



# The Methodist Church Southampton District

## ANNUAL REPORTS 2024-2025

*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 RACHEL BENDING

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## FROM THE DISTRICT CHAIR

Revd Rachel Bending

It's wonderful to see in these reports the range and depth of work across the District, I hope you will read and absorb these reports and join me in giving thanks for the individuals and teams that they involve.

I am so thankful for the connections that exist within this District and the varied ministry of people in all areas, all working together to seek and follow God's plans for us. It has been great to have a chance in my first few months as your Chair to meet so many of you and learn of your ministry and the work of God amongst you. As a Synod we celebrate and give thanks for this.

Every blessing, Rachel

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### Compass Project Portsmouth – the first six months...

Catherine Burt

New Places for New People projects are being set up around the country by the Methodist Church, to introduce people to the Christian faith in contexts and ways that are relevant to them. Over the past few years, the Southampton District's New Places for New People core team decided our project, called Compass, will be focused in the north of Portsmouth and primarily working with families, based on a need evidenced by a period of research.



My job, as the Compass Project Lead/Pioneer and seconded to the East Solent & Downs Circuit, is now to discern what this looks like in reality. I meet weekly with the District's Intergenerational Mission Enabler, Mark Tizzard, to discuss and progress the Compass Project. The project is not about being in competition with existing churches, but about giving people an option to explore faith in different ways; some of which may also contain an element of social action. My role started in September 2024 and so I've been in post for nearly 6 months – this is a summary of what I've been doing in this time.

### Listening to the local community

- We're targeting the Girls' Brigade group and Boys' Brigade group families, predominantly based in the area of the city my project is targeting and who I already have relationships with, and then rippling out into the wider community. So, I've been busy meeting with the groups' leaders and parents to find out how they feel about faith and what needs they perceive their community has. It may be that some of these leaders become Compass volunteers to help run events when they start. On a separate note, we provided the Girls' Brigade nationally with a case study about our group and how it links to New Places for New People.
- I'm starting to spend time in community places in the Copnor area of the city, such as the cafes, to meet people and hear what needs/dreams they have.
- An example of this currently being explored is a craft group, based on the requests of some local women.

### Making connections

- I've been attending One Body Portsmouth events for church leaders to become aware of other local churches' projects and meeting regularly with Rev Ray Goddess from Portsmouth Methodist Church. Although my project is not part of Portsmouth Methodist, we're meeting monthly to talk and to cheer each other on.
- I've also been attending the circuit staff meetings, leadership meetings and full circuit meetings to gain a better understanding of how the Methodist church works and to embed the project within this structure. I've just started meeting with the circuit ministers/staff to learn from their experiences and have attended some Methodist churches' mission and outreach events, such as Fareham's Messy Church.
- I visited a project similar to ours, but in a rural context in a Devon village called Horrabridge. It was inspiring to meet and learn from the project lead, Ali, and find out how, over a period of 7 years, she has now set up around 14 community outreach projects. I've also been meeting with a coach who has extensive experience in pioneering, which provides me with a great sounding board.
- Part of my role also involves sharing my learnings from the Compass Project and encouraging other churches to try new mission projects. In February I went to the Isle of Wight to meet with some churches there and talk about what opportunities they'd like to start to explore.
- I attended the Methodist Church's Wholehearted conference in March.

## **Listening to God**

- Prayer is such an important part of this project, so I've been praying and doing prayer walks in the Copnor area.
- I'd like to build up a team of prayers for my project, so please get in touch if you'd like to receive prayer points by email and/or attend prayer walks and/or Zoom prayer sessions. My email is at the end of this report.

## **Events**

- It's early days in terms of running events, but we have started running a couple of low-key events mainly to help the Brigade families understand that some events are for the whole families and not just the children.
- Christmas party - 70 children and adults enjoyed fun and games at a Christmas party on Monday 16 December evening. The family party, organised by 8th Portsmouth Girls' Brigade and 4th Portsmouth Boys' Brigade, featured a quiz with picture, music and general knowledge rounds, and a giant game of pass the parcel. The group also spent some time hearing how God sending Jesus to earth is the best present we can ever have... and each table were challenged to dress up one of their group as a present using a few items they were given in a bag.
- New Year's Stomp - Around 30 people took part in a New Year's Stomp enjoying the opportunity to get outside, socialise, and enjoy some moments of reflection. The free all-age event took place on Saturday 4 January 2025 in the Hilsea/Copnor area of Portsmouth. It was organised by the Compass Project Portsmouth, supported by 8th Portsmouth Girls' Brigade, 4th Portsmouth Boys' Brigade, Portsmouth Methodist Church, and St Nicholas CofE Church. It was great to get out in the fresh air and to also spend some time, individually and with friends, reflecting on the past year and the year ahead and considering how God fits into it.

## **Branding**

- The Compass Project logo has been produced after designs were shown to around 80 people for their feedback.
- I've started thinking about how we're going to communicate our project to the various audiences we have.

## **Reading and training**

- I have a long reading list and have already started getting stuck into books recommended for pioneers.
- Titles read so far include – Faith for the Curious by Mark Matlock; How to pioneer (even if you haven't a clue) by David Male; and Godsend by Michael Moynagh.
- There have been a number of webinars and courses targeted at pioneers/New Places for New People projects organised by the Connexion that I have attended to learn and meet other pioneers. And I have several more booked in during 2025.
- I've completed Methodist Church training such as EDI.

## **Next steps....**

- My reading and networking mean I have lots to reflect on and pray about.
- All the pioneers I've spoken with have said not to rush the networking and learning about your community part of the pioneering process so the next 6 months will look much the same as the first. At the moment, it feels like a puzzle where we have the outside edges in place, but we don't know what the picture is of yet. We may put some pieces down and see what works and what doesn't as we discern what God is saying.
- Your prayers for me personally as I listen to what God is saying about Compass would be much appreciated.

**[catherine.burt@sdmc.org.uk](mailto:catherine.burt@sdmc.org.uk)**

## **DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Paul Yarrien**

The District Policy Committee (DPC) has met three times since the last scheduled Synod in September 2024. We have had two planned meetings in person and an extra-ordinary DPC meeting on Zoom. We have also conducted business via email consultation. This flexible approach allows DPC to respond to a specific need as well as having programmed meetings and business throughout the year.

DPC has representation from each Circuit, either lay or ordained and they alternate on a three-year rotation. Their input regarding the discussions is invaluable and allows DPC to be kept informed of successes and challenges from across the District. This flow of information works both ways and representatives are directed to share information and requests with their Circuits. During the meeting on 02 Oct 2024 the representatives shared some of the challenges that the Circuits are facing in this current year. This discussion provided an excellent overview of the challenges and where there is commonality across the Circuits.

DPC considered a wide range of topics and issues, including several directly related to Synod. We spent time considering the shape and membership of Synod and then broadened the discussion to consider future locations of Synod, including the use of non-church premises. At the centre of these discussions was the need to consider travel to and from Synod, the need for parking, access to facilities such as multimedia and areas for eating and additional areas for discussion and activities. There is further work to be done as Circuits review their locations and their suitability to host Synod.

As Synod is aware, possible changes in Circuit boundaries has been an on-going area for discussion and some Circuits have already changed. The DPC sub-group, responsible on behalf of DPC, has continued to work with Circuits and it is expected that proposals will be brought to this Synod in respect of changes effective from 01 Sep 2025. Details will appear elsewhere in the Synod papers.

DPC received extensive updates on the following areas of District business:

- Finance
- Stationing
- Ecumenical Matters
- Lay Employment
- Methodist Women in Britain
- District Grants
- District Property
- Eco District
- GDPR

Several of the above will be referenced in other reports and Synod business.

DPC has also received an update on the NPNP project and specifically the follow-on research work in support of Circuits. We were briefed on the research undertaken in Salisbury and Yeovil and now await news on how Circuits will take the ideas forward.

The extra-ordinary DPC meeting held on 29 Jan 2025 had a single item agenda and was held at the request of the Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Jonathan Hustler. The meeting was asked to consider an option for how the Southampton District and the Channel Islands District could share a Chair of District. At previous Synods, reports have been presented describing discussions held with other Districts in the South-West Region. These discussions have led to changes including closer working with the Channel Islands in several areas of District business. DPC were asked only to consider the proposal in principle and how this could work in practice. At the time of writing, DPC are awaiting a written proposal to be shared with Synod.

## ECO DISTRICT

Dr John Evans

The Justice-Seeking Church programme (JSC) is led by Rachel Lampard, Director of Social Justice and Social Action. One of the five priorities of the Justice Seeking Church is: '*Establishing a flourishing environment*'. As part of the JSC programme, Dr Hamish Leese, the Action for Hope Implementation Officer, was appointed as Director of Environmental Engagement in the autumn of 2024. The Methodist Church Eco Community Network was launched in November 2024 with over 60 joining a Zoom meeting. It is expected that there will be three of these each year. The meetings are open as is an associated Facebook group.

The Eco District steering group meets on-line about 3 times per year. Its main activities have been the webinar series, Creation Mondays, and the newsletter, Creation Matters. Both of these are published on the District's website. The group also keeps track of Action for Hope and Eco Church developments. The District attained a Bronze Eco District award in 2024, being the third District to do so. It is expected that the criteria for Silver EcoDistrict awards will be announced this spring. We can expect that the threshold percentages will be 40, 30 and 10% for church registrations, awards and silver/gold, respectively. Currently we stand at 33, 19 and 6% for these three levels. Presently 50 churches are registered for Eco Church and 28 have received awards.

A fund for Action for Hope (AfH) grants was announced in the spring of 2024. These were to be dispersed to Districts once the District had achieved the eligibility criteria in accord with the Action for Hope programme of Net Zero. The steps for the Bronze Eco District award take us close to being eligible for receipt of an Action for Hope grant. The District Treasurer has been monitoring travel records for District business to allow a policy to be monitored; this, and a revision of the District's Environmental policy should complete the criteria. A fund transfer should occur within a couple of weeks of completion of eligibility and is estimated to be £105,108.

The EcoDistrict group proposed to DPC that this grant should provide churches with independent energy audits. Circuits would be asked to provide a list of churches to be assessed and the appropriate contact details. In advance of the inspection churches would be asked to provide information about their energy consumption and generation and also the pattern of use of the building. The inspectors would provide a report and respond to questions about that. The report would include proposed plans along the Action for Hope path. Such plans may be incorporated into church and circuit carbon plans, which can form part of their overall mission plan. DPC could see benefits of such audits and have asked for discussions to take place with superintendents to consider how a scheme might be implemented.

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## FINANCE

Christine Holland

During the year the District received total income of £566,650 (2023: £428,464) and spent £452,369 (2023: £434,584). At 31 August 2024 the District had funds totalling £1,385,107 (2023: £1,256,310). The District's funds have increased during the year primarily due to better performance against the District's invested funds, an increased amount being distributed from the Connexional Advance and Property Fund and the repayment of a grant previously made to the Methodist Ministers Pension Fund Reserve in 2021.

At 31 August 2024 the District held the following funds:

- General funds £139,453 (£129,187 at 31 August 2023)
- District Development Fund £45,888 (£49,595 at 31 August 2023)
- District Advance Fund £302,702 (£177,517 at 31 August 2023)
- Portsmouth University Chaplaincy £5 (-£78 deficit at 31 August 2023)
- Property Reserve (District Manse) £735,000 (£735,000 at 31 August 2023)
- Benevolent Fund £2,131 (£381 at 31 August 2023)
- MIH Fund £130,837 (£123,747 at 31 August 2023)
- A balance of £14,649 against our New Places for New People connexional funding (£28,846 at 31 August 2023)
- £Nil held on behalf of Churches Together in Hampshire and the Islands (£432 at 31 August 2023). This organisation closed during the year with the balance of funds being paid to Churches Together in England.
- £14,442 of Mission Alongside the Poor funds. (£11,683 at 31 August 2023)

In 2023-24 the District paid grants from the District Advance Fund that totalled £167,527 to churches, circuits, university chaplaincies and ecumenical groups. At 31 August 2024 grants totalling £424,600 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 2023 after taking into account commitments against the fund is £302,702.

## GROUP FOR LEARNING AND DISCIPLESHIP (GLaD)

Fran Jenkins

Rev John Yarrien is chair of the group and Fran Jenkins is the secretary. Recently we were delighted to welcome Rev Rachel Bending (District Chair) and Rev Martin Beukes (Synod Secretary) as ex-officio members of the group.

The remit of the group is: 'GLaD' (Group for Learning and Discipleship) is responsible to the DPC (District Policy Committee) and reports to it. GLaD is the District champion for various learning and discipleship pathways available to Lay and Ordained, paid employees and volunteers across the District. One main vehicle we have for promoting and encouraging learning and discipleship in the District is through the District website. At our recent meeting we agreed to review the website, seeking to making it easier to navigate to the wealth of information and support that is available there. With language which invites looking further, and a particular focus on signposting to the Learning Network, grants that are available to support learning, and information for ministers about Sabbaticals, on LP & WL and other training, mapped around Methodist Way of Life.

GLaD continues to fulfil the following functions:

1. Agree sabbatical prospectuses and receive the post sabbatical report
2. Approve grant applications from lay and ordained with respect to learning\*
3. Champion discipleship, learning and vocation in close partnership with the Learning Network.

GLaD provides a focused space for a two-way conversation between the District representatives (e.g., MWiB, LP/WL) and the Learning Network.

We continue to benefit from 'Dwelling in the Word' as our opening devotions, listening to and sharing what the Bible passage has said to us.

This past year we have agreed grants for various training courses and the purchase of mission resources.

\* The reviewed Application Forms for Grants, now in the new format, are available from Fran Jenkins, Sarah Potheary or the District website.



Mark Tizzard

Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement over the past year.

### Intergenerational Mission: What Does It Mean?

Intergenerational mission simply means bringing different age groups together to work and learn alongside each other, particularly with the aim of discovering and participating in the work or purpose of God. This approach encourages collaboration, understanding, and shared experiences across generations.

I witness this often across our District as I have the wonderful opportunity to visit various missional projects. There are so many creative and exciting ways we connect with our communities. Not only do I learn from them, but I also get to share insights and examples of what I've seen in other places.

### A Wealth of Ministries Across the District

We are blessed with a wide range of ministries. Starting with some of our youngest attendees, we have Toddler Groups—where the church is the largest provider—offering a significant first step into the church. We also have:

- Messy Churches and children's groups
- Uniformed organisations
- Youth groups, creating spaces for young people to explore faith
- Parenting courses
- Knit and Natter groups
- Coffee mornings
- Computer clubs, art groups, football clubs, and walking groups
- 'Warm Spaces', foodbanks, and other Church at the Margin projects
- The Compass Project – our District led NPNP project, helping us learn more about pioneering new Ecclesial Communities (look for Catherine's report to find out more).

Each of these ministries is distinct and works in different ways. If you want to learn more, please ask me—I'd love to help you discern what might work in your context.

## Opportunities for Deeper Engagement

These activities serve as wonderful bridges for people to step into the church community and deepen their relationship with God. You are doing an incredible job of creating opportunities for everyone to engage, regardless of their age, background or stage in life and I am privileged to see glimpses of all that is happening.

I was recently challenged by Kenda Creasy Dean in her book *\*Innovating for Love\**. She emphasizes the importance of knowing our 'Why?'- could it be because we believe *\*All Can Be Saved\**. Whether it's a simple coffee morning or a deep theological discussion in a youth group, we should seek to ensure that every event is rooted in God's love and grace. This focus will resonate with people and invite them into a deeper relationship with God.

By continuing to cultivate a variety of opportunities and intentionally connecting them, you are helping to create a church environment that is vibrant, welcoming, and spiritually enriching. This makes it easier for people to find their place and experience God's presence in their lives.

## A Helpful Model for Mission



I often use this model to explore opportunities for mission and to encourage churches in their journey.

## Recommended Reading

If you're interested in learning more about Intergenerational Mission and pioneering missional thinking, here are some recommended books:

- Being an Intergenerational Church by Suzi Farrant & Darren Philip
- A Gospel for All Ages by David M. Csinos
- Innovating for Love by Kenda Creasy Dean

## Let's Connect!

I'd love to come and chat with you, pray with you, and explore what God might be calling us to join in with. You can get in touch with me in a variety of ways—please don't hesitate to reach out!

Phone or text 07391017548

Email [mark.tizzard@sdmc.org.uk](mailto:mark.tizzard@sdmc.org.uk)

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

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

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



## LEARNING NETWORK

James Devenish

The Learning Network exists to support, encourage, and inspire Methodist people in all aspects of Our Calling. Together, we strive to be a church that is inclusive, justice-seeking, evangelistic and growing.

### How the Learning Network Works

The Learning Network (LN) primarily works with both lay and ordained church leaders, helping you develop your skills so you, in turn, can equip others.

The LN collaborates with other colleagues in the Connexional Team, as well as many of you in District and Circuits leadership roles, as well at times with local churches to equip and resource church communities.

### District Alignment: Support for Church Leaders

Each Learning & Development Officer (LDO) is aligned with a specific Methodist District, and I am delighted to be aligned to the Southampton District. Among other things this means that I:

- Accompany lay and ordained church leaders, supporting their growth and ministry.
- Enable church, circuit and district leaders to access lifelong learning opportunities.
- Facilitate growth and mission planning for the district and circuits.

### Connexional Learning & Development: Church-Wide Initiatives

Alongside District-based work, LDOs contribute to wider Connexional learning and development opportunities.

This includes:

- Planning, delivering, and evaluating learning and development opportunities across the Methodist Church.
- Collaborating with colleagues across the Connexion to create resources and events that support ministry and mission.
- Leading or supporting key Connexional projects, offering expertise in areas such as leadership, safeguarding, worship, pastoral care, and theological learning.
- Many of these initiatives take place online, reaching a broad audience across the Church.

We love for as many people as possible to know of our work, and therefore there are different ways to remain connected with us. I hope that one of these will work for you:

**Newsletter;** this comes out monthly, direct to your inbox. [Sign Up for Newsletters – The Methodist Church](#)

**Facebook;** There is a closed group, currently with 1300 members, where you can join for conversation about learning and development in the Methodist church, and to hear first about upcoming opportunities.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/thelearningnetwork/>

**Eventbrite;** Join over 1000 people, and receive emails from time to time promoting new Learning and Development opportunities. [Methodist Learning Network Events – 36 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

**Methodist Church Website;** There are many learning and development opportunities within the church, some we lead and some by other colleagues. [Direct link to the Learning Network pages.](#)

I'm looking forward to supporting you as you take your next step in discipleship!

James Devenish (07799 902567) [devenishj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:devenishj@methodistchurch.org.uk)



## **METHODIST WOMEN in BRITAIN (MwiB)**

**Chris Stuckey**

1. At our District Day in October we launched our new Overseas Partnership with a Leprosy Mission Project working with women in Nepal. Our local link with this project is Gabby North who lives in Southampton and is employed by the Leprosy Mission. This means that all monies raised can be sent to Nepal through her. We are supporting a project which trains women as Health Worker Volunteers, enabling them to travel to outlying and often remote villages where they can identify this dreadful disease at an early stage and offer treatment to prevent its development. Gabby gave a very moving presentation about the work we shall be supporting. This presentation is available on a memory stick and can be obtained from myself ([chris@christom.org.uk](mailto:chris@christom.org.uk)) for use at women's meetings, coffee mornings, or at a Local Arrangement at your church on a Sunday.

2. Our District MwiB Team will again be taking some morning worship services.

3. The MwiB National Conference will again take place at 'The Hayes Conference Centre' in Swanwick from 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> April. Revd Sonia Hicks, a former President of the Methodist Conference, will be our keynote speaker. The theme for the weekend is '*This little light of mine*'. Several women have booked to attend from the District. There is also the option of participating through Zoom.

4. We have a District Day planned for June 7<sup>th</sup>, 10.30-3.30 to be held at St. James Road Methodist Church, Southampton. The focus of the day will be 'Hope Street'. This is a project in Southampton for convicted women, offering an alternative to prison so enabling families to be together. We hope we will be able to attract some younger women to attend.

5. The Theme of the Easter Offering Service this year is '*Education for All. Hope for All*' focusing on every person's right to education. The Easter Offering is donated to the World Mission Fund which works with over a hundred Partner Churches around the world.

Connexional website: [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk)

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## **PROPERTY – GENERAL**

**Peter Frank**

One of the benefits of the role of the DPS is to gain some insight into what is happening in other parts of the country and at Connexional level. The Connexional Property Support Team now comprises a Net Zero Property Officer, three Development Project Managers, a Conservation Officer and Administrator and a Resources Officer, all of whom are there to support our Circuits and churches. I am privileged to attend regular briefings by the Team, and I share below a few items which may be of interest (or that it may serve us well to be aware of!).

### **Net Zero**

Hamish Leese is the Director of Climate Engagement in the Methodist Church. As such, he is not a part of the Property Support Team, but was invited by them to address the DPS's. The Methodist Church has committed to a Net Zero goal by 2030; that is, to be in a position in which we are not emitting more greenhouse gases, primarily CO<sub>2</sub>, than we are removing from the atmosphere. This can be achieved by reducing emissions as much as possible and offsetting the amount that remains. It involves property management, indeed our buildings are at the centre of our response, but it is inherently a missional concept: it's about God's creation, acknowledging that God remains party to it, and we inhabit it and impact upon it. Recognising that climate change disproportionately affects those who have done least to cause it and who have least ability to resist the impacts of it, the imperative is with those of us who have the resources to do what we can: to reduce consumption of fossil fuels, use less energy, maintain our buildings in good repair. It is hoped that we as a District can support our churches further in our response to this challenge.

### **Online Consents**

The website is having a make-over! As yet we do not know the details, but as we are all required to use it on occasion do contact me for support whether you've never ventured onto it before, or are experienced in its use but confused by the changes.

Please do continue to use the platform for your property projects. It is an essential tool provided for managing trustees to obtain the support they need in looking after Methodist Church property. And thank you to those 20 churches and Circuits which have obtained consent through the system in the last six months – see the listing on the agenda for details.

## Letting of houses – The Renters’ Rights Bill

Many Circuits are letting houses which are not currently required to be used as manses. The Renters Rights Bill is expected to be passed into law this year, and it will change the way we let houses and the way in which we can regain possession of them when required for a minister or for sale. TMCP are ‘on the case’, and have provided helpful guidance at [Renters’ Rights Bill – What you need to know as a Managing Trustee Landlord – Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes](#). I will be tracking developments and the advice issued by TMCP and the Property Support Team, so please be in touch if you have any questions or queries.

## Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme – User survey

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is consulting with those responsible for the care of listed places of worship as part of an evaluation of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which secures a rebate of the VAT paid on maintenance and improvement works.

If your church is listed you may wish to share your views on the value of the Scheme and help to improve it, and possibly secure its continued availability. The form to complete is at

[harlowconsulting.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/listedplacesofworshipgrantscheme?utm\\_source=MethodistChurchHouse&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=14909571\\_PropertyMattersNewsFlashMarch2025&dm\\_t=0.0.0.0](https://harlowconsulting.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/listedplacesofworshipgrantscheme?utm_source=MethodistChurchHouse&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=14909571_PropertyMattersNewsFlashMarch2025&dm_t=0.0.0.0)

Finally, do get in touch! I am available to answer questions and find support for your work with the Church’s properties.

Peter Frank, Property Secretary, email [resources@bhbcircuit.org.uk](mailto:resources@bhbcircuit.org.uk)

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## PROPERTY - MANSES

Henry Stroud

It is perhaps obvious that our ministers will be all the more effective and content if they and their families are living in comfortable houses that meet their domestic requirements and are well placed in relation to the churches served. As for all Methodist property each manse should be subject to a quinquennial inspection every 5 years to affirm its structural integrity. But a home is more than a building. It is the job of the District Manses Committee to ensure that each manse is indeed a good place to live and a good base for local ministry. So more than anything its work has a pastoral bias.

We have a small team of manse visitors. I would like to record our appreciation for the time and care that they give in visiting manses and producing useful reports. In 2024 they completed 6 visits. The reports have been sent to the circuits involved with a summary of the salient points which need attention.

It is good to note that most of the manses we see are in good order and the circuits take care to maintain and improve them steadily. We note our appreciation of the circuit stewards who fit this into their busy schedules.

At the moment we have 41 occupied manses and another 30 or so other houses which are rented out. As circuit boundaries change and other reorganisations within the circuits are instigated, we have seen a steady demand for manses to be replaced by more modern properties in different locations. This is no easy task. Modern houses are energy efficient but often the open-planned layout is not suitable if ministers need to have meetings in the manse. Finding property with good disabled access is also a challenge, and surprisingly some new houses are particularly poor in this regard.

Manse logbooks seem to be less common as there is a reliance on computer-based records. When visiting we often cannot see evidence of security alarm, electrical or, most importantly, gas inspections – we would urge circuits to ensure that paper copies of these inspections are present in each manse. We would also ask circuits to check insulation as still some manses do not meet the connexional rating of ‘C’.

In 2025 we are planning to visit up to 10 manses.

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. I would also remind circuit stewards that the committee must be consulted when the purchase of a new manse is being considered so that we can advise about the suitability of the property before the process proceeds too far.

## PROPERTY AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

Revd Bryan Coates

In our new existence as one combined group, we continue to process the Applications for Grants under the two headings of Property and Personnel. As at March 2025 these are the Grants that we have approved so far in the current Connexional year.

### Property

26/2	Alresford	Urgent Boiler replacement	£3,000
26/4	Christchurch, Woodley	Roof renewal	£3,000
26/4	Oakridge	Doors and Railings	£3,000
26/7	Bedhampton	North Doors	£1,359
		South Doors	£1,050
		Sanctuary Doors	£6,550
26/7	Drayton	Lighting upgrade	£55
		Water ingress	£495
26/7	Fareham	AV equipment	£1,000
		PV Panels	£2,975
		Green Roof	£1,800
26/11	Freshwater	Gutters, Fascias etc	£1,500
		Telephone link to Lift	£528
26/11	Wroxall	Booster Heater	£490
26/11	Newport	Urgent Roof repairs	£3,075
		Urgent Gas repairs	£3,168
26/11	Sandown	Door replacement	£600

The payment of these property grants is made as we receive confirmation that the work has started.

Some Grants agreed during the last Connexional year (not listed above) have been paid this year.

There are a number of Property Grant requests pending, including some that have already been entered on the Property Consents Site, but for which we have yet to receive the formal Grant Application.

### Mission Personnel – both new and continuing Grants that have been made so far this year:

26/1	Southampton University Chaplaincy- ongoing	£6,000	Reduced amount
26/2	Romsey Families Pastor -2 <sup>nd</sup> year of 3	£5,000	
26/4	Wesley, Reading, Youth Worker - <b>New Appointment</b>	£10,000	
26/7	Haslemere Café Outreach Worker - <b>New Post</b>	£5,000	
26/9	Bournemouth Café Administrator – <b>New Appointment</b>	£10,000	
26/11	SWAY Isle of Wight Youth Project – ongoing	£5,000	
26/12	Amesbury Community Hub Administrator – <b>New Post</b>	£2,833	
26/12	Bemerton Outreach Worker – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of 3	£6,000	
26/12	Salisbury Outreach and Families Worker -2 <sup>nd</sup> year of 3	£6,000	

Last year we agreed a Grant for an Outreach Worker for Tisbury but this appointment was not filled.

The continuing Grants are made subject to the receipt, and circulation to the members of the Group, of a Report on the work. As the District, we are greatly indebted to the wise assessment of the Grant applications that are made – and quickly turned round, by the members of the Property and Grants Group.

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Psalm 82 seems to be particularly relevant at this time:

- <sup>1</sup> God presides in the great assembly; he renders judgment among the “gods”:*
- <sup>2</sup> “How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?*
- <sup>3</sup> Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.*
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*



The year – particularly the last few months - have seen safeguarding and church safeguarding in particular have a **high profile in the media**.

As we are aware the Church of England have had a particularly difficult time. As I write they are still working out how to implement a new structure to improve their delivery of safeguarding. We are also aware of at least 10 members of clergy facing discipline following the Makin report – some who may be known to some of us as they are/were based in our District. The issues which led to the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the calls for the resignation of the Archbishop of York have had an impact on safeguarding practice in the Methodist Church.

In the Methodist Church we are also implementing the **new structure** for safeguarding as approved by Conference. Work is in hand to move forward with the TUPE process with the expectation all DSO's will be employed by Connexion by September 2025. We have been assured that this will not make a difference to delivery in Districts but is rather about seeking consistency of practice amongst DSOs. There is still a lot of work to be done on this.

We now have **Circuit Safeguarding Officers** in all Circuits. I am grateful to those who have been in post for a long time and have a wealth of knowledge and experience, to those who are new and have agreed to take on this vital role and to those who felt it time to 'retire' for all you have done to help make our District a safer space. If you haven't had the opportunity to meet your Circuit Safeguarding Officer yet, please do find the time. And please do pray for them in their ministry.

**Referrals** continue to be at a higher level. In a number of cases this is as a result of people being concerned they could be 'found lacking' in terms of reporting or ensuring things had been dealt with.



Whilst there is a mix of in person and online **training** provision across the District it appears many people prefer in person delivery. We offered further livestreamed training and will continue with this to enable people to meet together in small groups at local venues for the training. We are also working with the South East District to offer 'flexible' delivery options. All these are on the District website. We are increasingly adding to our pool of trainers which will increase provision.

Connexion continue to closely monitor **Minister DBS renewals**. We remain in a strong position with DBS renewals - those overdue being primarily for pastoral reasons. The turn-around time is still running at least 2 months and often more. We are in a good position with **Minister training** but there remain some ministers who have not renewed training and are significantly overdue.

Connexion have clarified the process we need to follow with ministers who do not renew DBS/training in a timely manner. Ministers who refuse to complete their DBS renewal and/or training in a timely manner when asked will have to step back from any front-line duties until such time as they undertake the training and the DBS process is completed. The option for suspension remains available. **Please note – this is the Connexion Policy not the decision of the District.**

From time to time there are **particular individual circumstances**, e.g. serious illness, or caring responsibilities and if this is the case the individual should discuss this with the DSO/District Chair and we can see how we might best respond pastorally. The eligibility for **Exemptions** has also been clarified. An Exemption is only for those unable to continue in pastoral/preaching ministry. The more difficult situation is where a minister **does not wish** to continue in active ministry – for a number of reasons. Connexion will no longer accept an Exemption for anything but **being unable to engage in active preaching/pastoral ministry**. We are advised that Ministers who do not qualify for an Exemption and do not wish to continue in ministry must either complete the DBS/training or resign their minister status.

**MyConcern** – record management system continues to be implemented. With the move to DSOs employed by Connexion the migration of historic data will now be managed by Connexion.

We continue to run **Safeguarding webinars** with the LN and Regional colleagues. Connexion also run webinars which are open to all. Recordings of all the webinars and Connexion webinars are available. These are relevant and open to all in our churches.

This year **Safeguarding Sunday** is 16 November 2025 – we encourage you to begin thinking of ways you may be able to mark this. We talk about Safeguarding being ‘**everyone’s responsibility**’ – this is one way of raising the profile and issues. We hope to again have a local video for churches to show. Please do consider doing something for this year.



We encourage churches and circuits to consider what safeguarding information is available on their **websites**. A quick survey has indicated a considerable variety of things on Circuit/Church websites relating to safeguarding. We are waiting for more specific guidance. In the meantime suggested minimum content:

- Copy of most recent Circuit Safeguarding Policy
- Training dates – both Circuit based and online
- Contact details of Circuit and District Safeguarding Officer

Of course, any other material may be included as you wish. The same should be considered by Churches.

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## STATIONING REPORT

**Liz Ward**

Having just finished (hopefully) a rather protracted stationing process it seems appropriate to update Synod on who is coming/going and to where:

There were 4 requests for re-invitation, all of which were agreed.

Rev Helen Harrell is joining Dorset South & West.

Rev Gillian Le Boutillier-Scott is joining Poole Bay.

Rev Susan Baker-Maher and Rev Mark Kimber are joining Chirstchurch & Wimborne.

Rev Jane Craske is joining the Isle of Wight (Superintendent).

Rev Dorothy Pipet (Probationer) and Dcn Selena Nesbitt are joining Salisbury.

Rev Rachael Hawkins is joining Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey.

Rev Ruth Fry is stationed to Redditch & Bromsgrove.

Rev Tony Cavanagh is stationed to Dorking & Horsham.

Deacon Suzie Viana is stationed to Purley.

We pray for all the Ministers who are moving and their families, and trust that their time in their current circuits is fruitful and that moves go smoothly.

Unfortunately there were fewer Deacons than appointments and so we were unable to fill all of the requested appointments.

I should like to say a huge thank you to all those involved in the process, Ministers and Circuit Stewards who spent hours on writing and refining profiles and to Rachel who worked through August to get to know people, while at the same time dealing with a Lay Stationing Rep who was learning on the job.

Soon it starts all over again as in May we shall have the two training days, followed by discussions with Ministers and Circuits. Early preparation is helpful in this process, so I encourage Circuits to obtain details of the Manse and a general guide to the Circuit as soon as possible so that they can then concentrate on the finer detail of the appointment(s) and the needs of the Circuit during the summer.

## **SUPERNUMERARY GIFTS AND NEEDS GROUP**

**Revd Stephen Maunder**

The group's focus is upon the lives and ministry of supernumeraries. To this end, the ways in which the gifts of supernumeraries can be best-used, and the needs that supernumeraries have, provide the main agenda items for meetings.

Over the past few years, the group has been active in areas such as engaging in discussion with the Connexion over the retirement course; encouraging Circuits in their use and appreciation of the ministry of supernumeraries; considering the possibility of offering gatherings for supernumeraries to enable discussion to take place on areas of mutual concern.

In relation to the last of these, the views of supernumerary colleagues across the District on the desirability of such gatherings have been sought, and responses will be discussed at the next Group meeting.

Unfortunately representation from the Circuits has decreased in recent years as some long-standing members are no longer able to serve. We would therefore value being able to expand the group's membership, and a request to this end has been made of District colleagues.

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## **WORSHIP LEADING AND PREACHING EXPLORE WEEKEND**

**Revd Mark Cheetham**

This is a District event, offered at Salisbury Methodist Church, on 27-28<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Advertising should be available shortly but do please spread the word.

The newly launched WLP Explore Weekends recognise that group learning is ideally at the heart of the Worship: Leading & Preaching course, but that many now find themselves working one-to-one with their tutors without the benefit of sharing in group conversation with other students, while also noting the end of the WLP Summer Schools held at Cliff College. Explore Online sessions, run quarterly on Zoom, have become a partial replacement, allowing students to complete the three Explore sessions for a module in a weekend, four modules in a year. Online sessions however do not suit all learners, and discussions around the Connexion have suggested an appetite for weekend in-person events, hosted by circuits and districts around the Connexion.

The Key Benefits include:

**For WLP students:** To provide an immersive, intensive opportunity to do the Explore sessions in person for a single WLP module. This will be provided in an accessible and affordable way, with students attending Saturday and Sunday sessions.

**For existing Local Preachers & Worship Leaders and those considering getting involved:** To provide an opportunity for ongoing learning through a one-day programme on the Saturday of each Explore Weekend. The programme is tailored for experienced practitioners, but with new or prospective participants in worship leading in mind.

The September Explore Weekend will focus on **modules 3 and 7**; these are 'encountering God in daily life and 'understanding our story'. There will also be contributions from invited speakers.

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## WORLD CHURCH

### Report on my time (January 2025) in Zambia for the District

Revd Rosemary Fletcher

It was a privilege to be in Zambia representing the Southampton District of the Methodist Church and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church, who largely financed the whole visit. I was there to further our link with the Lusaka Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia and the URC Link with the UCZ University. The District gave me £100 which was spent on Prayer Manuals.

I preached in 4 different churches on the 4 Sundays I was there - once in Mindolo UCZ (Caversham Heights Methodist Church were linked with this church for many years from 1998 onwards) and the other 3 Sundays I preached in different churches in Lusaka. I had many meetings during my time there, which included one at the UCZ University to reflect on the current state of the Link, with Bishop Lordwell Siame (Lusaka Presbytery Bishop), with Lusaka Presbytery Link Committee, and with the clergy and lay leaders of each of the churches. I met with the Synod Bishop (Festus Bwembya Chulu) and the General Secretary (Chipasha Musaba).

There were many informal meetings, such as with a group of inisters I had taught in 2000. One of the churches (St Johns Mtendere) I visited is linked with Salisbury and Bemerton Methodist Churches and Salisbury URC. At St Andrew's UCZ in Lusaka I met with the Boys and Girls Brigades and their leaders, to further the link with Woking BB and Amesbury GB. The picture below shows me with Bishop Lordwell and Whiteson Chenge (my opposite number in Lusaka)



*Some of the Girls Brigade Leaders from St Andrew's UCZ Lusaka*

I attended the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church of Zambia at Mindolo, where the UCZ began on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1965. Mindolo have been building a new church for some time, and it seats 2000. In the past, Caversham Heights Methodist Church had donated a lot of money for the new Church building. Even so, lots of people were sitting outside with live screens. Having been present at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service, I thought I knew what to expect but this years' service was even longer (over 6 hours). The celebrations begun with a procession from a local shopping mall. The sermon was preached by the President Designate of the Methodist Church, the Reverend Dr Richard Andrew.

My visit overlapped with the official visit of the Connexional reps – Richard and his wife Debbie and the Reverend Dr Andrew Ashdown (Partnership Coordinator for Africa). I also visited 3 UCZ Boarding Schools at Chipembi, Njase and Nambala.



In the Njsae chapel there are pictures of Gospel stories which date back to the 1960s and show people with Zambian characteristics. At the time this was innovative.

I visited several projects, two in Kitwe for orphaned and vulnerable children. I visited Racecourse Community School which Caversham Heights Methodist Church supported from 2001-2023. I visited former Methodist Mission Partner, Jenny Featherstone who has retired in Zambia. She has started a programme like Alcoholics Anonymous in Choma, and a project called *Happy Planet* which makes brickettes for cooking out of biomass, instead of charcoal, as deforestation is a big issue.

There was rejoicing that rains had come at last after several years of drought. but the Kariba Dam is still too empty and there are many power cuts.



Although Zambia became an independent nation in 1964, multi-party democracy was not instituted until 1991 and, being a new participatory democracy, they do not take it for granted, and there was a general interest and desire to talk politics. There was great dismay and upset when USAID withdrew funding on projects, e.g. Anti-Retroviral Drugs, as these are prescribed free at birth for babies born HIV positive and were being provided by USAID. I met Zambians who had lost their jobs in development work due to the USA decision.

For information, the Baptist organisation *Tools with a Mission* supports Zambia, and I met a Deaconess whose project benefitted from goods received from them. So, this is one idea for churches wanting to support Zambia. <https://www.twam.uk/>

And, if you were not able to attend the service at Salisbury Methodist Church on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025, celebrating Zambia's 60 years of Independence and 60 years of the UCZ and if you want to learn more about Zambia, then please go to the Salisbury Methodist Church website to share in the Service <https://youtu.be/flFjt9KT7p0>

What else could we do?

If your church is interested in twinning, please do get in touch with me: [rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk](mailto:rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk)  
The agreed criteria for links are people, prayer, perceptions, so please don't think they are all about money.

If anyone is interested in having a talk or a World Church Service on my time in Zambia then please do get in touch.

The UCZ University has set up the Peggy Hiscock fund which supports those who have a discerned vocation for ministry but cannot afford to train. Maybe the District could send a grant in memory of Peggy?  
Thank you to all who supported this visit and to all those who made it possible.

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### **ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

At Action for Children, we're driven by love to take action to change the childhoods of those who need help to thrive. We would like to thank you for being a huge part of making this happen throughout 2024/25 financial year. Churches and supporter groups worked so hard raising over £590,000. Funds raised over Christmas are still pouring in! Your generosity – individually and collectively, gives hope and practical support to thousands of families.

#### **Paying the Price campaign launched**

On 19 March, we launched a new campaign highlighting the urgent need for the government's child poverty strategy to meet the challenges facing families. Children across the UK are paying the price of poverty but we are campaigning to change that. The government has promised to lift children out of poverty with a new plan that it is publishing soon. Change is possible - but it will require real investment and a commitment from the government to do what is right. Please join our campaign. We have only got a short time to get our message to government, before it publishes its plan. By taking action today, you can help ensure more children's lives are not defined by poverty.

Please sign our open letter and share it with others: <https://actionforchildren.uk/PayingThePriceSynod>

#### **Methodist President and Vice President visit Action for Children**

We were delighted to welcome the Methodist Conference President and Vice President to our services. It was a pleasure to show them the impact of your support and express our appreciation to the church.

In January, Vice President Carolyn Godfrey took part in a Roots of Empathy session at Merrylee Primary School in Glasgow. She saw first-hand how this programme helps build caring and compassionate people by helping children learn about their emotions and behaviour supported by a baby teacher. President, The Revd Helen Cameron visited Edinburgh Disability Services in February. She talked to staff about how the service supports children with learning disabilities and their families. During a tour, she saw our facilities, such as a sensory room and gardens that support children with their development.

We are grateful for their prayers and keen interest in our work.

#### **Action for Children Scotland celebrates Investors in Young People Platinum Award**

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that Action for Children Scotland has retained the prestigious Investors in Young People Platinum Award!

The Investors in Young People (IYP) report states: "Your passion and commitment to provide young staff with an employment opportunity, especially young people who may face barriers to work, is inspiring, and sets you apart as an ambassador to develop Scotland's young workforce ... You care about your young people, and we know you're ambitious to do even more for them."

This proud achievement follows IYP Gold Awards in 2015 and 2019, and Platinum in 2022.

#### **Royal Patron visit**

Our Patron, the Princess of Wales, visited our Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) at HMP Styal in February. She met staff and service users, shining a light on the important work that ensures babies get the best chance to thrive in a supportive environment. She also spent time with some mums and babies to understand the importance of the service, which is very much aligned to her emphasis on early years development.

#### **Count Your Blessings during Lent**

Thanks to everyone who got involved in 'Count Your Blessings', learning about how we support children in care. If you are reading this after Lent, I urge you to still download our calendar to hear young people telling their inspiring stories in the videos and articles. I hope hearing how you make a difference encourages you.

#### **Child poverty report and campaign launch, 19 March**

The government's forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform child poverty in the UK. We are launching a new campaign, Paying the Price, which aims to influence the strategy, ahead of its launch. Details will be on our website soon.

## Celebrating Action for Children Sunday, 13 July

We love hearing about different fundraising activities throughout the year, but Action for Children Sunday is extra special. It is a celebration of our strong partnership with the Methodist Church and affiliated churches. It is also a time to reflect on the issues that affect children and families, pray and take action.

This year, we invite you to explore the theme 'Driven by love, we take action for children'. Worship outlines for adult and children's services will be available to download in April from [www.actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR).

Traditionally, churches have held their special service on the second Sunday in July, close to our birthday, 9 July. However, some choose another Sunday if that is more convenient.

We have noticed that after the pandemic, fewer churches indicate that they are holding an Action for Children Sunday service. And we would like your feedback on how we can support your plans and ways we could improve worship resources.

Do reach out to your Regional Fundraising Executive too for advice and support here: [actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser](http://actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser)

## Christian foster carers needed

We urgently need more foster carers in the UK, particularly from faith communities. We are calling on people with an open heart and a spare room to consider fostering and to help spread the word.

Children in care can struggle with their identity. So, it is important to support them to feel confident in their identity, culture, and beliefs by matching them with carers who share similar values, wherever we can.

We know that faith can provide structure, stability, and a supportive community for these vulnerable young people, many of whom have experienced trauma.

Find out more:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/fostering/why-choose-us/faith-in-fostering/>

Could you display our poster in your churches?

[https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/AfC\\_FIF\\_A4Poster.pdf](https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/AfC_FIF_A4Poster.pdf)

## Honouring our Heritage

Our Honouring our Heritage campaign is coming back for its second year - mark your calendars for June. Help us celebrate Action for Children's heritage and the incredible support you give that enables us to transform the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families in the UK. You can read last year's bible and prayer reflections here: [actionforchildren.org.uk/heritage](http://actionforchildren.org.uk/heritage) (scroll down the page).

## Keeping you up to date

Despite having a smaller fundraising team and fewer church visits post-pandemic, we aim to keep supporters updated on how their contributions are making a difference. Here are some of the ways to stay informed:

- – Sign up to our newsletter: <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/sign-up-to-our-newsletter/>
- – Sign up to join Faith Space, our online forum: <https://forms.office.com/e/y2701CkN5e> You only need to sign up once.
- – Watch out for news in your District newsletters and Methodist news.




Be our guest at our events at the Methodist Women in Britain Residential (April), the Methodist Conference (June) and 3Generate (October). I really enjoy meeting you in person and hearing about the inspirational things your churches are doing. So, sign up and come to say hello.

You can also email me with your stories and photos so I can share with our wider church community. Thank you. I wish you an enjoyable time at Synod.

Blessings,



Contacting us

- Your local fundraiser: [actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser](http://actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser)
- Supporter care: 0300 123 2112 (open 9am-5 pm, Monday-Friday) or [ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk)
- Connect with us on social media:  @actnforchildren  /actionforchildren  actionforchildrenUK

### Safe and happy childhood

Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

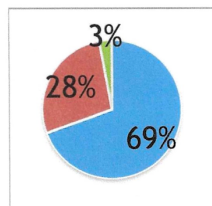
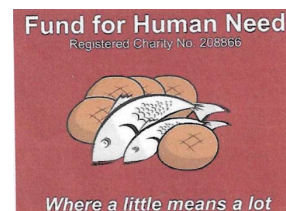


## FUND FOR HUMAN NEED

1960 - 2025

Sixty-five years ago the Revd Donald McNeill and others set up the Fund for Human Need, "to relieve and remove hunger and poverty in all parts of the world." Since the 1990's the Fund has concentrated on the needs of destitute and desperate people throughout the UK, making one-off payments to tide them over a difficult time in their lives, offering not only money but also love and hope. FHN is privileged to provide this service in the name of the Methodist Church.

Patron: The Rt Hon. Lord Boateng



### Thanks

The trustees express thanks to all who have contributed to the Fund in the past connexional year. Personal donations, many by standing order of £70,225 (69%) and church gifts of almost £28,000 (28%) have been used to give vital support to over 1,500 people, including 473 children.

### Emergency payments

If you know of someone in need, please note that priority is given to those who are destitute, are particularly vulnerable, and where an amount of between £100 and £130 will make a real difference.

Most applications are made through charities, NHS trusts, Citizens Advice offices, local authorities and churches acting on behalf of individuals or families to pay for food, bedding, warm clothing or other essentials. Many of those will have experienced medical or mental health issues, domestic violence or be waiting several weeks before receiving benefit payments. 99.6% of all grants are paid now by bank transfer to the applying organisation or individual, providing a faster response to people who are desperate.

### Ways to help

Are you able to consider making a standing order?

Could your church or circuit have a special fundraising event?

### Further information

In 2025 look out for us at

- the Methodist Women in Britain Annual Conference, Swanwick, 4 - 6 April
- the Methodist Conference, Telford 26 June - 2 July
- Greenbelt, Kettering, 21 - 24 August

The FHN Newsletter, with stories of how our grants have helped, is sent three times a year by email or post. Contact the administrator to request a copy.

Many districts now have a FHN Friend who can supply you with further information and may be available to speak at your church. Go to the FHN website to access recent years' Annual Report and Accounts.

See our adverts in the Methodist Diary (p 21) and Minutes of the Conference (p 40).

For further information contact: Mrs G. Mason (Administrator) Phone 07561 717230

email [fundhumanneed@gmail.com](mailto:fundhumanneed@gmail.com) website: <https://fundforhumanneed.org.uk>



## NATIONAL RIDE AND STRIDE DAY Saturday 13<sup>TH</sup> September 2025

Revd Rosemary Fletcher

There is a myth that this is just an event for Anglican churches, but it is open to churches of all denominations. I have been taking part for nearly 35 years in various counties (at some times Synods took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September so this prevented my getting on a bike).

**What could be better than getting on your bike, mobility scooter, horse, or lacing up your boots, walking shoes or running shoes, to explore historic churches on a sunny September Saturday?**

Ride + Stride for churches is a sponsored bike ride or walk between churches, exploring and enjoying the countryside from Cornwall to Northumberland. It takes place on the second Saturday in September every year. This weekend is also part of Heritage Open Days, so thousands of churches are open to visit across England. Supported by The National Churches Trust and run by churches trusts across the UK, Ride + Stride raises well over £1million every year. The money raised helps to repair churches, chapels and meeting houses throughout the UK. It is the single largest source of income for many historic churches trusts and enables them to give hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants to churches across the country. The funds you raise are divided between your local trust and your chosen church or chapel. So, it is a fund raiser for your worshipping community too and also if you ever want a grant from your own counties trust, then it is good if you have taken part by opening up on the day and/or members cycling, walking or riding!

Some churches use it locally to take their children from their Junior Churches around their local town and introduce them to churches of other denominations.

It puts your church on the map a bit more, and some churches whilst opening up for visitors also use it as a day to do odd jobs or cleaning, thereby utilising the day positively, and some churches use it as a day to open up their buildings for a heritage open day. There are lots of possibilities.

If you want more information do contact your local organiser:

Berkshire <https://www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk>

Dorset <https://www.dhct.org.uk/m/index>

Hampshire and the Islands <https://hihct.org.uk/>

Wiltshire <https://www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk/>

Or you can contact me, The Reverend Rosemary Fletcher: [rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk](mailto:rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk)

Below is a picture of James and myself outside Amesbury Methodist Church last September. We raised £700 in 2023 and £500 in 2024. Half of which went to Amesbury MC and half to Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, to enable them to give out grants. Also attached is a picture of Bourne Valley Methodist Church who opened for the first time in 2024 and had a very enjoyable day. The banner outside their church was made by members of their Junior Church and they will be able to use it in future years.

