through Discipleship.

Following the pattern set in September we will have no principal speaker. After our welcome and initial worship, staff from Queens led by Dr Judith Rossall will explore the Biblical Imperative to Discipleship.

This will be followed by opportunities to join one of five workshops,

- One led by Birmingham Circuit exploring the Holy Habits Programme
- The second by leaders from Solihull Methodist Church on Discipling Young People.
- The Third is on developing Discipleship in Small Groups and will be led by Mark Rowland.
- The fourth workshop will be led by Sarah Leeson and will cover growing discipleship in those who have been in the church for many years
- The fifth workshop will be on discipleship in the final days. It will be led by Margaret Goodall from MHA.

The final session before lunch will be led by the DMLN Team and it will explore resources for growing our Discipleship

Programme

10:00	Welcome, introductions and housekeeping & Worship
10:30	The Biblical Imperative to Discipleship
11:20	Discipleship Workshops
12:00	Resources for Helping us to grow as Disciples
12:30	Lunch
13:30	Probationers business - endorse probationers
13:40	District Council Report
13:50	Methodist Council Report
14:00	3 Generate – Report and advert
14:20	Web Site Demonstration
14:40	Mission Strategy Report & Michelle Simms replacement
14:50	One Mission Forum
15:00	Sanctuary for Refugees in Birmingham
15:05	Appointments and other formal businesses
15:15	Memorials to Conference
15:35	Soapbox
15:45	Closing Devotions

SYNOD – 30th April 2016

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrangements

Travelling expenses to Synod for Supernumerary Ministers will be paid on application to the Secretary of Synod

Methodist Ministers Children's Relief Association.

A collection will be taken during Synod.

Mail Trays

Any mail for distribution should be put in the trays by 12 noon and circuits should check their tray is empty before leaving Synod.

Autumn Synod Saturday 10th September 2016

Bromsgrove & Redditch Circuit

Finance Report to Synod – April 2016

The accounts for the year to 31st August 2015 were signed by the auditors on 31st March 2016. They were approved by District Council on 13th April 2016. They have been filed with Methodist Church House.

The DAF accounts (which form part of the District accounts) were filed with Methodist Church House by 31st October 2015. They have to be filed by that date in order for us to receive an allocation from the Connexional Priority Fund. The DAF accounts were approved by the District Grants Committee on 10th November 2015.

Both the above sets of accounts are available for viewing on the District website.

A brief summary of the District Accounts is attached, for information.

Helen Lynskey

treasurer@birminghammethodist.org.uk

Birmingham Methodist District – Summary of Accounts

Total net assets at 1 st September 2014		3,716,343
Income in 2014-15	page 2	769,480
Expenditure in 2014-15	page 2	(855,079)
Increase in valuation of Wesley International House		500,000
<u>Total net assets at 31st August 2015</u>		<u>4,130,744</u>

comprising:

Wesley International House	2,500.00
36 Amesbury Road	750,000
DAF balances at CFB and TMCP	665,618 <small>(DAF commitments at 31.8.15 - £656,958)</small>
District CFB account 0300010	175,052
District Co-op account	16,794
Adavu Co-op account	10,765
Lloyds account (Benevolent Fund)	7,847
Accruals and prepayments	4,668
	<u>4,130,744</u>

or, in terms of our various funds:

Property (part of General Fund)	3,250,000
Funds summary – attached	880,744
	<u>4,130,744</u>

Birmingham Methodist District - Summary of Funds at 31.8.15

	Unrestricted		Restricted						Total
	General	Designated	D.A.F.	Chaplaincy	Evangelism	Safeguarding	Benevolent	Adavu	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Opening position 1.9.14	114,816	46,310	710,532	43,466	10,566	3,062	7,847	29,745	966,344
INCOME									
Circuits' contributions	526,428								526,428
Interest	1,175		4,668					11	5,854
Grants	2,800		197,584					9,810	210,194
Donations	277			17,100				6,354	23,731
Other	3,272								3,272
	533,952		202,252	17,100				16,175	769,479
EXPENDITURE									
Methodist Church Fund	462,284								462,284
Grants			182,261						182,261
Donations	277								277
Employees' salaries	16,276			30,763	35,809	13,687		5,021	101,556
Employees' expenses	2,161			5,000	3,354	1,116			11,631
Training	10,699				735	325			11,759
District office costs	5,319								5,319
Manse costs	13,665	10,000		14,188					37,853
Trustees' expenses	3,323								3,323
Administrative costs	1,655	10,801	405		120	200		4,216	17,397
Subscriptions	2,721								2,721
Professional fees	2,400							14,955	17,355
Other	1,343								1,343
	522,123	20,801	182,666	49,951	40,018	15,328		24,192	855,079
Transfers between funds	7,500		(64,500)	10,000	32,000	15,000			0
Closing position 31.8.15	134,145	25,509	665,618	20,615	2,548	2,734	7,847	21,728	880,744

**ANNUAL REPORT OF DISTRICT PROPERTY COMMITTEE FOR
PRESENTATION AT SPRING SYNOD, BROADLANDS SCHOOL, HEREFORD,
ON SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH. 2016**

The Committee has continued its work of scrutinising and monitoring projects for the extension, improvement and renovation of Methodist Properties in the District as well as the sale, lease and purchase of properties.

Projects have ranged from those for simple improvements costing under £ 10,000.00 to major schemes costing over £ 100,000.00. Churches have continued to improve facilities for the disabled and to install energy-saving measures.

The on-line property consents system has been revised and up-dated to provide more information and is now more user-friendly with coloured symbols indicating where action is needed. The system has greatly speeded-up the process of giving district consent and has enabled access to funding to be simplified. Please will Managing Trustees note that the date of the most recent Quinquennial Inspection now has to be entered under the property details and the annual property return has to be completed before district consent can be given, also that it is best to consult TMCP before proceeding with schemes involving sales, purchases or leases of property to avoid delay.

This is the third year running when all the Church and Circuit schedules have had to be completed on-line and, at the time of writing this report, 106 out of 141 churches and 3 out of 11 circuits have completed their returns which is an improvement on the same time last year. I am grateful to all the church and circuit Property Secretaries for completing these and would urge the outstanding returns to be completed as soon as possible to avoid any delay in processing project consents.

However, many of the returns have flagged up issues including safeguarding policies not up-dated, safeguarding policies not displayed, property inspection forms not completed and insurance premiums not up to date. These are all matters for concern and should be addressed as soon as possible.

The register of Quinquennial Inspections is being accurately maintained and currently shows that twenty-five churches have inspections overdue from 2015 or earlier which is a matter for concern. Managing Trustees are reminded that consent for new property schemes is usually withheld if inspections are not up to date.

The District Website will be regularly up-dated with information on property issues.

Please contact me for guidance or information on any of these matters.

Chris Osborn – District Property Secretary

0121-351-4628

07740-963106

chrisosborn@btinternet.com

Property (Finance)

Contributions to the Fund for Property are shown below. There was a 2.8% increase in 2014/15, some of which was late money from the previous year. I have not been able to provide £ per member figures as there are no membership figures available. One church was successful in receiving a large grant from this Connexional Fund during the year, so if you have an exciting property project do consider applying.

Philip Osborn

General Property Fund Year 2014-2015

	Total £
5/ 1 Birmingham	7,410
5/ 4 B'ham Sutton Park	3,825
5/ 6 B'ham West & Oldbury	1,050
5/ 9 Tamworth & Lichfield	2,463
5/ 10 Coventry & Nuneaton	1,600
5/ 13 Mid-Warwickshire	375
5/ 15 Stratford & Evesham	1,652
5/ 16 South West Worcestershire	1,858
5/ 18 Bromsgrove & Redditch	550
5/ 21 Blackheath & Halesowen	892
5/ 24 Herefordshire (South & East)	935
Totals	22,610

2013-2014

21,984

Philip Osborn

District Archivist Report Spring 2016

This has been an exciting year with a Connexional Focus on Mission and Heritage and we have seen some wonderful examples of how our Heritage and History can be used as an evangelistic tool to help us reach out to our communities today.

We had a wonderful day at the Black Country Living Museum for the Methodist Connexional Heritage day, where we were telling the story of Francis Asbury in commemorative of his death 200 years ago. Francis Asbury was brought up in the Black Country, a local boy who had a big impact but is perhaps better known in America than in the home of his birth. Francis was the First Methodist Bishop of America, he answered John Wesley's call for preachers to travel to America at just 22 years of age.

We also had an exhibition of Artefacts, some local items, some items had travelled far to exhibited, as had some of the people, we had special guests from America, John Strawbridge had flown in specially for this event, his seven times Great-Grandfather, Robert Strawbridge was a contemporary of Asbury.

The Commemorative Services, morning and afternoon were packed out and Spirit-filled Worship enjoyed by all. All of this in a Community setting of the Living Museum, who knows what seeds we may have sown in people there?

I know from the number of enquires I get through the website that our genealogy and heritage offers us a wonderful opportunity to connect with people in our communities who we don't otherwise have contact with. So it is important that we have the resources to tell our story and to be able to tell our story effectively to present and future generations, that is why our archives are important and why we need to continue to archive our story today so future generations can continue to tell the story of Methodism.

If you would like to know more come and talk to me, I have a stand promoting the last publication of the West Midlands Methodist History Society- Celebrating 50 Golden Years of the Society which will be launched at Blackheath Central Methodist on 14th May 2016 2:30pm.

Diane Webb, Birmingham District Archivist

Report upon Ministerial Candidate 2015/2016

Mr Chair and Members of Synod.

Although there was more than one enquiry during last summer only one candidate registered to proceed beyond the 1st of September.

The District Candidates' Committee meet on 23rd of January to discern the candidates' call to ordained presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church. The Committee have to vote on the proposal that "the candidate named above be recommended to enter pre-ordination training for presbyteral ministry", in other words it is a simple yes or no vote. There is no other option. Sadly, after the interviews, by 2 panels and then the full committee, followed by much discussion and deliberation the Committee could not vote "yes" and so the candidate was not recommended.

The Candidate could have chosen to go forward to the Connexional Committee but chose not to.

Much time and effort is invested by the candidate in the process and so to receive such a decision is painful to accept and I ask your prayers for the candidate even though many of you will not know the name of the person involved.

This is my first year as Candidates' Secretary and I would also like to pay tribute to the District Candidates' Committee. We met in November for a Training Day jointly with the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District. This was led by the Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler who carefully took us through process of candidating and the criteria for recommendation. Our District Committee is professional, conscientious and diligent, bringing a wealth of Church experience as well as expertise from their professional lives. However we do need some new people to serve on the Committee especially to keep a balance of gender, age and ethnic origin. I would be grateful if any member of Synod could think about who in their churches may be able and willing to serve.

Rev. Anne Smith
District Candidates' Secretary
April 2016

Chaplaincy Everywhere – Birmingham+

Chaplaincy is continuing to raise its profile within the District and more Chaplains are required to offer a valuable, often unseen but highly valued, ministry in various contexts. The Methodist model of Chaplaincy Everywhere is frequently highlighted as an exemplar pathway in several ecumenical contexts as well as other faith forums.

Following our District Synod focussed on Chaplaincy we initiated the first well-being day for Chaplains in the Connexion and invited those interested in Chaplaincy. Thirty-five people attended from all around the Connexion and it gave those present an opportunity to share experiences and dreams from very diverse contexts. It also gave voice to *views from the edges* and offered Chaplains pastoral support and connectivity. Several discreet pastoral support conversations have been timely and assisted Chaplaincy contexts to robustly discern developments and opportunities.

We will be encouraging Faith & Order to consider pastoral recognition and 'Sending' Services for Chaplains so that church families can witness the manifestation of a Chaplains calling. We will also be urging greater thinking around Holy Communion and how this can be developed and acknowledged within the *church order* when Holy Communion is part of the creative brief for Lay Chaplains in such places as Hospitals and Hospices. We were invited to guest edit a Connexional Chaplaincy Newsletter with a focus on Equalities & Inclusivity and utilising valuable experience of Chaplains from ethnic minorities. We also visited gatherings such as the growing Chinese and Zimbabwean Fellowships to engage understanding of Chaplaincy and integration.

The Birmingham Synod Chaplaincy focus was warmly welcomed by other Districts which have been encouraged to explore Chaplaincy. Other districts developed a retreat & awareness day in a similar vein, and sanctuary space for Chaplaincy reviews. Churches Together in Worcestershire is announcing a full day on Chaplaincy - drawing several Chaplaincy ministries together following the Birmingham District Synod model, with the addition of business Directors which value Chaplaincy.

Circuits&Churches are warmly encouraged to invite Chaplains to Church Councils and staff meetings to inform the wider church about what they hear and experience in our name, from the contexts of Chaplaincy in the wider disparate communities. Some Chaplains who felt the call to a public representative ministry feel distanced from the church family, and as I travel around the District, Members regularly comment that Chaplaincy is a well-kept secret – especially as a ministry which is largely lay folk. Yet, Chaplains continue to offer love and encouragement in many places (often unseen) around the District in a rainbow of mental health settings, shopping centres, businesses, football clubs, bus depots, police stations, hospitals and hospices, universities & schools, and not forgetting Methodist Homes and more. This ministry is frequently within rich ecumenical contexts, and more so recently, with diverse interfaith partners. The NEC Group Interfaith Chaplaincy is celebrating its 40th year.

Our District model of Chaplaincy was invited to present at the recent ONE Mission conference for the new Connexional District ONE Mission programme as 40 District reps gathered in Leeds. Several attending said it rekindled their passion for outreach and the importance of witness being outside of church walls. There is also increasing

recognition that a Chaplaincy model can offer pathways to engage with community using our church plant, rather than simply treating 'users' as 'tenants.'

Birmingham District supports Chaplaincy which dovetails with several denominational & geographical areas with partners from Anglican, URC and Catholic communities and several Free Church denominations. We have offered support to many contexts being invited to facilitate retreat days for such as the Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Spiritual Care Chaplains, National Retail Chaplaincy Network, National Free Church Healthcare Chaplaincy and local Churches Together bodies exploring Chaplaincy such as Churches Together in Earsdon and Churches Together in Kidderminster and not least our training institutions such as Queens Foundation and Newman's University and others. Our views and engagement are encouraged by Faith at Work Worcester, CIGB Churches Together in Industry Birmingham, Black Country Urban Mission, IMA Industrial Mission Association and WorkCare Coventry.

Part of the vision for our District Chaplaincy was to be able to map our engagement so that management reporting could help Circuits recognise where Chaplaincy is developing, ensure good practice is evident and support areas which need further engagement. To assist this overview we applied for a grant from Connexional Grants to support the Mission in the Economy Officers role and a new Administrative role for 12 hours a week. Thankfully the Connexional Mission and Ministry in Britain grant officers agreed and awarded £109,400. The Administrative post will be advertised in the next few weeks and be based at the NEC Group Interfaith Chaplaincy centre.

If your Church&Circuit and/or Churches Together fora would like a discussion about exploring Chaplaincy or your Worship Consultation group would like a Chaplaincy focussed Sunday worship time please call and we welcome agreeing a suitable date. We value your continued prayers for a ministry largely outside Church walls.

David – Mission in the Economy District Officer & Chaplaincy Everywhere

Revd. David Butterworth MA. 0121 767 2911

or revdavidbutterworth@gmail.com

@revdbutterworth



Adavu is a project of the Birmingham Methodist District which aims to facilitate an effective local response to modern slavery. Men women and children can be exploited for forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude or other forms of slavery. Over the past year, we have engaged in work across the following areas:

1. The West Midlands Anti Slavery Network CIC. (Formerly called the Regional Anti Trafficking (RAT) Network). As a result of its success and ability to attract sustainable independent funding, the Network is now formally constituted as a Community Interest Company and is no longer under the management of the Adavu Project or the District. However, Deacon Kerry Scarlett continues to act as one of the five Directors of the Network.

2. Awareness Raising: The Birmingham ‘*Say Something if You See Something*’ Hotels and entertainment industry training has come to an end, with excellent feedback received from attendees and local police regarding the impact this has had on the number of potential cases of exploitation spotted and reported.

This year, Adavu worked in collaboration with the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) and the Soroptimists to produce an awareness raising poster aimed at victims of forced labour. These have been translated into a number of different community languages and are available to download from <http://www.gla.gov.uk/i-am-a/i-am-a-worker/worker-information/> . We would like to encourage everyone to distribute posters to any locations in their community where they think they might be effective (eg church projects, community centres, GP surgeries, etc.). Posters will be available at Synod.

3. Support: Adavu were delighted to be awarded funding via the Lloyds Bank Foundation. This money enables us to employ a part time Caseworker to pilot our bespoke aftercare project for adult survivors of modern slavery. Lloyds were impressed by the ongoing commitment of the Methodist District to addressing the issue of modern slavery, and particularly by the money raised by churches and circuits; this level of support played an important factor in their decision to fund us. We are now one of only three projects across the country who are specifically funded to offer long term, post safe house support to survivors in the community. Further funding from the Church Urban Fund will pay for interpreters for beneficiaries who do not speak English, and for volunteer training costs.

Deacon Kerry Scarlett, director@adavu.org.uk (07918 148266)

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT MWiB REPORT APRIL 2015- APRIL 2016

Carole Trigger moved from President to Past-President at the Commissioning Service of Diana Bosman, as President, and Christine Temple, as Vice-President, at Four Oaks Methodist Church in June 2015 at which we were fortunate to have Michael King, past Methodist Vice- President as the preacher. At present we are without a MWiB District Secretary so if any of you know someone who might be willing to undertake this non onerous task please make contact.

Diana chose Nkanfoa Methodist School and Church Aid as her district project for the next two years so it was good to have Dilys Jones, the widow of the founder of the Methodist school in Nkanfoa as our speaker, after the autumn Business Meeting in October who was able to tell us about the founding of the school.

In December, at Lichfield, we were delighted to welcome the Rev. Susan Sayers, a well-known Christian author to our Winter Meeting in Lichfield where her New Way of Looking at the Nativity fascinated us.

With all that was happening regarding refugees our March meeting in Erdington allowed us to learn about the continuing work at St. Chad's Sanctuary in Birmingham which works with refugees and asylum seekers in a wide variety of ways. Sister Margaret Walsh enlightened us about the situation and we all came away having a better understanding about what it is like to arrive in a foreign country, often not speaking the language. Both Sister Margaret's car and mine went away full of the generous donations, which were made on that day.

Future events at which any lady is welcome with some open meetings where we also welcome men!

June 11th This is my Story, This is my Song is an open meeting at Evesham Methodist church at 2p.m. at which six ladies will enlighten us about aspects of their lives.

July 8th/ 9th at Four Oaks Methodist Church we will have a two day workshop, for both sexes, presented by Shoreline Conversations. To know more please check their website. Bookings must be made for this and there is a charge.

October 6th we will welcome Jean and Peter Rookes, previous Missions Partners in Papua New Guinea, who will be giving a presentation on "Mountains, Rivers & Rainforests: Our 8 years living and working in Papua New Guinea".

December 3rd Rev. Hannah Bucke will be leading our day at Four Oaks Methodist Church. She works in Southend-on Sea town centre as a Methodist minister with many innovative ideas. This will be an open meeting.

Should any meeting in the district wish to invite me to speak on the MWiB District Project or invite my husband and myself to lead a World Church Service just make contact with us.

Diana Bosman 0121 308 2251 bosmandiana@gmail.com

Safeguarding Report for Spring Synod April 2016

Purpose

This report is to update Spring Synod with regard to Safeguarding. I have now been in post since June 2014 and have been pleased with the increase in referrals and contacts from across the District.

Training

Birmingham District was approved by Connexion to pilot the new Revised Foundation Safeguarding Training to run from Jan-1st April 2016. The majority of circuits have participated in the Pilot and I will be attending a feedback meeting in London on April 7th 2016.

The next Creating Safer Space Leadership Course is to be held at Stratford MC on Saturday 2nd July 2016.

There is a shortage of trainers in some circuits for Foundation Training and trainers from other circuits have travelled to other circuits to help out. We are now getting some volunteers coming forward but they just need training up. There will be a Train the Trainer Course held at Catshill MC on 1st October 2016. This will be led by Geoff Bond, DMLN and myself. Any willing would-be trainers should contact myself to book a place on this one day course.

Past Case Review

The report was published last year and as a result Connexion received 300 new referrals. Birmingham District had 5 of these new referrals.

The Past Case Review report was accepted by Conference and there are several work streams that have been commissioned. For instance, looking at supervision of ministers and a working group to review Covenants of Care.

Conference also asked the Connexional Safeguarding Team to look at reviewing and refreshing all the safeguarding policies and forms. Each District will be consulted on this. So anyone with strong views or good ideas on how to make improvements please let me know ASAP.

Due to the volume of work the PCR has generated a number of District Safeguarding Officers are assisting Connexion to review and action these.

One of the main themes from the past case review was the culture of the church and that safeguarding wasn't mainstream. Therefore the joint annual Anglian and Methodist Safeguarding Conference focused on Changing the Culture.

New People

The Methodist Church has now appointed a full-time National Safeguarding Advisor, Tim Carter. He is visiting all Districts to build up his relationships locally. He has already visited the Birmingham District Safeguarding Group in January 2016 and was positively received. The Interim Safeguarding Advisor, Hilary Walker has announced that she will retire at the end of July.

Last year Birmingham District Safeguarding Group appointed an Independent Chair in line with national guidelines. The Chair is Cathy Clement who has a lot of safeguarding experience with children and young people.

Safeguarding Audits

I have designed an audit tool for use by churches in Birmingham. This process is to help churches understand what is required. Rather than using it as a stick to beat people I am encouraging churches to use as a tool to help and encourage. It has been tried out in Sutton Park Circuit in three churches by myself, the Minister, Church Safeguarding officer and Circuit safeguarding Officer. It has been well received and I am encouraging its use across the District. Each audit took approx. 2 hours to complete and allowed the churches audited understand where improvements needed to be made whilst acknowledging good practice. Whilst we think that churches are implementing the safeguarding policies, the main issues that needed attention was that safeguarding officers need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities. Also, that people are still relying on relationships to recruit to roles involving children and young people, without using the safer recruitment guidance. I now have online access to the property Returns and will look at those churches that have shown that there are safeguarding issues. It is important that the person completing the safeguarding section of the property return liaises with their respective safeguarding officer to ensure a true picture is reflected.

Property Returns

I now have access to the Property Return system and able to see each individual churches response to the safeguarding section. What is worrying about the entries are that there were many churches are showing that they have not had any safeguarding training, people in key roles haven't got a current DBS check and some churches don't appear to have reviewed their safeguarding policy annually with their respective Church Council. This is not acceptable and if churches have not addressed these matters since completing the property return they need to do so ASAP. It is also apparent in many cases that the person completing the property return is doing so in isolation without any consultation with the safeguarding officer. Again, I ask that this happens in future.

Covenants of Care

There are currently 9 active Covenants of Care across the District with a further one awaiting to be implemented.

Case Load

I have met with most Circuit Safeguarding Teams (Circuit Safeguarding Officer and local church Safeguarding Officers). There are only a couple I have not met with and I encourage those that haven't to consider inviting me along to one of their meetings. To give a sense of the type of issues that have cropped up in the District I have bullet pointed **some** of them below:

- A referral to social services for a child that was self-harming
- Allegation of historic child abuse and the offender was still working in the church
- Sexual touching of a vulnerable adult. This is still going through the courts
- 4 blemished DBS checks
- Concern for a young child who had been left to care for an elderly relative
- Concern for an elderly lady that had been put in a care home and the family appeared to be selling her house but she was not aware.

In addition to the above I regularly carry out independent risk assessments on behalf of the Connexion.

Goddard Inquiry

The National Child Abuse Inquiry is now underway led by Justice Goddard. The Inquiry is focusing its first tranche on high profile people and the Catholic Church and Church of England. It is expected that the Methodist Church may also be asked to provide information in further tranches. Therefore, it is important that all safeguarding files/reports are not destroyed and are retained. This has been communicated to each Circuit Safeguarding representative.

Sue Holder

District Safeguarding Officer

Report on April 2-4th Methodist Council to Birmingham Synod meeting 30th April 2016

I would highlight the following matters that were discussed over the 48 hour meeting. All the papers can be found on the Methodist Church website.

- 1. Research on 'Regrouping' for mission ie larger circuits** MC/16/37
Stephen Skuce presented the preliminary findings from research being done on the impact of having larger circuits. The headlines so far include that the regrouping process is largely positive as the regrouped entities appear to be stronger than their predecessors and better able to meet financial and other challenges but the energy needed to sort out the new administrative arrangements in the initial years of regrouping has meant little energy left to focus on mission. However indications are that this is now starting to happen. The larger circuits have not grown or shrunk in membership more or less than the average. Issues include size of circuit meeting and how to exercise trustee responsibilities in such a large gathering, local preachers being visiting rather than having any real connection with a congregation if they preach round the whole increased area, fewer female superintendants of the larger new circuits. The research team are putting together some guidelines for future circuit mergers.
- 2. Budget.** The Council spent a long time discussing what options to offer Conference for the assessment for three years from 2017/8 and eventually agreed to three options +1% , *no increase* **or** -1%. The Council recommended to the Conference the 1% increase because of increased costs coming into the central budget from changes to allowances for ministers stationed to the Island Districts, inflationary salary uplifts for staff and the lack of any direction from Council or Conference as to what work the Connexional team should stop doing as minus 1% would require savings in staff costs of around £500,000 by end of the third year.
- 3. Lent 2017** CTBI are producing some Lent materials (which the Methodist/URC Interfaith forum are writing) that will address talking of Easter faith in a multi-cultural society.
- 4. Reflections by Vice-President on her time in office**
Noting that there are still three months to go Jill Barber's 'headline' comments from her travels around the connexion were
 - how much, too much, energy goes into buildings
 - the need for intentional discipleship, the need for people's hearts to be right with Jesus
 - the need for city centre evangelists
 - how we have some 'fabulous' ministers but how often, too often ministers are expected to be everything to all people and we need to be better at using individual gifts and skills, do we expect itinerant preachers, prophets and evangelists or pastors and priests

and she closed by quoting Wesley that Methodists are 'God's messengers to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land'

5. Methodist Conference

Proposed dates for Conference

2017 22th-29th June Birmingham

2018 28th June -5th July venue to be confirmed

2019 27th June to 4th July Birmingham

Report from the Birmingham District Council to Birmingham District Synod meeting 30.4.16

1. Church Closures

The following societies have voted to cease to meet and this resolution has been accepted and agreed by their Circuit Meetings and the District Council

- Coundon in the Coventry and Nuneaton circuit
- Trinity, Rookery Road, Handsworth in the Birmingham Circuit

The Synod is asked to confirm these decisions.

2. Ecumenical Matters

The Synod is asked to note that the National Ecumenical Officer and the District Council at its meeting on 13th April has approved the Constitution for the Hazelweel LEP in the Birmingham Circuit.

3. Representative to Methodist Council

I have been only covering the role for one year after Jean Jackson had to step down due to work commitments. The next four-year appointment is for a minister and the District Council recommends to the Synod that Rev Mary Shanahan be Birmingham's representative at the Methodist Council for four years from September 2016.

Helen Woodall

Secretary of the District Council and Representative to Methodist Council
2015/6

One Mission Report

The One Mission Forum met in Leeds 9 – 10 April 2016. I was there representing our District also present were Helen Woodhall (Connexional Grants) and Rev Ken Howcroft who is Chair of the Forum. Rev David Butterworth joined us by invitation to report on chaplaincy. The weekend covered a range of subjects with reports from Sierra Leone post Ebola, the world church secretaries and two fellowship chaplains: Rev William Davies (Ghana) and Rev Cleopas Sibanda (Zimbabwe). We had a skype link with the Astbury Commemoration in Dudley and a much longer conversation with Rev Christian Merillo in Mexico.

Listening to Christians in Mexico one realises that the twenty first century refugee crisis is truly a worldwide problem. As businesses and communication become worldwide so the dreams of desperate women, men and children are also global. For a variety of reasons the gap between the worlds' poorest and even the low paid jobs in richer countries has never been so stark. Throughout the world there are victims of political oppression, religious persecution and well-armed militias who create a desperate underclass who will risk all in the hopes of a better future. From Central American countries Panamians, Nicaraguans and many others cross through Belize to make the fifteen hundred mile journey on foot, stowing away on freight trains or lorry's desperately heading north. On the way human traffickers charge extortionate fees, take teenage boys and girls to be used as quasi slaves and women are physically taken advantage of because the Mexican police have little interest in protecting these unwanted foreigners. Indeed it is often officials who will levy charges on undocumented travellers keeping the proceeds for themselves.

Helen Woodhall presented a report from the Connexional Grants Committee regards the Mission Alongside the Poor Fund which still has significant funds available for grants. The Grants Committee is working on a new title for this fund suggestions have included "Methodists Against Poverty" but it is a work in progress. It was also a reminder that the Connexion has funds to help with a whole range of mission projects. Rev Hannah Bucke spoke about her work as a sacramental presence in the town of Southend on Sea. She has a strong call to serve the community offering an alternative to the "Attractional Model" of church that is the norm. As a non-stipendiary she is permitted to serve outside normal stationing and sees this as a minimum twenty-year commitment.

Of particular relevance to our District was the report from John Spencer regards how the Lancashire District has implemented its interpretation of One Mission. Titled TLC (Transforming Lives and Communities) a small team reports to each synod on their activities. In their case they have a district link with a district in Sierra Leone, they work with the District Mission Enabler and they organise two mission advocacy events per year. John acknowledged that attendance at these events is not huge but that they are worthwhile none the less.

As your District rep it is my intention to seek the support of synod in working out our own way of implementing One Mission. As a start I want to flag up a reminder to preachers and leaders of worship to make use of the Prayer Handbook to celebrate and pray for what God is doing throughout the world and in particular the 65 partner churches we have round the globe. When not preaching I have been part of congregations where too often there has been no mention of items suggested for the day and global events have not featured in the prayers. When I was a mission partner I valued the knowledge that my family and I were named in prayers in many churches and times of private prayer on the 6th of each month. On this 30th day let's not forget Portugal, Spain and Italy where Protestants are a tiny minority making a disproportionate impact in His name.

Richard Wilde

Mission Strategy Group

Members of Synod it's my privilege to bring to you this summary of the conversation regards the ongoing work following the departure of our District Evangelism Enablers, Michele Simms, and the work of the Notice and Motion Group. Ian called together a meeting made up of those who have supported both pieces of work in January. We were pleased to welcome Inderjit Bogal who was attending in his role as a member of the DLMN. We had a follow up meeting in March with a view to bringing recommendation to District Council and then to Synod with the hopes of appointing a staff member. As a committee we believe it is important to respond to needs and opportunities identified in local churches and communities throughout the District. Sometimes it is helpful for a local church to have an informed and capable specialist to help them ask essential questions about their vision, vitality and ongoing viability. This might help them to decide that the season of ministry in its current form and existing building has reached its conclusion. This would then release the building for sale or for re-use for mission purposes. It might also reduce the demand from the Circuit Staff, lay and ordained, stipendiary and voluntary who can then focus elsewhere.

On the other hand local churches will value a visit from an individual or a team who could come alongside them for a period and help them find new and appropriate ways of engaging in mission in their locality. We deliberated over what job title describes a person with this range of gifts – ability to analyse, encourage, challenge, envision, enable, train, identify available resources etc. Such a person needs to have an air of authority as a representative of the District challenging folks to make significant decisions but also needs tact, diplomacy and the ability to encourage. Such a person will need to have an understanding of theology and mission in its local context. It could be a Presbyterian, a Deacon or a suitably qualified Lay Person. We thought that such a person would need a salary commensurate with

these skills. This would mean that with the 30K p a budget it would necessarily be a part time appointment.

Since District Council I shared the thinking so far with my Staff (lay and ordained) thinking day. I think their wisdom, which I bring to you now, may find agreement with others in this room. Their suggestion was rather than recruit and appoint a person with such a range of skills would it not be better to set aside a fund for consultancy enabling local churches and circuits to invite a suitable person or persons for their particular need. Organisations such as Churches Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), Alzheimer's Society (Dementia Friends), Youth For Christ and many other para church organisations we might call on.

There has not been time for me to bring this back to the Mission Strategy Group but I am anxious that we need to expedite this work. I do not want to delay such an important decision until the September Synod. My proposal is this:

“The Synod receives the report from the MSG. Synod authorises the group to further explore either defining a job description, recruiting and appointing a suitable part time specialist or that it gives further thought to identifying individuals and organisations as consultants. Synod will allow for a mix of the two options i.e. appointing a suitable person and creating a resource list”.

I recognise this is a little more flexible than we normally like decisions to be but this seems to me a pragmatic way forward to achieve an important goal as quickly as possible.

Proposed - Rev Richard Wilde

Seconded -

30 April 2016

Proposed Memorial to Conference

This Synod notes that Cadburys/Mondelez paid no corporation tax on profits of nearly £100 million in the financial year ended 2014, and urges Methodists to boycott Cadbury's chocolate until its parent company pays corporation tax commensurate with its sales and profits in the UK.

[Proposed by Peter Powers, Seconded by Brian Brown.](#)

DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

DISTRICT OFFICERS

District Chair	Rev Ian Howarth
Deputy Chair	Rev Richard Wilde
Synod Secretary	Richard Hamilton-Foyn
Mission in the Economy	Rev David Butterworth
District Council Secretary	Mrs Helen Woodall
District Treasurer and Grants	Mrs Helen Lynskey
Methodist Council Rep	Rev Mary Shannahan*
Safeguarding	Mrs Sue Holder
Tax Justice Network	Mr Matthew Jones
Adavu Project	Deacon Kerry Scarlett
Property	Mr Chris Osborn
Presbyteral Synod Sec	Rev Caroline Hague*
Chair's PA	Mrs Deborah Webb

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Chair of District	Rev Ian Howarth
Deputy Chair	Rev Richard Wilde
Synod Secretary	Richard Hamilton-Foyn
Presbyteral Synod Sec	Rev Caz Hague
Treasurer	Mrs Helen Lynskey
Lay Stationing Rep	Mrs Gill Weller
Property Sec:	Mr Chris Osborn
Representatives:	Rev Carol Hamilton-Foyn
	Rev Tim Flowers
	Mrs Jean Hamilton
	Mr Bill Holdforth
	Rev Andrew Laird
	Mrs Sandie Smith
	Rev Paul Edwards
	Rev Audrey Simpson
	Mr Jim Hart
	Rev Tony Malcolm
	Mrs Anne Parsons

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Ministerial Sec & chair	Rev Peter Powers
Chair of District	Rev Ian Howarth
Property Secretary	Mr Chris Osborn
Treasurer	Mr Philip Osborn
Manse secretary	Mr Steve Buck,
Archivist	Mrs Diane Webb
Mr Brian Bradley, Mr Don Anderson, Mr Kenneth Holmes	

SAFEGUARDING

Independent Chair Mrs Cathy Clement
Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Safeguarding Officer Mrs Sue Holder
Mrs Jenny Fisher, Mrs Lyn Andrews, Mrs Jan Channer, Mrs Sheila Collins,
Mrs Mary Jackson, Mr Anthony Page, Mr Simon Robert, Mr Stuart Watkins

DISTRICT GRANTS

Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Treasurer and Grants Sec: Mrs Helen Lynskey
Property Sec Mr Chris Osborn
Rev Helen Jobling, Mr Edward Hall, Mrs Jean Hamilton*, Rev David Haslam

ECUMENICAL OFFICERS

Coventry and Warwick Rev Andy Laird
Birmingham Rev Nick Jones
Herefordshire Rev Deborah Cornish
Worcestershire Rev Jane Wilson
CLASP (Staffs) Rev Roger Baker

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

President Mrs Diana Bosman

DISTRICT CANDIDATES

Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Secretary Rev Anne Smith
Rev Kathryn Darby, Rev Nutan Suray, Rev Christine Giles, Mr Keith Dennis,
Mr Keith Drinkwater, Mr John Cotterill, Mrs Alison Fletcher, Miss Margaret
Fuller, Mrs Viv Kershaw, Mrs Christine Welham, Dr Valerie Edden, Mrs Fiona
Gilyead, Mrs Christine Chambers, Mrs Elspeth Rolls, Mr Jack Rolls, Deacon
Don Pritchard, Rev Stephen Willey, Mrs Jane Jarvis, Mrs Christine Parker,
Rev Pauline Warner

PROBATIONERS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Secretary Rev Peter Bates*
Mr Chris Shaw, Deacon Janet Smith, Mrs Beverley Greaves, Rev Nicholas
Jones, Rev Jane Wilson, Rev Edson Dube, Nwabueze Nwokolo, Christine
Welham

SABBATICALS

Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Secretary Mr David Smith
Ministerial Sec: Vacant
Rev Carol Hamilton-Foyn, Mrs Sheila Russell

MISSION GROUP (Notice of Motion)

Chair of District Rev Ian Howarth
Synod Secretary Mr Richard Hamilton-Foyn
District Council Sec Mrs Helen Woodall
Eunice Attwood, Adam Sanders, Rev Alison Richards, Mrs Beverley Greaves, Mr David Gowdy, Rev Richard Wilde

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOMES (BISH)

Trustees:

Mr Lawrie Rumens, Mr Michael Fisher, Mr Peter Johansen, Mr Kevin Allen, Mr Robert Dauncey, Mr Malcolm Evans, Mrs Jayne Gilbert

DISTRICT CHAIR'S NOMINATION PANEL

Synod Secretary Mr Richard Hamilton-Foyn
Deputy Chair Rev Richard Wilde
Mrs Christine Parker, Mrs Beverley Greaves, Mr Colin Rice

DISTRICT SCHOOLS OFFICER

Mrs Christine Parker (SW Worcester*)

DISTRICT RECONCILIATION GROUP

Rev Clive Fowle,* Mr Keith Drinkwater,* Mrs Elspeth Rolls*

DISTRICT COMPLAINTS SUPPORT GROUP

To be appointed.

*New Appointment

2 NEW courses due Autumn 2016
suitable for ADVENT and LENT – or any time of year

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

a 4-part course written by Canon Robert Warren

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

Practical steps in Christian spirituality as seen through the eyes of Luke, John, Mary and Paul: four witnesses to the coming of Christ. This course helps us to *wonder, ponder* and much more. It engages with the distinctive nature of Christian spirituality and how we can give expression to it in our lives, thus living in the light of Christ's coming.

* * *

RECEIVING CHRIST in five different ways

a 5-part course written by Canon John Young

'To all who received him ... he gave power to become children of God.' (John 1.12.) **Aren't we all children of God anyway? Just how can we receive Christ? And what does it mean to have 'a relationship with God'?** This course, crammed with discussable questions and supplemented by four leading Christians on CD, teases out from the NT different ways in which we receive Christ. St John's theology in his magisterial Gospel has practical implications for our day-to-day lives.

PARTICIPANTS on the course CD:

BISHOP NICK BAINES
REVD KEN HOWCROFT

*
*

MARGARET SENTAMU
THEODORA HAWKLSEY

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NOTICES

District Stationing meeting (for all those involved with Stationing 2017) has been arranged for Tuesday 10th May, 7.30pm at Droitwich Methodist Church, WR9 8AN.

It is with sadness that we report that Trinity Methodist Church, Rookery Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21 has decided to close its doors. We no longer have the available funds to maintain such a large building and in spite of our efforts to go into partnership with another church and effectively share the premises, we have not succeeded in doing so.

Our final service will be held on Sunday 15th May at 3pm, followed by light refreshments and a chance to chat and reminisce.

If anyone would like to share with us in our final act of worship, you would be very welcome.

Circuit Stewards/Treasurers meeting. Saturday 11th June 10am at Quinton Methodist Church, B62 9AU

Berlin Exchange Students

Two 16 year old students from the Berlin District are looking to come and spend their summer vocation with a family in Birmingham District to improve their English language. They are looking to be involved with a local church (if possible helping out around the youth of the church).

The girls would like to be in England from around the 25th July to end August exact dates to be confirmed once accommodation has been arranged.

Please if you would welcome sharing your home and Church with the girls can you contact Ian Athey (details given below). If you cannot provide accommodation for the full period please specify what dates you could do, we may be able to place the girls in 2 places during their stay. It is not imperative that you speak German yourself as the object is for the girls to improve their English.

Once Ian knows you are interested he will put you in contact with the Rev Joachim Georg. Joachim speaks fluent English and has been a key member of the last 2 District exchange visits.

Please contact Ian Athey at ianathey@btinternet.com or via phone his mobile number is 07854001768.

Chaplaincy Anywhere



"The Church that has left the building"

**A Forum for all in the County, working or interested in learning about
Chaplaincy in all its variety.**

**Saturday 21st May, 9.30 a.m to 3 p.m, at Droitwich Spa Methodist
Church, Droitwich.**

This event is to showcase the variety of Chaplaincies Christians in the county are sharing in, and to invite you to come and be part of the day. It will be an opportunity to hear the experience of chaplains, clergy and lay in places from prisons, to hospitals, to canals, to shops. It is an invitation for us to have a taste of this from 10 different chaplains, then to share some more in workshops in key areas and then bring it all together. We are delighted that Revd David Butterworth, Chaplain for the NEC and NIA Birmingham will lead the day. There will be an opportunity to worship and share lunch together as well. It is a day for all Christians, from all backgrounds who perhaps feel a call to some sort of Chaplaincy, for those who are active already as chaplains and for people who want to explore more about this part of the Church's mission.

If you would like to come or to find out more for yourself or your group please contact our Administrator, Stephanie Watson, ctiworcestershire@hotmail.co.uk or the Revd David Ryan, david.ryan@cofe-worcester.org.uk. This is an exciting opportunity to highlight and share in something of God's great work with chaplaincies across the county.

The event is free, but donations of £5 will be welcome. Drinks will be provided, but please bring your own packed lunch.

RUACH RETREAT

**LLYS GWYNT, OLD MILL ROAD, DWYGYFYLCHI, CONWY,
LL34 6TB**

01492 622279

dray1@btinternet.com zzuvcenko1@btinternet.com

Rooms: 1 double and 1 single. Bathroom, lounge, conservatory and spacious garden available for the sole use of retreatants. Room for day retreats/quiet days/away days for up to 10. Other rooms available for day visitors.

Notes: David and Zoya moved to Llys Gwynt in May 2015 to fulfil a vision of opening their home to people of all faiths or none. It offers a small, quiet retreat opportunity for those needing space and a place to be. David and Zoya can be on hand to offer a listening ear, pastoral counselling and prayer if needed. It has room for one or two residential retreatants at any one time and space for small groups on a daily basis. Day visitors can lead themselves or be led by either David and/or Zoya.

Llys Gwynt is a mile off the A55 and 4 miles west of Conwy. It is set at the foot of the Sychnant Pass amid low hills and green pastures. It is a haven of tranquillity. There are many walks from the cottage and eating places within walking distance. Local buses go to Conwy, Llandudno and Bangor. The cottage has one or two steps between some ground floor rooms and has stairs to the bedrooms.

For residents, meals can either be shared with David and Zoya or prepared by the retreatant and eaten alone. Day groups will be offered light refreshments throughout the day and a simple lunch can be prepared if needed.

Hospitality is the key - we recognise the need to offer a bespoke format that works for individuals and groups.