



The **Methodist** Church
Southampton District

ANNUAL REPORTS

2021 - 2022

We will be a District where Circuits, Local Churches and individuals of all ages are accompanied and encouraged to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ and participate in God's mission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

DISTRICT CHAIR: THE REVD ANDREW DE VILLE

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SOUTHAMPTON METHODIST DISTRICT VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

DISTRICT VISION

We will be a District where Circuits, Local Churches and individuals of all ages are accompanied and encouraged to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ and participate in God’s mission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

DISTRICT PRIORITIES

1. to give priority in using our finite resources to support Circuits that are engaging positively in the reshaping for mission process;
2. to support Local Churches and Circuits in providing a safe professional and legal environment;
3. to encourage Local Churches to explore and trial new ways of being ‘church’;
4. to encourage and resource Christian learning and discipleship across the District;
5. to develop partnerships within the District and the wider global and ecumenical context focused on mission, and to engage with the inter-faith landscape.

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Action for Children has provided a report on recent activities and forthcoming events. (please see the website for the full report: www.sdmc.org.uk)



You will read about:

- The Methodist Conference President and Vice-President meeting Action for Children staff. The charity hosted The Revd Sonia Hicks at their Short Breaks @ West Hyde service and Barbara Easton at a special Christmas reception in London.
- Action for Children helped run a Health and Wellbeing Centre at the 3Generate Conference for 8 to 23-year-olds in October 2021.
- The encouraging outcome of their campaign for increases in children's services funding. Many commitments in the government's Spending Review in the autumn seem to indicate change in the future.
- An update on Secret Santa, their Christmas campaign, which raised almost £900K in 2021 (as at the time of the report).
- Their exciting new charity partnership with Iceland Foods in 2022. This builds on the £300,000 Winter Fund that Iceland created to support their Secret Santa appeal in 2021.
- Calls to Prime Minister to tackle child poverty. You can sign their open letter to the Prime Minister here: <https://bit.ly/PM-Poverty>

Events to look forward to include:

- Count Your Blessings, 40-day journey during Lent to learn and pray about Action for Children's work and donate to help reach more children. It is available to download from their website: <https://bit.ly/FaithFR>
- Giant Wiggle Yoga, a fun-filled sponsored activity for children, in partnership with The Very Hungry Caterpillar™ is back. Find more information at www.actionforchildren.org.uk/giantwiggleyoga
- Action for Children Sunday on 10 July.

DISTRICT ARCHIVIST

Geoffrey Goodman

Being an archivist has been a challenging job during the last two years as the job involves contacting people which has been largely controlled by Covid 19 regulations, but now things are getting a little easier this should benefit us all.

I have recently completed an audit of our Circuit Archivists and I am pleased to say that we are almost at full strength –

Southampton Circuit - Vicky Green

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit - Marilyn Pack (Circuit Admin/Archivist)

Kennet & Test Valley Circuit - Vacancy

Basingstoke & Reading Circuit: Lisa Spurrier

Yeovil & Blackmore Vale Circuit - Adam Miller (Archivist), Helen Coombes (Circuit Admin.)

Meon Valley Circuit - Derek Morgan

East Solent & Downs Circuit - Mark Brooks

Dorset, South & West Circuit - Jacqui Trent (Circuit Admin./Archivist)
Poole Bay Circuit - Geoff Goodman
Christchurch & Wimborne Circuit - Jean O'Shea & Derek Hancock
Isle of Wight Circuit - Pat Phillips
Salisbury Circuit - Ian Hardy

News on our previous District Archivist (John Russell)

Frances and John moved to Broadstone to live in 2021, but soon after Frances had to go into a care home to be looked after, where she spent a short while before passing away. We remember her for all her kindness, care and hard work in the District. John has kept himself busy and has started a museum in Scotland where he spends some of his time. I do try to keep him up to date on what we are doing as Archivists in the District.

The Methodist Chapels Project

It has taken me over twenty years to record and map all the churches and chapels of the Methodist Connexion and Ireland. Its home is now the Museum of Methodism at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. This includes not only those we continue to use but chapels that have closed since the Wesley's. This has been a fascinating journey with many surprises and stories particularly about 19th Century Methodists (Wesleyan, Primitive, United, Bible Christian, etc.). If anyone wants information on our churches and chapels in their Circuit please contact me for details. My journey didn't stop at our Connexion, as I have now moved on to The United Methodist Church of the USA with all their changes post-pandemic.

I attended the June 2021 **Connexional Archivists** meeting held on Zoom, with John Purcell chairing the meeting as Liaison Officer for Methodist archives.

- a. District Archivists on Synod's - Synod is a really good way of getting to know the District, and Archivists would find it useful to get to know people and the many activities that are happening. It also helps us to know what churches are doing, or even those who might be near to closure and need support.
- b. Chapel closures - A question was asked about the procedures to follow in the event of a chapel closing, i.e. there is a process for archive and artefact deposition, amongst many other things. This process has just been redrafted for those who wish to use it.
- c. The role of District & Circuit Archivists - One of the most important aspects of my role is to keep in touch with Circuit & Church Archivists across the District, and to keep our records up-to-date. It is good to see we have a number of Circuit Administrators linking their role with being an Archivist, or supporting the Circuit Archivists in their job.
- d. Circuits Plans - it is important to keep copies of Circuit Plans as they are a very good way of researching projects. It is essential they are kept in secure places in the Circuit or in Local Record Offices. The Connexion are at present look at the problems of copyright related to Circuit Plans.
- e. Local Record Offices - increasing numbers of LRO's are not taking records as they do not have room and finances are being cut. It is a good idea to become a member of your LRO so prior knowledge is known as to how they can be used.
- f. Communication - it was felt that communication with the Liaison Officer was worthwhile and the Archivist Newsletter for gaining information and advice.

AOB -

- Artefacts: Alison Butler, who handles artefacts for the Connexion is always prepared to give advice on this subject.
- Marriage Certificates - digital are now replacing paper-based certificates. It is recommended that only one copy is kept in the Circuit and the other one is kept at the Local Records Office, or both at the LRO.
- Mission and Archives - we were reminded how valuable archives can be for mission.

I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work in making it possible to archive those aspects of the church we feel is worthwhile preserving. Future generations will benefit from being able to see what has gone on in the past and learn from them.

DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE

Paul Yarrien

The District Policy Committee (DPC) has met on three occasions since the last meeting of Synod, once on Zoom and two all day meetings, in person. The agenda for each meeting has ensured we covered the business DPC is required to complete, as well as developing strategies and policy. We continued to review normal business such as finance, stationing, property, grants and ecumenical matters and some of this work will be shared with Synod by other District Officers.

DPC has received updates from:

- *District Safeguarding Officer*
- *Lay Employment Officer*
- *Intergenerational Mission Enabler*

DPC has been regularly informed about the work of the Learning Network and how they support across the District, at Circuit and individual level.

Like any other District, we are required to act when and where direction is given from Conference and the Methodist Council. At each meeting we received an update from the District Representative to the Methodist Council. DPC has spent a considerable amount of time considering the actions given by Conference in the following areas:

- *Deliverance Ministry*
- *Online Communion*
- *Ministry in the Methodist Church*
- *Oversight and Trusteeship*
- *Marriage and Relationships*
- *Strategy for Justice Dignity and Solidarity*
- *Youth Ambassadors*

Many of these will be topics being considered or actioned at Circuit level, please ensure that issues are forwarded to DPC for wider discussion.

Either through the full meeting, or via a DPC sub-group, we have continued to deal with applications for Church Closures and Lay Authorisations. Thank you to the Circuits for their timely engagement with both pieces of work.

EVANGELISM ENCOURAGERS

Mark Tizzard

In the past year, like so many parts of the church we have had to do things differently. We have not yet been able to return to our normal practice of meeting together a few times a year, when we would share what things we have seen going on in the churches and circuits and talk about what sort of things churches and circuits are trying to do. So, this year, we have made use of email, social media and the District Website to share ideas instead.

<https://www.sdmc.org.uk/ime/evangelism/>

The Connexional Team have some excellent resources <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/practise-evangelism/>. One resource I would thoroughly recommend is the Evangelism for Leaders Course. This course aims to equip leaders in their contexts to confidently model what it means to follow our shared calling to evangelism; to intentionally prioritise and promote evangelism and to cultivate a culture of confident, authentic faith sharing which raises up those spiritually gifted as Evangelists. There are five sessions, all online, each two hours long. If you want to know more, please do email me.

It is almost time for Thy Kingdom Come, and I see this as a great way for us to be praying for our communities. One of the aims of the project is a focus on praying for 5 people that we know, to come to know more about God. For more details please visit <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/thy-kingdom-come/>

I would also recommend having a look at the blog of the Southern and Islands Learning Network <https://learningnetsi.org.uk>. With them I have been hosting a number of webinars focused on small and rural churches and often looking at Mission and Evangelism.

If you want to find out more about these groups or for some help with the Mission Planning Toolkit, then please do get in touch

Mark_tizzard@aim.com 07391 017548

FINANCE

Christine Holland

During the 2020-21 financial year (1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021) the District received total income of £344,078 (2020: £365,450) and spent £239,736 (2020: £375,508). At 31 August 2021 the District had funds totalling £1,242,083 (2020: £1,054,247). The District's funds increased during the year due to lower expenditure on District grants, the revaluation of the District manse, unrealised gains on invested funds and lower than usual expenditure primarily on travel, training and conferences due to the coronavirus.

At 31 August 2021 the District held the following funds:

- General funds £125,165 (£101,894 at 31 August 2020)
- District Development Fund £59,394 (£63,416 at 31 August 2020)
- District Advance Fund £148,199 (£55,260 at 31 August 2020)
- Portsmouth University Chaplaincy £Nil (£720 at 31 August 2020)
- Property Reserve (District Manse) £750,000 (£700,000 at 31 August 2020)

- Benevolent Fund £681 (£2,631 at 31 August 2020))
- MIH Fund £151,701 (£129,369 at 31 August 2020)
- A balance of £6,161 against our New Places for New People connexional funding
- £782 on behalf of Churches Together in Hampshire and the Islands (£957 at 31 August 2020).

In 2020-21 the District paid grants from the District Advance Fund that totalled £89,050 to churches, circuits, university chaplaincies and ecumenical groups. At 31 August 2021 grants totalling £298,500 have been committed from the District Advance Fund that are payable in future years. The balance on the District Advance Fund as at 31 August 2021 after taking into account commitments against the fund is £148,199.

GROUP FOR LEARNING AND DISCIPLESHIP (GLAD)

Fran Jenkins

The group continues to work in accordance with our Mission Statement

"To have a strategic overview for learning opportunities in the District and to engender, ecumenically, a culture of learning and spiritual development".

This we do as we hear reports from the various sections of the District about their initiatives and activities, and discuss ways to encourage discipleship development.

As well as considering Sabbatical Prospectuses and Applications for grants, we welcome and value feedback of Sabbatical experiences, training courses and events from those ordained and lay people who have taken them.

Our May meeting in 2020 being cancelled, we shared information and updates from our respective District aspects via email. Our October and February 2021 meetings were effectively held via Zoom, which will continue for at least some in the future, as (as so many others found) it was beneficial not having to travel. We have however since been able to meet in person at the end of 2021 and now in 2022!

Grant application forms are available from District website or from myself:

fran.jenkins@btinternet.com

Hopefully there will be more coming in as Covid restrictions are eased.



Mark Tizzard

Needless to say this year has been a continuation of the difficult year before with the pandemic causing us all to think and work in very different ways. This year I have continued to work with my management group and identify new ways of working during this pandemic.

Being a visible presence in the District

It goes without saying that physically travelling around the District has been severely limited during the pandemic. However, like so many, I have learnt and developed a pattern of work which heavily relies on Zoom, email, and social media. I was in a meeting recently in a church that I had not physically attended before, but I had joined them on Zoom, and, so, felt like we had already met. My expectation is that I will continue to work in a hybrid way, with some online and some onsite meetings.

I have a map of the whole District on my wall, in my office/shed, and I use this to help me regularly pray for each circuit and church. We all know the value of email, but also the weakness of too many emails! I try to keep my emails to Superintendents, Presbyters and Deacons to a minimum, and value their support and encouragement. We have some amazing Children's, Youth, Families and Intergenerational workers in circuits and churches across the District and I have sought to find ways of offering encouragement, prayer and any assistance I can. We have all learnt much from each other.

I have continued to work closely with the Learning Network, <https://learningnetsi.org.uk>. Together we have run a whole host of webinars and even tried "Vlogging". We ran a 3 part series in the autumn exploring the theology, culture and strategy of intergenerational mission. For me, whenever we are seeking to bring a new emphasis to our circuits or churches, allowing people to understand the heart of that makes the journey much easier. We have also looked at small and rural churches, and the particular challenges and opportunities that they have.

I have continued to be able to "join in worship" from across the District. Some of this has been online but increasing onsite opportunities are becoming possible. Recently I was invited to help in a service in Haslemere, which was followed by a discussion around Mission Planning and I have plans to visit other churches as well.

I'm conscious that for many this has been a particularly challenging couple of years. We have lost contact with some who used to regularly attend meetings and activities; we have seen a number of churches reassess their ministry and some feel that it is time to cease to meet. But there have also been opportunities for us to engage with folk, who for all sorts of reasons haven't darkened the door of a church building before. For example one church youth group found that instead of just ministering to a group of young people on Zoom, they found they were connecting with whole families. Things like Messy Church bags have been snapped up, bringing something of God's story into homes. Services delivered by USB memory sticks, played via USB speakers have continued to allow folk to feel connected.

I think there are many who are asking some of the big questions, such as Who am I? Where do I fit? What difference can I make? Such questions can allow us to share our story.

Developing training

This year has continued to change the way I have been able to deliver training. Webinars have played a big part in the way I have been able to help people think through Intergenerational Mission, but I have also been able to visit and do some onsite work. I went to one church for a training session, and we had a mixture of people onsite and online - we are learning what it means to be hybrid. Obviously, the ongoing impact and uncertainty that the pandemic and lockdowns have brought have meant we all have to reassess what is possible, and what might emerge as a new normal. But, I would love to be able to chat with you, if you think there is something you want to explore.

I have been able to run a three-part webinar series looking at the Theology, Culture and Strategy of Intergenerational Mission. We looked at how it needs to be Intentional – a choice we have made. It needs to be Integral – something that runs through the whole church. And finally, it should be Entwined – Intergenerational thinking needs to wrap around all we do.

I am also involved in some Connexional thinking around Intergenerational Worship and Mission and we hope to have some resources available soon. I would recommend the Essential Guide to Family Ministry as a good introduction from a UK perspective <https://www.brfonline.org.uk/products/the-essential-guide-to-family-ministry-a-practical-guide-for-church-based-family-workers>

Learning from NPNP

I have been involved in the NPNP project for the District. And although the project is still in its early days, there are a couple of things I would like to share with you about what the Core Team have learnt. We are working on a 3-part plan – Listen – Test – Explore. Listening is so important and we need to make sure we spend time on this. There are 3 “things” we need to listen to.

The First is God. We need to listen to God. With our “Missio Dei” understanding, we believe that God is at work - it is His mission, and we are invited to join Him in that mission. One way would be to create a regular, dedicated prayer group, that will act as a spiritual barometer.

Then we should listen to our communities. Listen to those who live there, who work there, who seek to provide services there. For the NPNP project we hired someone to help with this research – they spoke to politicians, health and school workers, to other community groups, they interacted online and looked at data available online.



This helped us form some thoughts about what God was doing and what the community needed, then we need to listen to the faith community/church and see how they might be able to meet those needs.

As we are listening to the church, we move in to the Test stage. By testing our assumptions, we have an idea of what God might be saying to us; we identify a need in the community and decide if it is right for us to work with. Can we help? Can we cheer someone else on? Do we need to repeat the Listening stage or take it back

to prayer or ask the community some deeper questions.

Finally, we should Explore – what works and what doesn’t? We might get some things wrong - as the saying goes, you can’t make an omelette without breaking a few eggs. This is where we might rediscover that the Methodist people are a movement and not a structure. Do our buildings allow us to facilitate this mission, or would somewhere else be more suitable? When? How? Who? There are lots of questions around this.

Building up an online/social media presence

During the last year, as a District we have continued to explore how we can use the website and other social media platforms to keep each other informed, but also to engage with others. We have our website www.sdmc.org.uk and we have our own YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXwKiDvZe3p2x3hMzt7jKNg>

An example of how we used this platform could be seen when I hosted 12 days of prayer - on each day of Thy Kingdom Come and Aldersgate Day. Each circuit hosted on a different day, and folk from right across the District were able to join in.

You can find most of the videos on the District YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXwKiDvZe3p2x3hMzt7jKNg>

Do continue to use the District website as a tool for finding out what is going on.

<https://www.sdmc.org.uk/ime/intergenerational-mission-enabler-news/>

I have been using social media to create online communities. You can find out more at

<https://twitter.com/IntergenMission>.

<https://www.facebook.com/marktizzardime/>

<https://www.instagram.com/intergenmissionenabler/>.

In conclusion I would like to say thank you to the District Synod, DPC and my management team for the support you have shown me, and all those people called Methodists, during this most extra-ordinary of years.

Blessings, Tizz.

LAY EMPLOYMENT

Penny Thatcher

This past year has been a challenging one for lay employment in churches and circuits, navigating our way through furlough and changing patterns of working into a world which has developed a more hybrid character and which continues to present ever more complex situations. I have engaged with Circuits in a wide range of employment scenarios, working together to find the best way forward in each case.

It's been a season of new initiatives, including the establishment of the Local Lay Pastor role, adopted at Conference and now beginning to populate Southampton District, and the preparation and delivery of a District-led recruitment process under the *New Places for New People* scheme, with the aim of carrying out a specific piece of work in one of the Circuits. There have been opportunities, too, to review particular areas of engagement, such as employment status and relationship within Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

I continue to maintain good and effective working relationships with my fellow District Officers, Superintendents, Circuit Stewards and all those with responsibility for employment in the circuit and church teams.

As ever, I am available by phone or e-mail for advice and guidance on employment issues, and happy to attend meetings where appropriate. Please do not hesitate to contact me, however small or mundane your query may seem!

If this report is too long to read, here are the salient points:

1. *There are plenty of learning and training opportunities available regularly, in person, online, a hybrid of the two, or in your own time online.*
2. *If you cannot find the training which you need we'll find it for you.*
3. *If you want training that will make your life, relationships, church and circuit better, easily, look for the Positive Working Together and Mental Health First Aider courses.*
4. *There is a wonderful and skilled team of people across the Connexion available to equip and support you in your ministry and discipleship. The full contact details are at the end of the report, or you could just email me, Katie*
(deadmank@methodistchurch.org.uk) or give me a call on 07799 902571.

My first day back in to the proverbial office from over ten months of maternity leave was in mid-October, therefore my report to Synod contains much experience and insight from the rest of the team!

Since arriving back, I have continued to note much change across the Southampton District that is seemingly reflective of those changes across the Region and Connexion: changes of people in roles, in ways of working and resources, in mindsets and missional opportunities. Change, while always evident, was particularly illuminated upon my return, particularly against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, I sense much paradox in where we now find ourselves, in our unfolding missional landscapes. There is great suffering and loss, alongside new life and hope. There are polarising debates and conflicts, alongside great unity and shared identities. There is fatigue and health challenges, alongside new-life and excitement. These paradoxes are perhaps centralised in my vision since they have clear links to where I find myself amid the paradoxes of new parenthood! Change can be exhausting and invigorating. It may not be easy to navigate. Yet God is with us. With the offer to lead us and guide us. God is certainly at work with, through and among us all. There is much of God's work to witness in the Southampton District.

It has been fantastic to hear the learning and updates on the New Places for New People initiative in Portsmouth. We hope to be able to further support the project as it begins to take root. It has also been a privilege to have been able to support circuits in their conversations-for-change and to support congregations as they discern the call to transformation and innovation in their mission. I appreciate, greatly, the hard work of the people I encounter across the District and Connexion who, despite these changes, challenges and transitions, remain steadfast to Our Calling as a Methodist Church; who continue to passionately preach, care, love, teach, innovate, lead and follow in response to God's call on their lives.

We look forward to the conversations regarding Vocations (methodist.org.uk), the ONE Programme (methodist.org.uk) opportunities, and ministry with armed forces communities and are greatly encouraged by the reception of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy - this new way of working will enable transformational culture change as we seek to follow Christ more closely.

Lockdown fast-evolved the remote and ‘virtual’ side of our work, and has enabled the Learning Network to operate more Connexionally than ever. Whilst regional teams continue to prioritise serving their districts, they are now blessed to be able to work more closely with colleagues from across the Connexion in delivering quality learning opportunities more efficiently, particularly in areas related to the training of Circuit Stewards, Worship Leaders and Preachers and in specific teaching areas. Most training is now moving towards a ‘hybrid’ form as the norm; offering possibilities for both in-person and online engagement.

The digital learning platform Theology X is being developed to facilitate remote learning opportunities that can be completed independently within the learner’s personal schedule and approach. Cliff College continues to develop its distance learning courses for those wishing to gain formal qualifications.

‘Striving for Justice’ is a significant series of upcoming hybrid events which are a key part of the Church’s justice mission. In partnership with the [Agents of Change Roadshow events \(methodist.org.uk\)](#) and [Walking with Micah \(methodist.org.uk\)](#), these gatherings invite everyone in the Methodist Church to share experiences of justice and injustice *en masse* on Zoom, or in small local groups, so that through storytelling and reflection we may discern God’s heart for justice and sense how we can be, and bring, transformation. For more information, please visit [Social Justice \(methodist.org.uk\)](#) and/or contact the regional team.

Bible Month returns to support the study and preaching of the book of Isaiah this year. This is a resource and ministry in which our region has traditionally offered a Connexional lead. By the time Synod meets the marquee Bible Month event will have already happened (at Salisbury Methodist Church) yet the relating resources will be available on our blog and online throughout the year. Please find them at [Bible Month Videos — Learning Network \(Southern & Islands Region\) Blog \(learningnetsi.org.uk\)](#)

We have recently started ‘The Staffroom’ -- this is an online space (45 minutes, twice a month) for lay workers to gather together in conversation, learning and fellowship. Initiated in January of this year, we hope it will become a place where lay workers can come and hang out, find connection and inspiration. So, if you are a lay worker, or know someone who is, please join us in your regional staffroom. For further details, please visit: www.learningnetsi.org.uk/events

Another new and exciting addition to our menu of offerings has been the Manna & Mercy biblical literacy pilot project. Offered for 8 weeks through the beginning of 2022, this online discipleship journey explored the Bible story in a simple yet theologically rich manner, through the interpretive lens of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, utilising Daniel Erlander’s wonderfully illustrated book of the same title. For those who attended, we look forward to hearing your reviews. If you would like to know more for your, circuit, church or self, please do get in touch with the team.

The Pioneers Community of Practice continues, predominantly online, yet still with the aim of meeting occasionally over a meal. Aimed specifically but not exclusively for those who are on the Methodist Pioneering Pathways, this is a place where people who have a call to pioneer new expressions of God's Kingdom outside the parameters of traditional church can meet for mutual encouragement and inspiration. If this excites and interests you, or someone you know, do be in touch.

'Dreaming Beyond' is additionally offered by the regional team. Aimed at small and rural churches, this series of gatherings share the different ways in which churches are seeking to be good news in their communities. We meet quarterly and are always excited to hear new stories of what God is doing. If this speaks to your context, please do join us: <https://learningnetsi.org.uk/events>

This year we are also delighted to offer Mental Health First Aid training for adults. MHFA is a nationally accredited training course which teaches people how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and provide help on a first aid basis. This is a really important piece of work for churches which seek to be centres of healing and hope within their communities and towards their members. We are able to offer the course at a concessionary rate to people connected with the Methodist Church (£50 instead of £300). Please contact the team for more details.

Every circuit should have a growth or Mission Action Plan, but it often seems to be 'yet another thing'. We would love to assist you with this, no matter where you are in the journey. Please do get in touch.

The normal service continues in the background: training for Circuit Stewards and Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, learning opportunities for Children's, Youth and Family workers, for those in Pastoral Care roles, for Line Managers and Administrators. Positive Working Together courses, Safeguarding and Unconscious Bias training also continue to be offered through the year, as well as support for those in the Candidating process, and for WL/LP tutors, mentors and LP secretaries. Do be in touch.

Please visit our blog's events page for further details on training and dates <https://learningnetsi.org.uk/events>

If you'd rather we contact you with these events and updates, then please sign up to our monthly email newsletter The SIGN (The Southern and Islands Good News!). This is probably the easiest and quickest way to keep abreast of all that we can do for you: www.learningnetsi.org.uk/subscribe

If you prefer, we continue to invite you to contact us with your learning and development needs: drop us an email at Ins&i@methodistchurch.org.uk or give one of us a call.

In the meantime, we hope to see you soon, and thank you for continuing to support us in our ministry.

With Blessings from,

Katie Deadman-Vernall

deadmank@methodistchurch.org.uk 07799 902571

and the rest of the team...

Adrian Roux	(Coordinator)	rouxa@methodistchurch.org.uk	07799 900476
Jon White		whitej@methodistchurch.org.uk	07969 985376
James Devenish		devenishj@methodistchurch.org.uk	07799 902567

LOCAL PREACHERS SECRETARY

Geoffrey Goodman

Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Report

I reported in last years report that the work of our Local Preachers and Worship Leaders has been greatly affected by the pandemic, but as we see a light at the end of the tunnel slowly churches are opening for worship, and we still need to thank Presbyters, Deacons, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders for their continued work, and their efforts are still much appreciated. Some preachers though are finding it hard to decide whether to return for a variety of reasons.

The training of our local preachers and worship leaders is an important task. The number of LP's joining retirement lists is increasing and in some circuits they outweigh those in active service, something rarely seen in the past. Tutors and Mentors are doing a first class job with students to support the on-line training, Tutors are organising regular Explore meetings as well as assessing projects on-line students are carrying out, and Mentors are working with their students planning their worship practice.

Local Preachers who have died (18 to be recorded in the Book of Remembrance at Church House (Dates in brackets are the year LP's were accredited) :

Basingstoke & Reading: Sylvia Wright (Acc. 1973); Lynden Jones (1975)

Christchurch & Wimborne: Fred Kerley (1952)

East Solent & Downs: Geoffrey Paffett (2016), Brian Sloggett (1959)

Kennet & Test Valley: Terry Ayres (1965), Brian Collis (1987) Salisbury: Dennis Bailey (1960), Jenny Franklyn (1959)

Southampton: Mary Bennett (2002), David Cowling (1962)

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey: Delcie Dalby (1993), Paul Rolph

Yeovil & Blackmore Vale: Ken Harvey (1970), Ann Bradford (1996)

Worship: Leading & Preaching - 'WLP in a year' which was started in 2020 proved to be a success and is continuing this year. This is intended to be a "fast track" approach that can be completed in a year. It will demand a high level of commitment from students and local tutors, but it is designed to meet a real need, especially for those who sense a call into full-time Christian service. Refer on-line to info@cliffcollege.ac.uk. Cliff College are once again holding their Spring & Summer Schools to help student local preachers and worship Leaders with the EXPLORE meetings for WLP. Grants are available from the District GLAD Committee if you feel you need to apply for one of these courses.

Bible month is planned for this year (Book of Isaiah), including training sessions run by the Learning Network. Tickets are available through Eventbrite, but it can also be viewed on line.

The Connexional District Officers' Meeting was held in November 2021 on Zoom with an excellent attendance once again by Districts. The topics covered (some good and some not so good!) were:

- There has been an increase in on-line meetings, especially in Circuits, Districts and Connexion
- Concern about those who do not have computers (known as the 'digital divide') and feel excluded
- Those who live in care homes can keep regular contact on-line
- Ecumenical boundaries have been lowered due to meeting on-line and gives more room for ecumenical cooperation
- Some confusion about using material with copyright on-line
- The opportunity for LP's and WL's to participate in on-line worship has been 'patchy'
- Generally, the return to on-site worship has been welcomed
- On-going discussion on how church worship will look in the post-Covid world and what new skills we need to acquire
- Is our present training suitable (WLP) only for Sunday morning worship or across a wide variety of worship activities in the church

Finally, my thanks to Circuit LP/WL Secretaries for all their hard work, with much of their work going on behind the scenes. The work of God in our District has been maintained because of their dedication.



MHA Spring Synod Report 2022

Islay Roberts

Firstly thank you for all the ongoing support from our friends within the Methodist Church, your dedication to MHA (Methodist Homes) during these unsettling times, and your overwhelming support of our mission, vision and values has helped our vital work helping those in later life live well.

It has been a busy year for us at MHA. We have dealt with the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the day to day lives of those in our care, and on our services, with colleagues working tirelessly to deliver the best possible care in sometimes challenging situations. As well as this we have also been able to start focusing on the future again, refreshing our organisational strategy and launching three new specialist strategies to sit alongside our dementia strategy. These strategies are designed to ensure we are able to focus on the activities and moments that matter and give the best possible quality of life to those who use our services.

MHA's new spirituality strategy

In November 2021 we launched our new Spirituality Strategy as well as our End of Life Care and Music strategies. The strategy outlines how we know that spirituality is important and everyone's spirituality is different.

We treat every person as an individual, involving each person in shaping the way we support their spiritual wellbeing. We also recognise that people live connected to many different communities, not least the MHA service to which they belong. Alongside families and friendships, people are often part of social, religious and activity-based communities. MHA is one of few care providers that have a dedicated chaplaincy service, nurturing the spiritual needs of residents, members, families and colleagues. Our chaplaincy service aims to meet spiritual needs through one-to-one and group support, providing a sense of comfort, community and a listening ear to everyone who needs it. These services are for people of all beliefs. Although chaplaincy is often the most recognisable resource linked to spiritual care, all colleagues play an important part in supporting people's spirituality.

Our strategy outlines our five commitments to offer the best possible spiritual care and support:

1. We will ensure that the spiritual care we provide is person-centred and reflects the community in which it is provided.
2. We will ensure that colleagues understand how everyone can contribute to the way spirituality is recognised and supported.
3. We will train, support and resource chaplains, ensuring that they are best placed to model MHA values and be ambassadors for holistic care.
4. We will develop and encourage the role of volunteering within chaplaincy.
5. We will ensure that colleagues and family members have moments to reflect and the opportunity to express and explore their spiritual needs, as well as support those they care for.

MHA Sunday

MHA Sunday 2021 focused on the impact of our community services for those who are at risk of becoming isolated in their own homes, sharing the story of Anthony who has benefited from the support of our MHA Communities scheme in Birmingham. Through the generous support of the churches across Britain we have raised £136,926 from both MHA Sunday and wider support over the last 12 months. Thank you for all your support, it really does make a difference to the lives of lonely and isolated people in our communities. Please could we also make a slight plea, if you are sending us money as a result of MHA Sunday activity please do let us know when you send it in, as this helps us to best assess the impact of the appeal.

MHA Sunday 2022 will be focusing on the impact of gardens and outdoor spaces on the wellbeing of those in later life. It will be focusing on the story of John, a resident at MHA Aigburth in Leicester. His son Joe explains the impact being able to take him outside has on him.

'My dad's faith is incredibly important to him, he regularly talks with the MHA chaplain Emma. The church has always been a massive part of his life so the Christian ethos of MHA appealed to us. Away from the noise and bustle of the home, dad can communicate more easily, he finds it relaxing, we can talk and listen to each other. It's a very calming environment. Even in winter, I'll wrap him up and take a walk in the garden to watch the change of seasons in the fresh air; afterwards, dad will say 'thank you for taking me out, I enjoyed it.'

We'll be hosting a webinar where you can learn more about the resources and how funds raised from the appeal will be used to enhance our outdoor spaces, further bringing joy and access to those in later life. The webinar will broadcast on 4th May at 7pm. To find out more please ask your rep or visit mha.org.uk/Sunday.

Christmas

This year we took a slightly different approach to the Christmas Friendship Appeal, encouraging our services to set up a post box outside their front door so local supporters could drop off cards in a safe way. Thank you to everyone who did this. As the activity was dispersed we do not have a total for the number of cards delivered but our residents and members were thrilled at the cards received and warmed by the kind words written. Thank you to everyone who supported this campaign.

Tea party

We're looking to use the power of tea to bring 'tea-gether' communities across the UK. So get your friends and family, school, church, or wider community together and host your first MHA Communi-tea Party this March, to raise awareness and funds for MHA. The official day will be 25 March, but feel free to do your events on days around then that suit you.

Download your Party Pack full of resources and ideas on how to host your event. Whether it's a bake sale, an afternoon tea, or a coffee morning - our printable pack has games, recipes, bunting, invites, and more to help you make your event a success! Or if you would prefer a ready-made pack sent to you in the post, you can opt for a posted pack for a donation of £10 via our website

(<https://www.mha.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/teaparty/>)

Fix Care for All

This time last year we were preparing to bring forward our campaign to #FixCareForAll. With your help, we launched in May 2020 just before the Queen's Speech, and thousands took part to pressure the Government to address the issues in social care, once and for all. Because of us pulling together alongside organisations, MPs and sector leaders, we were able to see proposals brought forward for the first time in decades. It's time to build on what we've achieved and continue to champion for the best adult social care sector there has ever been, one where people working in care are recognised for their great contribution and a less complex system for those accessing care when they need it. To achieve this, MHA will continue to campaign throughout the year with varied activities. You will be able to support through signing petitions, writing letters to your MP, sharing what's important to you and many other actions.

If you too are passionate about positive change for the sector join our campaign supporter mailing list to be the first to know about how to support our other advocacy work.

Why not take part in our social media challenge by growing a plant in your home or garden. Snap a photo and post it on social media with a caption of your one hope for the future of adult social care. Don't forget to tag @MHAaction and use #SocialCareWish.

If you would like more information about these and other activities please do contact your MHA rep or email us directly at fundraising@mha.org.uk or call 01332 296200. The latest edition of Heart and Soul is out now. If you have not received one, please do ask your rep for a copy, or contact us on the details above.

METHODIST WOMEN in BRITAIN (MWiB)

Chris Stuckey

Having completed the Partnership with Fiji, we have this Connexional year been focusing on local circuit needs. In September we are hoping to undertake another District Partnership, looking beyond our localities to an area of need in another country. This time we shall hopefully be engaging with some groups in Mexico visited by our National President Hilary Evans before the pandemic.

We were delighted to be able to hold our Celebration Day in person on 25th September 2021. We met at St. James Road MC in the Southampton Circuit. Our Chair Andrew de Ville led us in a Bible Study on the Book of Ruth, and Rev. John Hughes led our service of Holy Communion. It was wonderful to share together in worship and fellowship once again.

Our MWiB team are again offering to take a morning service in some of our circuits. We felt this to be a very worthwhile contribution to the district before the pandemic and are looking forward to being able to lead worship together once more. We shall include Drama, Testimony (by a local member) and a short sermon.

At present we are booked for Andover (12th June), Hedge End (17th July) and Wimborne (24th July).

Our National Conference is taking place at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick 22-24th April. Jill Baker, former vice-President of the Methodist Conference and former National President of MWiB will be leading us on the theme "Surviving by Hope". Jill will be focusing primarily on the 'energising and sustaining practices of pilgrimage and poetry'. There will be at least 12 of us attending from our district.

Our District president, Irene Bourne, is in her third year of presidency. She agreed to continue for an extra year because during lockdowns and severe restrictions, she was unable to visit ladies meetings and other organisations in our churches and would still like to do so. We are at present on the lookout for a new president to take over in October.

Connexional website: www.mwib.org.uk

PROPERTY - GENERAL

Mark Bell

As District Property Secretary it is a privilege to work with faithful, dedicated and hardworking people in circuits and churches across our District. During the past year, many have continued to experience major challenges because of the pandemic and have sought diligently both to ensure premises are safe and secure and to carry out essential maintenance so that buildings can continue to be important resources for mission.

I wish also to place on record the outstanding contribution of colleagues on the District Consents Panel, who offer wisdom and advice as well as exercising careful assessment of schemes submitted.

Annual Property Returns

Thank you to those who have completed their returns for this year, the period ending 31st August 2021. Completions as at time of writing – 57.9% of churches and 2 circuits. Although the online record remains “open” until 31st August 2022, may I please continue to urge colleagues in circuits and churches to seek, at the earliest opportunity, to complete any which are outstanding?

I am aware that, in some circuits, there is a continuing problem where it is not possible for the records to be fully “signed off”, owing to the presence of “ghost properties” – i.e. those sold in the past, or those which have never existed as Methodist Model Trust Property. Where such issues exist, please contact TMCP or send me details, so that, once again, I can take up the matter with TMCP and Property Support. If a record of sale or disposal can be found in “old” circuit meeting minutes, please include this information in the details you provide, as this will speed up any investigation of TMCP records.

Quinquennial Inspections

Connexional Guidance for quinquennial inspections is now on the website on the Maintenance page under:

‘Quinquennial Report’ and ‘Quinquennial – How to Appoint an Inspector.’

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/maintenance/>

May I remind everyone of the need to ensure that these inspections are renewed every 5 years. To date, in most circuits, there are omissions, although some inspections have been delayed owing to the pandemic. In case there are problems in finding a suitable surveyor, a list of surveyors can be found on the TMCP website. If difficulties exist, please let me know.

Connexional Property Strategy

Since its launch in early 2019 the strategy has become more embedded in the life of the church. A copy can be found in the property resources area of the Methodist website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/property-strategy/>

It is a helpful tool in its aims to assist Managing Trustees in developing Mission Plans and considering ways in which Property serves as a resource.

One area of increasing concern (exacerbated by the events of the past two years) relates to the additional burdens placed on congregations by buildings which are too large or require major resources to enable general upkeep or repairs.

As, in many churches numbers are falling and the age-profile is rising, these demands are becoming impossible to manage. Often societies will close and the buildings sold.

The Strategy presents a challenge to us all to discern how best to use the resources we have across churches, circuits, districts (and connexionally for that matter).

Property Projects and Consents

Around the District there are some exciting schemes being considered, which seek to develop church premises as effective resource bases for mission in their communities. Other projects have, of necessity, had to focus on major repairs to buildings, many of which are either “Listed” or in major conservation areas.

Rather than quoting a lot of statistics about Property Schemes in the District, I refer you to the list of Consents given in the papers of every Synod which show the extent and diversity of work done on Church premises and manses. Every Scheme given consent is shown to be necessary and relevant to God’s mission in that place.

I should like to take the opportunity to restate for the benefit of all, and especially those new to the District or starting out, the guidelines on Methodist property and resourcing mission matters:

*The on-line Property Schemes Consent process began operating on 1 January 2010. Synod has delegated to the **District Consents Panel** the responsibility for considering and giving Consent to approved Property Schemes posted to the Methodist Church Consents Website by Churches and Circuits. The DPS manages the process on behalf of the Panel.*

Synod requires all Schemes costing above £25,000 to be given consent by all available Panel members. For Schemes costing below £25,000, Synod has given the DPS delegated authority to give consent and to report such consents to the entire panel. At each meeting Synod receives and is asked to note a report of recent Schemes.

Where premises require structural repairs, or are to be sold or leased, the Property Consents Process also applies.

Trustees are strongly recommended to contact the Connexional Conservation Officer, at an early stage, for advice when maintenance work is required on listed buildings or those in conservation areas.

Members of the District Consents Panel continue to be confident that, in the main, the Process is working effectively. However, as I have said in previous reports, there appears to be some misunderstanding about the reasons why it is important to set up a Project on the Consents Website and for the Consents Process to be followed. I believe, therefore, that it is worth repeating this advice:

Apart from situations as set out on the Property Consents Flowchart (found on the Consents Guidance pages or Property Support pages of the Methodist website), including where circuit or district grant funding is being sought, the system is useful as a property record for each set of premises. More importantly, by providing checks and balances, it serves to protect Managing Trustees in the event of something “going wrong”.

Managing Trustees are merely custodians of Model Trust property, not the legal owners. Legal ownership rests with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP).

A range of resources is available to help Managing Trustees on Property Matters:

- The Consents Process online continues to be regularly updated and includes helpful guidance notes.*
- “Property Matters” information bulletin provides useful updates for Churches and Circuits.*
- TMCP legal and conservation officers are available to offer specific advice by email or telephone. Details on Methodist Church website: www.methodist.org.uk or dedicated TMCP website: www.tmc.org.uk*
- The Connexional Property Support team has also produced a range of advice (details available on the Property pages of the Methodist Church website). The team may be contacted via email: property@methodistchurch.org.uk.*
- In appropriate cases Panel Members are happy to arrange visits to Churches and Circuits to enable informed guidance to be given and to offer “first line support” over the ‘phone and by email.*

If further advice is needed, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Finally, I repeat sincere thanks to all District and Circuit colleagues who have shared with me in these responsibilities during the past year.

PROPERTY - MANSES

Henry Stroud

The small team of visitors aims to visit each of the fifty or so manses occupied by ministers (there are another thirty or so properties let while not needed for ministers) every five years. Visits are normally planned in the year after the quinquennial, but this depends on stationing and personal factors.

We rather optimistically planned to carry out 15 visits in 2021, including 6 visits planned for 2020 but delayed by the pandemic. I am pleased to report that 14 of these were completed in the year owing to the diligent work of the visitors and to the circuit stewards who ensured that quinquennials had been completed in most cases. We have planned to carry out 12 visits in 2022, so we are back on track.

Of course, there are no visits without visitors. I am pleased to report that following the targeted approach we reported last year we have recruited and trained 4 new visitors. This is particularly pleasing as they come from circuits that have not supplied visitors for some while and 2 of them are women. This will enable us to more closely satisfy standing orders which require that at least half of the panel of visitors shall be women.

A meeting of the committee by Zoom considered the reports of the 14 visits and agreed that, to the credit of the various circuits and the occupants, most of the properties were well maintained. A variety of issues were identified including the perennial, but important, absence of gas and electrical inspection certificates and minor repairs and improvements not being completed in a timely manner. One of the manses was considered to be sub-standard and several others need determined efforts to remedy long outstanding maintenance issues. These issues will be taken up with the circuits involved.

Recent quinquennial reports have recommended upgrading heat and smoke alarms and we are consulting the Connexion before proposing a District policy to move perhaps to mains-operated linked systems. Several manses visited had issues with their heating systems – the rising cost of energy and our environmental ambitions will require us to give more consideration to improved insulation (a number of manses appeared not to have cavity or adequate loft insulation). But we are aware of limited circuit budgets.

I remind circuit stewards and others that there is a wealth of information on the Methodist website to help in the purchase and maintenance of our manses. Please contact me if you cannot find what you want.

SAFEGUARDING

Jane Fisher

CASES AND CONTRACTS

As lockdown has lifted there has been a significant increase in the number of calls – both seeking advice and to refer cases.

The Connexion has produced training material for Monitoring and Support Groups (MSG). (Those supporting offenders or those known to pose a risk of harm as they attend church.) We are currently planning how we roll this out. MSGs are our front line of protection where offenders or those who pose a risk are involved in the church.

There has been an increase in Scams – some specifically directed at churches, which we are continuing to keep people alerted to. If you receive an email/text from a minister asking if you are free check the actual email address or mobile number to ensure it is from the minister. Better still, contact the minister on a known email/mobile number to ensure it really is them.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Safer Recruitment Policy has been reissued and we are working to ensure recruitment to all posts follows the guidance. This relates to all posts – paid and voluntary.

TRAINING

Face to face training has started again in a number of Circuits and we are working through those who need training/to update training. Connexion have made clear WL or LP who have **not** completed/are not up to date with the Advanced module by the **end of August 2022** will not be permitted to continue their roles.

We will be piloting a 'hybrid' version of the Advanced module which will involve myself and another delivering the training from a central venue which will be livestreamed to groups meeting in churches or other venues with the necessary IT kit. This should enable us to reach a much larger group of people with each session and cater for smaller groups who are not able to travel to a central venue.

WEBINARS

The Mental Health webinar went well, with good attendance.

The Record Keeping webinar allowed us to help people be clearer and more confident in making and keeping records. We have been asked to run the webinar for London District!

In March 2022 we have a webinar looking at the Theology of Safeguarding and reflecting on the Conference Report.

Further webinars will be run during the year.

Working with South East District and LN to run webinars across the District is an effective way of reaching a large number of people easily and economically.

Connexion continue to run webinars open to Church and Circuit Safeguarding Officers which are well attended from within the District. Links to webinars and recordings are on the website.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

I am part of a working group working on Safeguarding and LEPs. The current guidance relates to C of E/Methodist LEPs – there are far more LEPs with the URC and Baptists. We hope to provide resources and guidance to allow safeguarding processes to work more effectively across all denominations.

District Safeguarding Group

The DSG has continued to meet and provides much valued support, accountability, and advice.

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

We are encouraging churches to engage with Safeguarding Sunday as a way of raising awareness of safeguarding and promoting the culture of safeguarding within the whole church. National resources are available, and we will provide some locally.
