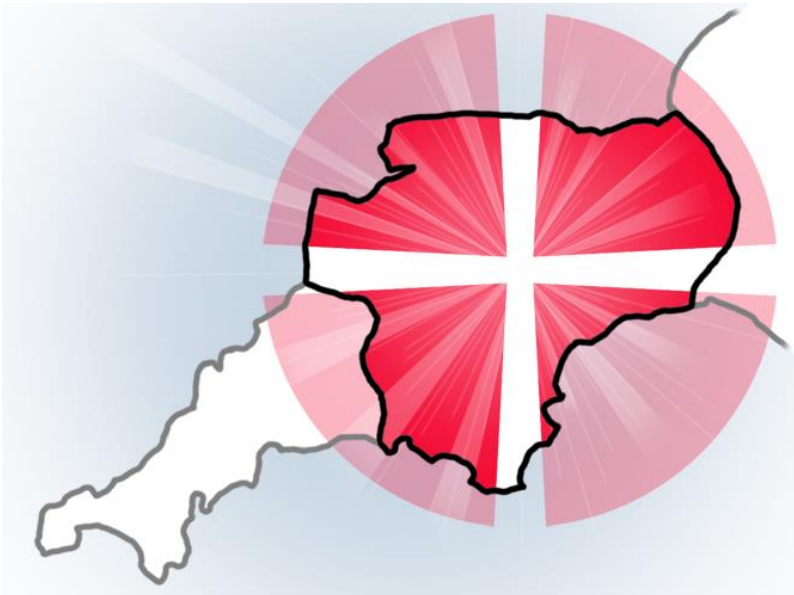


THE METHODIST CHURCH

THE PLYMOUTH AND EXETER
DISTRICT

Annual Reports
Spring 2017



Annual Reports - Contents

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REPORTS

SIMPLY REPORT (17)

Simply is a joint District/National VentureFX project developing a network of small expressions of faith and church across the district and region. The VentureFX Pioneer Leader, Steve Jones, began the process part-time in 2012 but started full-time in 2014 after a period of serious illness.

Since the last synod, Steve has further developed social enterprises in order to help finance the project beyond its proposed funding end in 2022 (Exeter Pound, Rustic Ragamuffin – a Homeless/Mental Health Enterprise, Stir to Action – developing Co-operatives and Social Enterprise for Young People). He has also gathered some leaders of hubs in Exeter and has helped to start a hub among families, meeting in a large home on a Sunday morning for food, chat, creative arts and prayer. He continues to train as a local preacher in the Exeter Coast & Country circuit and has also been involved in encouraging pioneering individuals or churches in Cranbrook, Torbay, Bude, Holsworthy, Halwill Junction and Taunton.

But after nearly 2 years of evaluation processes, the DPC has now decided to curtail the project and end the funding and is making Steve redundant from September 1st 2017 (the national funding stops if the local District funding does). The Simply Steering Group are looking to support Steve through this process and to explore ways to possibly develop Simply as an ecumenical and voluntary project with Steve self-funding bi-vocationally (or what some people call ‘tent-making’) – this may prove a ‘bridge too far’ and the District would then need to close the formal project. Steve is also using these last few months to find ways to share the learning with the District and Connexion including writing a chapter for a new book on pioneering in a Methodist context.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Governance

The Methodist Conference 2017 approved the change in frequency of Creating Safer Space Foundation and Leadership Modules training to every four years with effect from July 2017.

In addition, the Conference directed the Methodist Council to oversee work on the practical and financial implications of increasing the minimum required number of hours worked by District Safeguarding Officers and to bring clear recommendations to the 2017 Conference. Furthermore, the conference directed that costings for achieving professional supervision for all District Safeguarding Officers be part of the 2017/18 budget preparation.

Tim Carter national safeguarding adviser for the Methodist church will be attending the district network day on 03/03/17.

President's Safeguarding Inquiry 2011

The Independent District Safeguarding Chair has been working on several documents which recognise the role and responsibilities of some key safeguarding positions in the district. This was identified by the President's Safeguarding Inquiry 2011. This work is now strongly linked to a number of projects within connexion safeguarding. As a result, this year will see us actively recruit new members to the District safeguarding team.

Past Case Review.

Courage, Cost and Hope, the report of the Past Cases Review was received by the 2015 Methodist Conference. Recommendation 9 stated "That until the Methodist Church has robust accountability processes in place and fully operational, an annual independent audit of progress on these culture change recommendations and in particular on the mainstreaming of safeguarding awareness be carried out; and that a framework for the audits and proposals on who should carry them out be agreed by the Methodist Council in October 2015."

The District Safeguarding Officer submitted the district audit as requested.

The learning arising from the Ten Themes (Past Case Review) needs further dissemination and embedding across the district and the District

Safeguarding Officer is in discussion with the District Chair and Independent Safeguarding Chair about what this will look like. There are plans in place to deliver some thoughts on this to the District Policy Committee February 2017 and the District Network Day March 2017.

The full report “An audit of the implementation of the Past Cases Review Report” can be accessed through this link.

<http://methodist.org.uk/media/2481887/counc-MC17-16-An%20audit%20of%20PCRI-january-2017.pdf>

Work of the District Safeguarding Team

The Independent Chair of the District Safeguarding Team, as previously mentioned, continues working hard to fully support the recommendations from the President’s Inquiry (Safeguarding) 2011. As a district, we were one of the first to have a District Safeguarding Team. We are now in the process of reviewing the purpose, role and responsibilities of this group to ensure the team continue to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults.

Key features of the group as identified in the report are that its business is managed in an effective manner and it has a representative membership of ordained and lay people across the district including people with experience and/or professional background in safeguarding. Work is currently in progress with the District Safeguarding Team to develop a strategy through the definition of core objectives, and the associated actions to progress them.

Case work workload

The Safeguarding Policy requires the District Safeguarding Officer to be the focal point of contact for advice and making referrals on all safeguarding matters and to be informed of a disclosure or concern about abuse. The District Safeguarding Officer must be told of all safeguarding issues, be fully involved and oversee all situations of concern including the establishment and review of all Covenants of Care. Disappointingly there are still wide inconsistencies of reporting and recording of incidents to the District Safeguarding Officer across the district. There is some good news; some circuits are working well. This means they regularly report incidents which involve statutory services. However, many circuits still handle the incidents alone. Some will report after dealing with the situation. This can result in a level of work which is reactive rather than

proactive and places unnecessary additional workload on the District Safeguarding Officer.

Blemished DBS work still means a number of internal risk assessments and the review of these. These have been completed by the District Safeguarding Officer.

The Past Case Review recommended that a working party be set up to review Covenants of Care, for those who are considered to be a safeguarding risk. This national working group have looked at a more formalised process for independent risk assessment of known and alleged offenders. Maintenance of records of all those subject to Contracts or Agreements is key to ensure that consistent regular reporting and monitoring approaches can be achieved. Providing training for members of Monitoring and Support Groups to ensure they are suitably prepared and enabled to carry out their role is of significant importance to the District Safeguarding Team. Implementing a process whereby all Contracts and Agreements are reviewed at least annually and consideration given to a new risk assessment every three years. This will increase the level of district work over the next few years while new measures are implemented.

There have been some commissioned, risk assessments from connexion safeguarding. All risk assessments have been assessed by connexion and recommendations made by the connexion safeguarding panel. These are expected to be implemented locally by the district.

Good practice suggests that two meetings are organised annually to provide support and information on safeguarding issues to Superintendents, Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers. Discussion is underway as a district safeguarding team as to how this will be implemented.

National Safeguarding Conference

The Annual Methodist Safeguarding Conference this year encouraged reflection on the churches' response to survivors and to become clearer about where the Church must be headed in the future. This has had the impact of encouraging those that attended to think more widely about the role of the church and its responsibility to survivor. It is likely that this will increasingly impact on safeguarding work in the future.

In Summary

This is no doubt the President's Safeguarding Inquiry 2011 and the Past Case Review report have, and are having an important impact on safeguarding Nationally, at District and at local Church levels. This will require strong leadership decisions and more robust safeguarding at all levels. As a result, there is likely to be both practical and financial implications regarding future work and the role. In addition, the eventual recommendations of the working party looking at Covenants of Care will continue to impact at District level and is likely to again have an impact practically and financially across the District and Circuits. The District Safeguarding Team continues to review cultural change across the District and the impact.

The Courage, Cost and Hope report continues to push forward its recommendations and regular audits will be in place until the Methodist Church has robust accountability processes in place.

The Independent Chair of the District Safeguarding Team is continuing the work reviewing the purpose, role and responsibilities of this group to ensure the team continue to focus on safeguarding work with children and vulnerable adults. There will be active safe recruitment to the team this year.

Important work is needed to raise the profile of appropriate reporting and referrals to the District Safeguarding Officer.

The District Safeguarding Team is presently looking at the implications of meeting with Superintendents, Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers to provide support and information on safeguarding issues.

Reflecting on the churches' response to survivors at National Safeguarding Conference was difficult for those who attended. However, it's important we understand there will be an impact on us at District and Circuit levels as we recognise and understand what resources we have locally to support all God's children to attend worship safely and appropriately.

Thank you for your ongoing support of safeguarding matters.

DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE

Since the last written report to the spring Synod 2016, the Committee has held two additional meetings in addition to its three normal meetings (evenings in October and July and all-day in February). In July an additional meeting was held to discuss the Venture FX 'Simply' project, while in December an all-day 'Strategy' meeting was held to discuss the implementation of the District Policy agreed by Synod at its Spring meeting 2016.

The Strategy meeting identified a number of next steps which needed to be taken to effect the Synod's intentions as set out in its Policy document. These were primarily a group devoted to 'Making New Disciples' and two groups devoted to 'Facilitating Ministry.' Further groups necessary to carry forward the policy are also being set up by the Policy Committee including a 'Structures' group. These groups are expected to bring forward their recommendation in the next six to twelve months.

The Policy Committee has given much time in successive meetings to considering the work of the Venture FX 'Simply' project. This has included consultation with the Management Group Chair, Rev Dave Martin. At its February meeting the Committee reluctantly concluded that, with other pressures on District resources, it would not be right to continue support of the project and it unanimously agreed to cease funding 'Simply.'

The Policy Committee recommends to Synod for approval:

- 1. The budget and circuit assessments for 2017-2018.**
- 2. The transfer of six churches (Totnes, Buckfastleigh, South Brent, Buckfast and Scoriton) from the South Devon Circuit to the Teignbridge Circuit.**
- 3. The appointment of Rev Stuart Innals (South Molton & Ringsash) as Deputy Chair from September 2017.**
- 4. The proposal for the Administration of Synod to be handled electronically (as set out in the circulated paper)**
- 5. The Model Constitution for the Covenanted partnership of Pawlett Methodist Congregation (Taunton Deane & South Sedgemoor Circuit) and Pawlett Anglican congregation.**

6. The Constitution and Schedule for the Fairplace Church (Okehampton, West Devon Circuit) Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership (Methodist/URC)

During the year the Policy Committee has

- Appointed Mary-Ann Martin to the post of part-time District Support Officer, Mary-Ann works from home but is in the District office at least one day each week.
- Approved as District Trustees the annual Report of the Trustees including the accounts.
- Increased the hours of the Evangelism Enabler, Jo Simpson, to full-time..
- Kept under review the possibilities in the major developments in the District: - Cranbrook where further funding may be necessary for the second five year period, Sherford and now Hinckley Point.
- Approved the closure of Flexbury Church (Bude & Holsworthy Circuit) and Axminster Church (Exeter Coast & Country Circuit). Note the Axminster congregation is worshipping in other accommodation. (Closure of Broadley and Beaford Churches in the West Devon Circuit were reported to the autumn Synod.)
- Reviewed and agreed to support the Agricultural Chaplaincy.
- Set up a Review of the South-west of the District. The review has examined the position of the South Devon Circuit after loss of six churches to the Teignbridge Circuit (see recommendation 2 above).and made recommendations which are being considered by relevant circuits.
- Agreed to provide financial support for Methodist Women in Britain within the District..
- Supported the Sidwell Street Trustees (Exeter Coast and Country Circuit) in their application to the President's Council for the sale of the Church to the Exeter Network Church (Anglican) under Model Trust 20.
- Continued to support the implementation of the recommendations of both the Review of the Lay Employment Committee and the

Communications Review. The latter review has generated the District e-newsletter.

- Approved applications for authorisation to preside at Holy Communion. These are passed to Synod for approval.

John Prebble (Secretary)
7 March 2017.

DISTRICT LWP (LEADERS OF WORSHIP AND PREACHERS) REPORT

And now for some Good News ... God is continuing to call people of all ages and walks of life to become worship leaders and local preachers with some feeling further called to candidate for ministry.

The online Worship: Leading and Preaching course is now into its second year – many doing only the worship leading modules feel that the workload needed has increased considerably. We continue without a district tutor and many circuit tutors are ministers or supernumeraries and we thank them for their help. It is uplifting hearing of preachers being accredited or commencing training but we still lack younger people hearing the call ... or maybe they are reluctant to answer it.

There still appears to be a universal problem of lack of attendance at meetings across our district but this is also a problem across the whole connexion. Another problem seems to be the one of 'filling the plan' and even the larger circuits can have difficulty with a shortage of dates being offered by preachers. Often this is not helped by large travelling distances and of course increasing age/frailty. One or two circuits thankfully have an easier time with this or even have more preachers than appointments available. Refresher days are also held in some circuits but poor attendance does discourage holding these.

Churches are finding more varied ways of worship to encourage growth both of membership and mission and LPs are taking an active part in helping these churches and with bible study, prayer meetings, worship groups, messy church, café church, pastoral care and such. There are always those churches and preachers who feel unable to make any changes because they prefer more traditional worship and these continue to have an important role. WLs are taking a more active part in some circuits though still not fully appreciated in some churches and some do not have any.

It is rewarding to visit preachers who have had to 'sit down' during the year due to illness or age, or indeed any who are suffering, and assure them of the love and prayers of their colleagues in Christ. On some occasions certificates can be presented to them, as well as to those still able to preach, as a more tangible record of their often-long service. This is always a delight especially when they can tell us of their many experiences throughout their ministry!

It is often surprising that God continues to love us ordinary people full of faults and works through us to enable His Kingdom to grow as we mission in our various ways. Praise is that He can and that we respond.

Sue Bolt
District LP Officer
April 2017

JOINT DISTRICT SELECTION AND DISCERNMENT PANEL

'CANDIDATES' (17)

This is the second year that the Plymouth and Exeter District have joined with the Cornwall District to form a united Candidates Committee and once again I must express my sincere thanks to the members from both Districts who willingly gave of their time on a cold winters night in December and on two consecutive Saturdays in January to meet with five candidates for the Presbyteral and Diaconal ministries, after much reflection, listening, discerning and prayer the Joint Committee were able to recommend four of the five candidates to the Connexional Candidates Committee for Ordination Training and will continue to hold each one in prayer.

A special word of thanks must also go to our Regional Training Officer Dr.Jon Curtis who travelled with me to Circuits stretching from Helston in Cornwall to the borders of Somerset in order to ensure that each candidate had the required support network in place to help them make the journey through the process of candidating a joy and not a chore.

Looking towards the Connexional Year 2017 / 2018 Dr.Jon Curtis, the Revd Dr Stephen Mosedale and I held an Introduction to Candidating seminar at Fairplace Methodist Church, Okehampton on the 1st April for those testing a call to ministry. Although the process of candidating officially begins on the 1st September 2017 it is beneficial to each candidate if they can begin the process as early as possible.

If there is someone you know who may be testing a call to candidate for the Diaconal, Presbyteral or Lay ministry within the Methodist Church, please be in touch, my email address is listed below.

Revd Mike Parsons (Regional Candidates Secretary)
(mikeparsons2313@gmail.com)

RURAL ISSUES

This year has seen the development of a Rural Forum within the District. This is an ecumenical initiative mainly within Devon although this gives us a model for developing our work in the rural areas in other parts of the District. This forum is chaired by the Rev Mark Butcher from the Anglican Church and includes representatives from both church and community groups involved in rural development in the South West. This will be a forum for conversation with a focus for action when new challenges emerge in the rural parts of the District.

Through the support of the Training Network and with the help of Alison Ball we have held another Rural Day in the District following on from last year's. This year's meeting called 'God's best kept secret' saw 50 or so people gathering together at Hatherleigh Community Centre to engage in conversation around Rural mission and ministry and to explore something of the current political issues from one of our MP's Gary Streeter. Following feedback from this event we will look at themes for our gathering together next year.

It is envisaged that there will be 2 training/conversation days each year with one arranged by the Rural Forum (whose initial training day was held at Bicton college) and one through the Methodist Training Network both of which will allow for a wide participation from churches and communities across the District.

We continue to develop and affirm the work in which Andy Jerrard is involved through agricultural and market chaplaincy. The management group which supports Andy continue to meet to support this work which began in Shebbear Circuit as rural pastoral support many years ago. As part of the ongoing development of the scheme the District Grants Committee has agreed a grant and we are looking at how as a District we can continue to support the management of the scheme in the future.

It was back in 2001 when Radio Devon began the Sunday service at the request of clergy and lay people in the areas most affected by Foot and Mouth disease. People could not travel to the churches and chapels and the Radio Devon Sunday service began. It is still broadcast at 6.30 am every Sunday (which means an early start for the contributors when it is

broadcast live) and is listened to by many people in the District. Whilst this is not just for the rural community it continues to be a worship focus for many in rural areas who cannot attend church for many different reasons. Many of our lay people and ministers lead the service together with leaders from our ecumenical partners. If you're not around at 6.30 am to hear it then, the service is available on the BBC iPlayer.

The Arthur Rank Centre at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire has in the past couple of years developed the Germinate Network, about which more information can be found on the Arthur Rank Centre website. Rev Elizabeth Clark the National Rural Officer for the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church has visited the District on a couple of occasions over this past year. Elizabeth gave the keynote speech at the Hatherleigh meeting and ran a workshop at Bishops Lydeard Village Hall when members of the four Somerset circuits in the District gathered together. We are grateful for Elizabeth's willingness to visit us in the South West and for her ongoing support for the work in the District and in Churches in the area as well as nationally.

We continue to be part of the Churches stand at the Devon County Show which is held each May and there is also a church presence at the Bath and West and the Royal Cornwall Shows. I have had the privilege of representing the District at the Devon County Show for the past 15 years and the time has come to hand on the baton to Rev Anna Flindell subject to confirmation by the Synod.

In a District with much rural work we are seeking to develop a Rural Policy within the District Policy committee. This important piece of work will explore how we support and enable mission and ministry in the rural parts of the District both currently and in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone who is supporting rural churches and communities in many different ways, to thank Andy Jerrard for the work that he is doing, to Alison and the Training network for their support and everyone in the market chaplaincy teams and in the management groups which support this work.

Many people share ministry and mission in different ways in the rural parts of the District. Can I please ask for your continued prayer for our ongoing

work as we seek to support those amongst whom we live and work as we continue to share faith in the countryside.

Rev Philip Wagstaff
Rural Officer

PLYMOUTH METHODIST MISSION CIRCUIT REPORT 2016-2017

Having struggled for a year without one member of our staff team, it has been both a delight and a relief to welcome Deacon Linda Brown. Linda is a probationer, and comes with previous experience as a lay worker. She is already bringing renewed energy to the Keyham project and much needed pastoral support for the wide variety of need to be found at Central Hall.

Central Hall continues to be a lively, all-age, multi-cultural hub of Christian worship and service in Plymouth city centre. Sunday worship provides a distinctive blend of the traditional and the contemporary with a strong emphasis on gathering around Scripture and prayer.

It is our privilege to welcome people from many nations, including a number of students from home and overseas. Our student and young adults' worker in particular makes regular links through the University chaplaincy and offers a crucial role in supporting and mentoring students from a variety of backgrounds.

Midweek activities range from Pre-School Nursery School and toddler groups, to day time Bible studies and friendship groups for the elderly. The Discovery Centre, including the Café and Prayer Chapel provide haven of welcome, spiritual support and a listening ear. Each day there are those who drop by with a request for prayer or support and our volunteers and staff do their best to respond to the many and complex needs.

Our great joy this year has been to see the fruit of linking together all our work with children and young families by appointing a part-time Under 5s worker. Not only has it given a greater connection between our midweek work and Messy Church, but a number of the young families are now attending on a Sunday – slightly contrary to the 'theory' of Fresh Expressions! This provides yet a further challenge is providing the kind

of Sunday worship that is appropriate and makes sense to the full range of ages and experience of those attending.

Over the years, PMCH has worked hard to ensure the premises meet the needs of the huge range of work we are engaged in. The big challenge we currently face is to refurbish the main activities hall with a new roof, ceiling, lighting and windows. This is a mammoth commitment at a time when all budgets are tight and funding sources are limited. In faith we plan for the work to proceed this summer.

Keyham Methodist Community Centre provides welcome, support and advice for people in a particularly deprived area of the city. Our new Deacon and the Keyham Family worker are putting energy into finding ways of getting KMCC known as a hub for the community. One important breakthrough has been in taking “Open the Book” into local schools, paving the way for greater collaboration. There is also a developing link with the Chaplaincy at the naval dockyard.

The Oasis Project in Stonehouse continues to promote a strong community by providing practical training, emotional support and spiritual guidance. It is home to the Oasis Cafe and Plymouth Foodbank, whilst also working alongside many other statutory agencies. Two significant changes have occurred in relation to the work of the Foodbank. First, after nearly a year of slow decline in demand for vouchers, numbers have returned to almost the highest levels of two years ago, leading to a 12-month high of 8000. At the same time, the perceived ‘popularity’ of the Foodbank as a source of funding support, sponsorship and donations has dropped away hugely. Along with many others in these key sectors, the project is finding finance is very tight. The circuit is serious about supporting this vital work, but is also challenged about the financial demands across all areas.

We are grateful to God for the wonderful opportunity to see lives healed, restored and transformed.

Rev Dave Martin

DISTRICT ECUMENICAL OFFICER'S REPORT TO SYNOD (DEVON)

Churches Together in Devon

Churches Together in Devon (CTD) has continued to provide county level connection between Churches. It is a charity with trustees from six denominations, and chaired in rotation by church leaders. The Chair of District is currently mid-way through his two-year term in this role.

The County Ecumenical Officer, Revd Sue Macbeth, retired in February 2017 after a three-year term in which she had done much to encourage Churches Together or similar groups around Devon, and to enable churches across the county to network and share ideas. Key communication tools are a monthly newsletter, the website <http://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/devon/> and Churches Together in Devon Facebook Group. Recruitment of Sue's replacement is under way, with interviews shortly before Synod meets.

CTD arranges periodic reviews of single congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs). Some of those planned for this year had to be postponed due to ministers moving on, but I was able, with the URC Synod Pastoral Advisor, to undertake a review of the Cornerstone, Torpoint LEP.

CTD was encouraged by, and contributed to discussion of, the Churches Together in England document "A new Framework for Local Unity in Mission". This looks at ways to make it easier for churches co-operating in a local area to think through the type of arrangements they need to ensure clarity and accountability while not adding needless barriers.

Opportunity beckons

This will be my last report to Synod, as I am retiring as District Ecumenical Officer this summer, after five years in which I have visited many corners of Devon and met wise people from other Christian traditions. Anyone interested in taking on this voluntary role should contact Graham Thompson. I am happy to talk through informally what is involved, and to provide some initial mentoring. Training and expenses are provided, and there is good support from the Connexional Ecumenical Officer. It

includes being a trustee of the District and of Churches Together in Devon, with the opportunity to influence what they do.

UPDATED CONSTITUTION FOR FAIRPLACE LOCAL ECUMICAL PARTNERSHIP (FOR DECISION)

Fairplace, Okehampton, is a long established Methodist / URC LEP. It is updating its constitution as recommended in the Churches Together in Devon 2016 review. The new version is attached as a separate document, which requires Synod approval. District Policy Committee has considered it, taking account of advice from the Connexional Ecumenical Officer, and recommends approval. The Constitution has been approved by the URC SW Synod Executive.

Synod members should bear in mind that most of the text is set in the template agreed by Churches Together in England and the Charity Commission. Only the highlighted parts can be altered locally. Once all approvals are given it comes into effect on adoption by the Church Meeting (and is given that date).

Note that the constitution refers to Methodist S.O.611 and in approving it Synod is giving the delegation described there. Essentially this means the Church Council acts as the Methodist Church Council except for some reserved matters for which a wider meeting including Circuit Ministers and a Circuit Steward is required. The guidelines for Synods on single congregation LEPs are available here: www.methodist.org.uk/media/1093220/ecu-guidelines-for-use-of-synods-in-designating-scleps-0514.pdf

Synod members with queries on the detail are invited to contact me in advance for clarification (prof@harbo.me.uk)

Other Local Contacts

I have provided advice on request to churches and circuits in the Devon part of the District on both formal and informal ways of working with other denominations. These have included Bridestowe, where there is a covenant with the parish church the village, and Sidwell Street, which is planning an innovative property arrangement with the Church of England.

General Matters

As a member of DPC I have encouraged an ecumenical perspective on all policies, including awareness of opportunities to co-operate with other denominations, and care to ensure policies work for LEPs. I have been able to contribute ideas from partner churches in, eg, discussion of the District strategy. This year I have also been one of the DPC members on the management committee for the District Evangelism Enabler.

Glenys and I attended the national Anglican/Methodist DEOs meeting in November 2016. In addition to looking at “A New Framework” (as above), this considered “The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting in mission and holiness”. We heard about the faith and order work done since, in 2014, the General Synod and Methodist Conference resolved to make progress towards fuller Anglican Methodist unity, by addressing the questions of expressing the Methodist Conference’s ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry and of reconciling the existing ordained ministries of our two churches. While national work is done on these issues, local churches are encouraged to make the most of the existing freedoms under the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. To aid this, regional “Covenant Champion” volunteers are being recruited.

In practical terms, it has been good to see a number of Devon-wide initiatives in which Anglicans and Methodists invited each other, and other partners, to benefit from training or networking events. These include rural conferences, dementia friendly church training, and Eco-Church.

KIT HARBOTTLE,
DISTRICT ECUMENICAL OFFICER

District Ecumenical Officer (Somerset) – Report to Synod, Spring 2017

I have continued to maintain contact with and offer help as requested to the circuits that fall within my area and to attend the regular meetings of Churches Together in Somerset Standing Committee. CTS continues to

provide a network opportunity between the denominations in Somerset, and we have now also been blessed with the appointment of both Roman Catholic and Anglican representatives which gives us a much more balanced committee. I have just had a meeting with my new Anglican colleague, Rev Tim Price, where we were able to begin addressing some issues that we need to work on together and I look forward to a fruitful working relationship with him.

The CTS AGM and annual forum were not well attended, with poor weather and illness preventing some from attending. The Annual Report may be read on the website www.sctog.org.uk. There will be a CTS biennial gathering for LEPs on Saturday 17th June.

I also attended the Anglican Methodist Consultation at High Leigh last autumn and will be attending the “Responding to the Reformation” Conference organised by Churches Together in England this coming autumn, as well as the annual Connexional DEO’s meeting in London at the end of April.

I have attended meetings of representatives from Temple Methodist and Paul St URC churches in Taunton, as they seek to determine how best to explore their future mission and ministry together, and will continue to liaise with them and with my URC colleague in this matter.

I have spent time liaising with Pawlett Methodist and Anglican churches, the Archdeacon of Taunton and the Connexional Ecumenical Officer regarding the proposed Covenanted Partnership LEP at Pawlett between the Methodist Church and the Anglican Parish Church in that village. Both churches in Pawlett have worked with increasing closeness for some years and now seek to formalise that working to provide a more visible sign of the unity of the Christian church in the community which they jointly serve.

The Covenant and Constitution have been drawn up using the model documents from Churches Together in England, and have been agreed by the Connexional Ecumenical Officer, in consultation with the Faith & Order Committee. The last District Policy Committee voted in favour of recommending them to Synod. I present the Covenant and the

Constitution for this Covenanted Partnership and ask that Synod should vote in favour of the setting up of this LEP.

I should say that, my Anglican colleague having only just been appointed by the Bishop, it is difficult to know at present just what stage this has reached in the Diocesan process and it may be some little while before there is formal agreement from the Anglican side. Therefore, I am not able to give Synod any clear idea at present as to when both sides might be able to sign this Covenant. However, the Bishop is aware of the initiative and my discussions with the Archdeacon and with Rev Tim Price lead me to believe that any hold-up will be merely procedural.

Glenys Allinson. DEO (Somerset)

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

Current District MWiB Officers:

President	Mrs Sharon Canning
Treasurer	Mrs Alison Thompson
Vice President	Mrs Di Smart
Conference Event Secretary	Mrs Carol Batchelor
Acting Secretary	Rev Deborah Kirk
Conference Booking Secretary	Mrs Pam Kingsland
Minute Secretary	Mrs Elsie Potter
Pastoral Letters	Mrs Margaret Hill
Resources Officers	Mrs Gwynneth Pengelly & Mrs Beryl Archer
District Representative to Forum	Rev Deborah Kirk

September 2016 began with some vacancies in the District MWiB Team, as we sought nominations for a new Vice President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. We are thankful that our prayers were answered as people responded to God's call on their lives and offered their gifts for these roles.

Mrs Di Smart was elected as the new Vice President, and she was inducted at the Autumn District Day held last October in Palace Avenue Methodist Church, Paignton. We were grateful that Alison Thompson has

made time in her busy life to offer to help us with the District accounts, allowing Jean Mann to retire after 12 years in the role. Alison is not always able to be present at our meetings due to her work, however, she nominates her husband to bring the reports, and Rev Graham is always present and supportive at our events. Following a period covered by an Acting Secretary, Elaine Banks has allowed her name to be offered, and has been elected as the District Secretary from September 2017. Thank you to all our new officers for their willingness to serve in this way.

The Autumn District Day also launched our new partnership with Amigos - a charity which works in Uganda, with sustainable agricultural projects, assisting small businesses, and wide ranging youth and community development work through their Kira Farm project. Phil Pugsley, local representative, spoke inspirationally to the gathering during the afternoon.

The Connexional World Federation Day was held in Rowbarton Methodist Church, Taunton, at the end of October, and people from as far afield as Norfolk, Birmingham, Truro, and Southampton, gathered to experience 'A Taste of Texas'. The day enabled people who had not been able to attend the 13th World Assembly in Houston during the summer to find out a little of what went on, and experience a flavour of the conference. Worship, workshops, presentations and conversations around the theme 'Chosen People, Called to Proclaim' challenged and inspired a full congregation. The day concluded with a report from Alison Judd, the new World President of the WFM&UCW, in which she outlined the action plan for the next five years as we look at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and seek to work for God's Kingdom on earth through engaging with the goals in practical ways.

The Annual Residential at Sidholme in November was led by Mrs Anne Browse, Connexional MWiB President, and was full to capacity, with day visitors swelling the numbers on the Wednesday. Anne's theme was Story and Song.

Fundraising for the World Church continues through Circuits' support of the Easter Offering appeal. There are children's resources available on www.mwib.org.uk

'Dementia Friendly Churches' - don't forget this pack has lots of information, ideas, and suggestions to help your congregation and your

building to become more dementia friendly. £5 per pack. Available from the District Forum Representative.

Forthcoming District Events 2017:

- Wed 26th April - Spring District Day at Tedburn-St-Mary, speaker Mrs Sharon Canning
- Thur 12th October - Autumn District Day at Ridgeway Methodist Church, Plympton to include the Induction of Mrs Di Smart as District President, and speaker
- Wed 6th September Autumn District Committee Meeting at St Thomas' MC, Exeter
- 14-16th November Sidholme Conference, speaker Mrs Jill Barber, Past Vice President of the Methodist Conference

Connexional MWiB Events 2017

- Heritage and Archives Exhibition at Epworth reopens March - October 2017.
- Creativity Day - 20th May 2017 in Liverpool - 'Leaving the Familiar'
- Methodist Conference Fringe Event - 23rd June 2017, 7-9.30pm, Hilton Birmingham Metropole, at which Sandra Goodwin will be commissioned as MWiB Connexional President
- World Federation Day 2017 - 28th October, in Grimsby

*Report submitted by Forum Representative, Rev Deborah Kirk
30.03.17*

MHA PLYMOUTH AND EXETER DISTRICT NEWS

MHA has almost 75 years experience of accompanying and supporting people as they age, and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that our later years can be as fulfilled as possible, working to combat loneliness and providing opportunities for people to create caring and supportive communities.

Best Sunday for Ages – 11th June 2017

This year we are continuing with our 'Best Week for Ages' campaign where we ask our staff, their local communities and churches to organise various fundraising events during the week commencing June 11th. For well over 25 years, churches up and down the lands have supported our MHA Sunday appeal and we are grateful for all that that has enabled us to do- particularly in supporting our Chaplaincy work, our Music Therapists' work with those living with dementia, and our more than 60 Live at Home schemes. This will now be known as the Best Sunday for Ages and we hope that old friends and new will join us by holding special services, taking a collection for MHA's work or simply remembering MHA in your prayers.

We invite you to take our theme of '**Befriending Age**' to look at ways in which we can help one another support older members of our church and society as well as learn from them how best to plan our own ageing journey. While the landscape of ageing still has many of the features of diminishment and difficulty, those are to be seen alongside features of flourishing, discovery and adventure. Your support helps our aim to help older people to benefit from the loving, Christian based care MHA provides.

An Order of Service and other worship resources can be downloaded from our website at www.BestForAges.com/BestSunday or contact Lesley France on 01332 296200 or email lesley.france@mha.org.uk for printed copies.

Impact Report - For more information on how we use our fundraised income and our aims to make later life better, please download our latest Impact Report '**Connecting Older People in Communities that Care**' at www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/our-publications/ or contact us for a copy.

Development Strategy - Staff changes within our developments team have afforded the opportunity to review our development strategy. The review will be concluded in the next few months and will give us a clear view of how to deliver great communities for older people. While this clearly has a short term impact we are confident that the delay will be beneficial.

Return to Circuit Ministry - Rev. Dr Keith Albans, Director of Chaplaincy & Spirituality

Since joining MHA in September 2001, Keith has been responsible for the spiritual and pastoral welfare of staff, residents and scheme members across the organisation, leading our chaplaincy service and maintaining links with the Methodist Church and the wider church. Keith became a Methodist Minister in 1984 and will take up the role of Superintendent Minister of the York circuit in September. MHA is indebted to Keith for his service and will be making sure he is given a fitting send off before he starts on the next stage of his professional journey.

Thank You – we are very grateful for the support MHA receives from our friends within the Methodist Church and for sharing our mission to improve the quality of life for older people, inspired by Christian concern.

DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRIES LEARNING NETWORK

The Learning Network meets four times a year with representative of both of the districts it serves in the South West Region. The meeting of the forum sets our work priorities from the point of view of the region. For Connexional year 2016-17, the forum set the following two priorities:

- To support and equip the development of mission and ministry in context
- Provide opportunities to develop the skill sets of all those involved in ordained and lay ministry, paid or voluntary roles

These priorities have now been confirmed to continue for Connexional Year 2017-18

The Network Committee of the Connexional Team also sets priorities that run from year to year and these are to support:

- Missional leadership
- Growing Participation
- Healthy Methodist Communities
- Enhanced visibility

Prayer Point: Please pray for discernment as we develop a work plan that enables these priorities to be fulfilled. Pray that we use the resources we have available to good effect.

Aiming to deliver on these priorities the Learning Network has offered a busy programme since the last meeting of the DPC. Events have included:

- 'We are Family' – a day looking at Family Ministry with Gail Adcock, in Plymouth.
- Growing through Conflict training (Phase 1 of Positive Working Together implementation) in Newton Abbott
- 3Generate – the Connexional participation for young people aged 8-23
- God's Best Kept Secret a day conference on rural mission and ministry held at Hatherleigh with contributions from the Arthur Rank Centre, Gary Streeter MP, Our District Rural Officer and others
- Bible Month Initiative Training Day at Plymouth Methodist Central Hall – a day for Local Preachers and Small Group leaders on the book of James with Dr Joan Wragg as our keynote speaker
- Time to Breathe – the joint districts' Ministerial Retreat at Treloyhan Manor, Cornwall with James Catford of Renovare and Rev Ian Adams
- Pioneer Pathway meetings at Wesley Cottage, Trewint with Jon Curtis – supporting and equipping pioneers in our region
- Candidate support – Jon Curtis working collaboratively with Rev Mike Parsons and Rev Graham Thompson to develop an evening circuit event around vocation as well as supporting the process of Candidating.
- Worship: Leading and Preaching – continued support for tutors and circuits in training new preachers and worship leaders as well as supporting churches in using local arrangement services creatively.

- Supporting the One Person Participant from publicity and advice on developing a project, to selection, recruitment and line management of the OPP. Crediton Methodist Church appointed an OPP this year and Sharon Rowe is his line manager.
- Bringing together Lay Workers for fellowship as well as learning and development

It is difficult to be precise on numbers. We estimate that around 250 have attended the training described above. In addition there has been considerable work with local circuits developing vision, looking at making the most of local arrangement circuits etc.

Within our specialisms each member of the team contributes to Connexional events and bodies including Connecting Disciples, Reimagine Conference, Cliff Summer School, 3Generate. Supervision and others.

We also connect with our Ecumenical Partners within each district through a variety of bodies and events. We sit on a number of district groups such as the District Safeguarding Team and District Policy Committee.

Prayer Point: Please pray for our safe travel as well as for our families when we are away from home.

We would encourage you to think of us as part of the district family of resources. We have all received training in a process called 'Appreciative Inquiry' which is a way of hearing a positive narrative around our ministry and mission and using the energy that positivity gives us to look at areas that require development or change. I have used it on 3 occasions now and it has proved to be a creative approach. We also have some consultancy time bought in by the DMLN which we can draw on. If you would like to know more, please get in touch with me.

Prayer Point: Please pray for our spiritual journeying and growth as we recognise the work of the Holy Spirit in what we offer to our region.

Thank you for the support and helpful feedback we do receive. If you have an idea that you think we could help develop please pick up the phone and give us a ring.

Alison Ball
Coordinator of the DMLN SW
Tel: 07799902583

LAY EMPLOYMENT REPORT

At its meeting on 4th October 2016 the Committee was advised that in the year to 31 August 2016 the number of completed applications was 13 (11 in 2014/15). This covered the usual variety of posts including Youth and Children's Workers and Administrators. There were 2 pending applications as at 31 August 2016. In addition, during 2015/16 there were 12 general enquiries (2014/15 15) covering a range of matters including the documentation required in respect of possible future posts and payroll issues.

The next Annual Meeting is scheduled for 3rd October 2017 at the District Office. Rev. Kate Konrad and Mr David Bradford have now joined the existing members be being the District Chair, Clive Wooldridge and myself

Malcolm Pillar
Lay Employment Officer

2017 Plymouth & Exeter District (24) Statistics for Mission

Circuit	Members 2015	Members 2016	Community Roll	Av Adult attend Sunday	Av Youth attend Sunday	LEP Membership
Plymouth & Devonport 24/01	1190	1121	1340	867	112	35 MC/ 40 URC
Plymouth Mission 24/02	317	316	352	220	42	
Exeter Coast & Country 24/03	1417	1377	2031	1081	68	
Tavistock 24/07	270	258	567	274	74	4 MC/ 24 URC
Torbay 24/08	554	529	311	475	19	86 MC /143 URC / 15 JOINT
South Devon 24/10	172	160	322	147	6	
Bude & Holsworthy 24/11	540	490	151	398	18	
Taunton Deane & Sedgemoor 24/15	380	366	488	221	19	

Tiverton & Wellington 24/16	309	300	934	255	23	77 MC/ 7URC
South Petherton & Crewkerne 24/18	273	258	193	207	8	
Ilfracombe & Barnstaple 24/20	510	494	391	486	40	123 MC/140 URC/ 60 Cof E
South Molton & Ringsash 24/22	260	243	246	272	10	6 MC / 16 C of E
Torrige 24/23	368	351	126	329	15	
West Devon 24/24	348	309	437	371	52	53 MC / 32URC
West Somerset 24/25	183	176	288	201	27	
Ringsash 24/27	164	162	117	196	69	
Teignbridge 24/28	555	542	672	445	28	143 MC / 32 URC
TOTALS	<u>7810</u>	<u>7452</u>	<u>8966</u>	<u>6445</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>936</u>

AUTHORISATION TO PRESIDE

The following applications are being made to the 2017 Conference:

For a First Year

24/3	Exeter, Coast & Country	Margaret Cole	L
24/11	Bude & Holsworthy	Michael Reeves	L
24/11	Bude & Holsworthy	Courtney Drew	L
24/16	Tiverton & Wellington	Anne Browse	L
24/16	Tiverton & Wellington	Hilary Young	L
24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Sylvia Edwards	L
24/22	South Molton & Ringsash	Gloria Manning	L
24/22	South Molton & Ringsash	Arthur Mildon	L
24/23	Torridge	Elsie Potter	L
24/24	West Devon	Daisy Bray	L
24/24	West Devon	Barry Searle	L
24/25	West Somerset	Margaret Lintern	L

For a Second Year

24/3	Exeter, Coast & Country	Yangsun Yi	P
24/8	Tavistock	Philip Griffin	P
24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Geoffrey Harding	L
24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Brenda Prentice	L
24/20	Torridge	David Ley	L

For a Third Year

24/11	Bude and Holsworthy	Muriel Hodges	L
24/11	Bude and Holsworthy	Clive Smale	L
24/20	Ilfracombe and Barnstaple	Martin Reardon	L

APPOINTMENTS

Schools Officer Robert Benzie Plymouth
District Support Officer Mary-Ann Martin

District Policy Committee

Grants Officer Andrew Vidamour West Somerset

SYNOD DATES

Autumn Synod 2017

Saturday September 9th.

Hatherleigh Community Centre, Hatherleigh, West Devon Circuit

Spring Synod 2018

Saturday April 21st

Seaton Methodist Church, Seaton, Exeter Coast and Country Circuit

Autumn Synod 2018

Saturday September 8th

Plymouth Central Hall, Plymouth

Spring Synod 2019

Saturday April 6th

Queens College, Taunton, Taunton Deane and South Sedgemoor
Circuit **To be Confirmed**

Autumn Synod 2019

Saturday September 7th. Central Church, Torquay, Torbay Circuit