



Serving the Methodist Church  
in South Yorkshire,  
North Nottinghamshire  
and North East Derbyshire

# Reports to Synod

## April 2023

## **Chair's Introduction**

Welcome to this Annual Report which seeks to tell the story of numerous things that happen across the district which are unseen by many of us, but which involve a great deal of commitment on the part of some and make a huge difference to the lives of others.

This last year has seen us navigating the aftereffects of the lockdowns that our churches experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has continued to be a challenging time for many individuals and churches across the district and some worshipping communities have prayerfully made the brave decision to move on from their buildings. We have seen some buildings being creatively used to serve communities and we have watched some congregations find alternative spaces in which to continue their Christian witness.

We have seen many churches and groups continue to serve their communities through Warm Spaces, Foodbank Hubs, work with children and young people and we have seen new Christian Communities start to emerge. Our calling to worship, learn, care, serve and tell others about Jesus continues.

The way ahead for the church is undoubtedly uncertain and challenging, but it is my prayer that we will continue to support and encourage each other as we seek to listen carefully and watch patiently for where the Spirit is already at work and where we are being called to follow.

Thank you to everyone who serves across this district, whether in the local church, the circuit or on district groups and committees. All that you offer is appreciated and valued and every contribution is an important part of the mission in which we share. As we join in this District Gathering and Synod may we be inspired again to respond to the call to join God in the work of transforming the world.

Every blessing

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gill', with a short horizontal line underneath it.

Gill Newton, District Chair

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## **Archivist**

It has been possible to reopen communications with the three Record Offices that are in our area and substantial deposits have been made but both Sheffield and Nottingham are experiencing long delays in supplying the deposit details of the records which are now in their care.

We are waiting for advice regarding what action we need to do concerning marriage registers now the system has changed. The Anglicans are in a similar position, at least in Derbyshire, as the authorities are unable to cope with the volume. Family history societies are also asking as to what is the situation to which at the moment there is no answer.

There have recently been some interesting enquiries from people with connection to early Methodism in Sheffield. One was from a six times great grandson of James Vickers and was also related to Thomas Holy. The latter welcomed Wesley to Sheffield and kept the early accounts and developed the manufacture of Britannia metal in the city.

Another more recently, concerned the early Methodist developments in Attercliffe when the Rev. John Felvus preached at hangings on Attercliffe Common around 1820. I wonder what his text was. If you have any information about Methodist connections in this part of the District, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Another interesting project has been transcribing the diaries of the Rev George Faulkner who was Superintendent of the Holywell Cross Circuit 1938-1945. This has been done in cooperation with his grandson and give a very interesting account of his work, together with local and national affairs, all intermingled together. I think that this is of some importance and will be exploring how to bring this to a wider public.

*John Tranter - District Archivist*  
*trants10@tiscali.co.uk*

## **Candidates Committee**

The candidating for ministry process is changing considerably following the Methodist Conference 2022, so this year's District Candidates' Committee (DCC) was the last time we met in this way.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the members, some of whom have served on the DCC in Sheffield for a very long time, while others only joined us this year.

My heartfelt thanks go to: Keith Abel, Rev Sean Adair, David Banks, Rev Meg Burton, Julie Oxley, Kate Pinder, Rev Lisa Quarmby, Deacon Annabel Terry as well as the three colleagues from within the other two Yorkshire Districts who invested time, nerves, and expertise to make up our numbers: Rev Tim Francis, Rev Helena Harbottle and Rev Ian Pruden.

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A very special thanks goes to Gill Daly who not only ensured that we had sufficient lay representation on the committee but contributed her invaluable wealth of knowledge and wisdom.

This year's DCC was another great team effort, underlining the importance of collective discernment processes. Huge thanks to Rev Gill Newton for her guidance and support throughout, and to Katrin Hackett for all the administration and organisation behind the scenes.

We had two candidates from our district this year – one for diaconal and one for presbyteral ministry.

The DCC was held face to face at Carterknowle Methodist Church in Sheffield, and I would like to give a shout out to the local team of stewards and cooks, as they looked after us very well indeed. The local minister, Rev Claude Kimpinde, was our chaplain and did a wonderful job looking after the candidates and their supporters. Thank you, Claude, for your time, presence and worship leading!

After intensive conversations and deliberations, we concluded that only one of the candidates should be recommended to attend the Connexional Selection Committee. We rejoice with that candidate and wish them well on the next steps of their journey into the Methodist ministry.

Not recommending somebody is never an easy decision to take, but the committee arrived at this decision with a clear consensus. Our prayers continue to uphold this candidate as they figure out and continue to discern their sense of calling and where God is leading them.

If you are interested in finding out more about the new candidating process and how you could get involved, do not hesitate to contact me, or check out the information available on the Methodist website. We will be looking for people within our churches who are able to accompany and journey with a candidate for a few months, during which they meet and explore with them their sense of call and their awareness of God's loving presence in their lives. All prior to sending in their application to candidate for ministry in the Methodist church.

It promises to be a mutually beneficial time of reflection, learning and journeying together – and could enable you to deepen your own Christian discipleship while helping others to explore theirs.

Thank you once again to all those who have been involved, from faithful prayers to a listening ear and challenging conversations. It is a huge privilege to journey with those who feel called by God to share in the building of God's kingdom in and outside the church.

*Rev Debora Marschner  
District Candidates' Secretary*

## **Children & Youth Work**

Over this past year I have been getting round the district and supporting in any way I can, from school assemblies, supporting new groups starting, sharing resources, and building fellowship across the district with retreats, prayer breakfasts and monthly community of practice drop ins. I've also been able to link up churches with others so we can share in best practice too – we don't need to reinvent the wheel! I really love joining in with the great work that is happening amongst Children and Young people across the district and it's exciting to watch it grow & develop. I'm also very grateful for the dedicated volunteers & workers who support this work.

In September 2023 we'll be launching our very own district led ONE opportunity programme, for any young people aged 16-23. This is an internship supported by a local church or circuit. The participants will follow a year-long project, including monthly fellowship time, leadership development training and joining in with residential plus 3Generate. If you know anyone in this age group who might be interested, please do get in touch.

After the success of our Youth Event last year, on the 25 March 2023 we held our second one again at Hesley Woods Scout Centre. This year we explored through different workshops around; how we can be peacemakers in the 21st century, ways in which each of us has the power to make a difference and what we can do to help our environment. We also enjoyed some of the on-site activities including zip-line, crate stacking, cube, inflatable obstacle course and archery. We also very much enjoyed our Subway lunch. We had a bigger uptake this year which was wonderful and we are already thinking about what we'll do next year.

We're also planning to host another District Family Picnic this summer.

We want to encourage as many as possible across the District to attend 3Generate which will be on 6 October – 8 October 2023 at the NEC in Birmingham.

Please do get in touch with me if you want to chat about all things children, families, youth, or schools work in your setting.

*Victoria Loveday - District Children & Youth Co-ordinator*  
*cy@sheffieldmethodist.org*

*T: 07483 100 864*

## **Communications**

The role of District Communications Officer is to make sure the right messages are reaching the right people at the right time. We do this in a number of different ways.

We create videos which are shared via our YouTube channel. We use our weekly mailing, which is sent direct into hundreds of email inboxes each week and we use our other digital channels too.

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Following feedback, we've also delved back into printed materials and released a 20-page full colour magazine in September explaining how the District Mission Strategy was being fulfilled over the last 12 months. 1,750 copies of "A Story of the Year 2022" were distributed to each Circuit for free and copies even made it into our neighbouring Districts and as far as Manchester and Stockport who felt inspired by what they read.

Social media remains one of the main sources people use to obtain news, information and keep in touch with family and friends. This is why it's been important this year to grow our social media following, increase our engagement and create more content than ever before.

The District has four social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Over the last 12 months our social media followers have been on the rise.

Channel	% increase
Facebook	20
Twitter	16
Instagram	7
YouTube	25

Last year we challenged ourselves to reach 100 followers on YouTube which would allow us to have a custom web address for our channel and we are pleased to announce we did it. We now have 114 followers and a dedicated channel which is much easier to find.

**How many people do our social media channels reach?**

Channel	Average Reach
Facebook	190 per post
Twitter	3,318 impressions per month
Instagram	201 per post
YouTube	2,800 views – 109 hours.

Following a review of our digital strategy and our social media content we have been creating District campaigns which involve each Circuit, but then provides a resource for everyone to use. At Christmas we created a digital Advent calendar where a video was released each day through Advent and onto Epiphany. Each

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Circuit were asked to record readings, a prayer and share a story for one week. This meant the workload was shared and stories and voices were heard from around the District. A similar campaign has been created for Lent 2023 where a reading and a reflection has been shared each day. We are planning more joined up campaigns for this year too.

Our District website created by ThenMedia continues to grow with on average 45 visitors per day, an increase of 25% compared with last year. Work is ongoing on creating new Circuit websites using the same template to show we are all part of one District, but also allowing each Circuit to keep their own personality.

We have also been working closely with the Connexion to provide digital training and that will continue throughout this year, and we hope to be able to offer it to as many people in the District who would like to take part.

If you'd like to find out more about how I can support you with your communications needs, send me an email to [comms@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:comms@sheffieldmethodist.org)

Follow us on social media:

- Facebook @Sheffieldmethodist
- Instagram @SheffieldMethodist
- YouTube @SheffieldMethodistDistrict

*Sam Roberts - District Communications Officer*

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## **District Leading Team**

The District Leading Team (DLT) has met six times since the last Synod report. Meetings continue to be held over Zoom as this is the most effective use of time and resources.

The Team's regular and continuing work includes setting and monitoring the District's budget, approving grants, and considering requests for authorisations, extensions for On Trial preachers and church closures. During the year the DLT has received a variety of reports about work in the district, in particular from all District employees and the main District committees.

The DLT has considered in detail the budget for 2023/24 and subsequent years, and the Treasurer's report sets out the decisions reached.

### **Lay Authorisations**

Applications for lay authorisations to preside at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were received as follows:

- from Doncaster Circuit: -  
Sean Worsley (new application)



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- from Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit: -  
Ed Archer-Siddall (renewal)

The DLT supported these applications, but the Synod may make comments upon these.

An application for the Revd Tracey Morris to be granted status as an Authorised Presbyterian was reported.

### **Cease to meet/sale of building**

A number of requests to cease to worship, close and sell the buildings across the district have been received as follows:

Sheffield

Tinsley – to cease to worship, close and sell the building

Derbyshire North East

Duckmanton – to cease to meet as presently configured. Responsibility for managing trusteeship will move to Bolsover Methodist Church.

Doncaster

Sprotborough Road – to cease to meet as a Methodist congregation.

The Kings Cross Church – to cease to meet as a Methodist congregation. There are ongoing discussions about the future use of the building.

Barnsley

Cudworth – to cease to meet, close and sell the building.

New Hope – to cease to meet, close and sell the building.

Trinity

Wheatley – to cease to worship in the Methodist building. The Circuit will explore alternative uses of the building rather than sell immediately.

**These decisions require Synod approval.**

Approval was granted for The Foundry, Sheffield to apply for an alcohol licence under Standing Order 922 3a. Whilst noting that this is a complicated issue, the intention is not to generate income from alcohol sales but to increase the number of conferences held at Victoria Hall.

Despite the appeal for new members of the Leading Team who will reflect the diversity of the District, the membership has remained the same. The view of the group is that it is time to revisit the constitution of the group and a proposal for this will be brought to the Synod in a separate paper.

*Katrin Hackett - District Administrator*

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Some people are beginning to realise across the Connexion that EDI and the Justice Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy that flows out of it, are just as big a deal as Safeguarding. In some ways that is right – in other ways it's possibly even

more important than safeguarding, because it is about how we relate to all the people who come through our doors, whether they have particular vulnerabilities or not.

So it is that during this past year the **training** to bring us up to speed with the whole range of issues covered by EDI has become **mandatory**. It can be done on-line or in groups. Watch the District Newsletter for news of Groups being run.

This training can best be seen as a task of deepening our discipleship – how can we become better at loving our neighbours as ourselves, as Jesus commanded us? How can we become better at seeing God's image in all people whatever their state or circumstances?

At the end of last years' Report, I reminded people that each Circuit needs to appoint its own EDI Officer, in the same way that we have a safeguarding officer. Once they are all in place, there will be a good body of people to enable to the JDS Strategy to bed into our Christian life in the District.

I am aware that much of what I'm writing about is within the Sheffield Circuit. This is not of my making - I have simply responded to requests – **so please do invite me to take part in things in the wider District.**

During the past year, particular pieces of work are:

- **two more sessions on Unconscious Bias** within Sheffield Circuit for a mix of Presbyters, Deacons and lay people.
- a **session for the Sheffield Circuit Worship Leaders and Preachers meeting** looking at how our practice as people who conduct public services could be adapted to take on board the principles of Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. This exploration of how to implement the Strategy is very important and I was also invited in the autumn by the Connexion to be part of a small group evaluating how this is progressing across the Connexion – slowly and patchily, just as in Sheffield – is the general impression I have! Which gives us plenty of scope to develop our understanding and become a church which truly includes and welcomes everyone equally.
- I attended a Big Gathering of people interested in EDI in January 2023 and was able to encourage a less box-ticking and more doing differently approach – which is essential if we are to live out the EDI Policy. To encourage this, I wrote a piece called '**EDI Training - Burdensome Task or God-centred Opportunity?**' which appeared in the District Mailing and should have been picked up in your Circuit Newsletters too.
- I have been in contact with and attended one meeting of the Group that is going to grow into the Justice Seeking Group for the District. Its work will be to support, encourage and take action on the whole range of JDS

issues. I am working with them to prepare the worship for the District's Spring Gathering – How to be a Just Church in an Unjust World? My own role is very limited being an average of 2hrs per week as a volunteer, alongside a busy 'day-job', so it will be great to work alongside them.

*Erica Dunmow - EDI Officer*  
*edi@sheffieldmethodist.org*

## **Lay Employment**

As I continue to fulfil my role as HR Officer for both the Sheffield and the Yorkshire North and East Districts, there are a few matters that I wish to draw to your attention:

### **Recruitment**

This has been a particular area of focus for me since the last time I wrote. Over the past 12 months I am pleased to have been able to introduce an enhanced level of recruitment support within the districts that I support.

I value how many circuits have embraced working collaboratively with their recruitment needs, from beginning to end. For me to be involved in the important creation and direction of role conversations has been useful because it has allowed me the opportunity to gather relevant and up-to date data in order to offer feedback and provide guidance to maximise the benefit of effective and relevant advertising to reach the most suitable candidates. I look forward to continuing and developing this work over the next 12 months.

In addition, I am currently working on a project that will provide a Yorkshire-wide talent pool for church jobs. I sincerely thank those who are engaged with this in its early stages and those who are supportive towards its development. I can see that many churches and projects are benefiting from this joined up approach already and I would really like to use this as a platform to encourage others to reach out to me as recruitment continues to evolve and some processes become outdated and ineffective. As we seek to move forward, I believe that there could be an opportunity in creating a group to share ideas, set standards and work towards consistency in how we recruit new members to our team. If you are interested in being part of this, please do let me know!

### **1-1 Support**

Productive and meaningful conversations between line managers and employees continue to happen. Thank you again to those who have been a part of this offering and for placing your faith in me to support you as you navigate life as an employer or an employee.

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With many finding the drop-in sessions I offered previously to be of benefit, I will be holding these again throughout June and July. I have listed the dates below. To reserve your slot, please email [hr@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:hr@sheffieldmethodist.org)

**Line manager/employing body drop-in sessions:**

- Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup> - 6pm-8pm
- Thursday June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 6pm-8pm
- Thursday July 6<sup>th</sup> - 6pm-8pm
- Thursday July 20<sup>th</sup> - 6pm-8pm

**Employee drop-in sessions:**

- Tuesday June 6<sup>th</sup> – 6pm-8pm
- Tuesday June 20<sup>th</sup> – 6pm-8pm
- Tuesday July 4<sup>th</sup> – 6pm-8pm
- Tuesday July 18<sup>th</sup> – 6pm-8pm

The format remains the same: They will be held by zoom, 1-1 and remain in complete confidence. They are led by you, and we can discuss any employment or work-related questions or concerns you may have.

**Updating policy**

The Sheffield District is growing. With this in mind we are looking to update current employment policies and processes, whilst considering the implementation of a few new ones. This is not an overnight problem solver, but the district is committed to driving good practice and being the best that we can be. Your input is valuable and gratefully received and I encourage you to get in touch if you have any suggestions and ideas.

I look forward to working together in the year ahead.

*Andrew Crawford HR Officer*

[hr@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:hr@sheffieldmethodist.org)

T: 07483 106 005

## Learning Network

The role of the Learning Network is to equip and resource the Church through a wide range of contextually relevant learning and development opportunities. Sharing responsibility with others within the Connexional Team and key stakeholders within the districts, circuits, and churches.

**Contacts:**

Rachel McCallam: 07799 900478 [mccallamr@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:mccallamr@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Graham Jones: 07799 902574 [jonesg@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:jonesg@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Siggy Parratt-Halbert: 07799 902575 [parratt-halberts@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:parratt-halberts@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Carla Quenet: 07772 979670 [quenetc@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:quenetc@methodistchurch.org.uk)

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Follow us on our Social Networks:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LearningNetworkYorkshirePlus>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LNYorkshirePlus>

## **Manse Panel**

Every year several manses in the Circuits across the district are visited by a faithful band of manse visitors to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. The manses are all visited in rotation every five years and after each visit, there is paperwork to be completed by the visitors which forms the basis of a report to the Circuit that owns the manse. In addition, manses that are due to be vacated by a minister in the summer of each Connexional year, receive a visit a few months prior to their departure to highlight any work that may be needed ahead of the arrival of a new minister to the circuit.

Since the Spring Synod last year, arrangements were made for manses in the Barnsley and Doncaster Circuits to be visited and the Manses Committee continue to be pleased with the level of care taken within our circuits to ensure that the manses are maintained to a good standard.

We have yet to recruit a Manses Secretary to carry on the excellent work done by Lionel Derry in this role, and we will also be looking for more manse visitors to replace John and Sue Dilks who have recently stepped down from this responsibility. We thank them for their commitment to this work in recent times and invite you all to be praying about whether this is a ministry that you or someone else you know could be involved in.

*Revd Gill Newton  
District Chair*

## **Methodist Council**

The Methodist Council has continued to meet via Zoom for its October and January meetings, the most recent meeting in March being held in person over 48 hours at Woodland Grange Conference Centre, Leamington Spa. There have also been a number of appointments and re-invitations confirmed electronically between meetings, and I have also been part of a subgroup meeting to consider applications to sell or lease buildings at under market value which needs the consent of the Council.

The Methodist Council in its present form will cease to be after August 2024. The 2022 Conference voted to reduce the size and duration of the Conference and also

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to establish a new trustee body, the Connexional Council, which will replace the Methodist Council and the Strategy and Resources committee. The Connexional Council will be the charity trustee body. It will have general control and management of the Connexional administration of the Methodist Church and will report annually to the Charity Commission. It will consist of around twenty people, with the Secretary of the Conference describing it as small enough to be nimble and flexible and large enough to have different views and balance.

The constitution of the Connexional Council will include the Presidency and Secretariat with the remaining number being made up by persons with appropriate skills. These persons will be nominated for appointment by the Conference following a recruitment process which means Districts will no longer have direct representation. A Nominations Committee is being formed to bring these nominations to the Conference.

The Conference in 2022 passed resolutions to reduce the number of Conference and the size of the Conference will drop from 306 to 225 from 2024. The Methodist Council was asked to do work on the distribution of seats in the Conference. The Conference also agreed to new ways of working which will result in shortening the length of the Conference by a day from 2024. The Council appointed a task group to recommend to Council the distribution of seats and presented its report to the March Council meeting. The report recommends that the category of Conference-elected be abolished and replaced by 7 members of the new Connexional Council, this will ensure that a good proportion of the Connexional Council are members of the Conference, and they would provide the continuity and experience offered by the present Conference-elected representatives. It is agreed that representation of the Synods at the Conference shall be no less than 70% i.e. 158 reduced from 229, this means the number of representatives from the Sheffield District will likely reduce from 7 to 5 from 2024.

A report from the Methodist Schools committee to the March meeting highlighted Emmanuel School, in the Sheffield Circuit, as a recent particularly good example of a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report. Other SIAMS reports can be found here: [www.methodistschools.org.uk/about-us/siams-inspections](http://www.methodistschools.org.uk/about-us/siams-inspections)

Other reports presented to the council include implementation of the Justice Dignity and Solidarity strategy, plans to amalgamate the Bolton and Rochdale, Cumbria, Lancashire and Liverpool districts to form a single district, Walking with Micah, and Positive working together.

Full reports of non-confidential business are available on the Methodist Church website <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/latest-council-papers/>

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This will be my last report to the Synod as I come to the end of my term as District Representative to the council. It has been a privilege to represent the District and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve in this way. My successor from September will be a Presbyter, to be appointed by the Synod, following the pattern of alternating between Lay and Ordained representatives.

*David Burton*

*Methodist Council Representative*

## **Methodist Women in Britain**

Over this last year we have enjoyed fellowship together in many ways. In April The Peveril Centre at Castleton was the Venue for our Quiet Day which was led by Rev Lisa Quarmby.

Swanwick Annual Conference was, as always, a weekend where it was good to meet up with members from all areas of the Connexion. Jill Baker was the keynote speaker and as always gave us food for thought in her bible studies.

June found MWib celebrating a delayed 10th Anniversary at Epworth Rectory with a garden party in the grounds. Afternoon tea was provided and it was a really happy day, enjoyed by all who attended.

The following week we held our District Day at Emmanuel Church, Barnsley. The President, Ruth Parrott was the Speaker and although the number attending was disappointing, time together was enjoyed by all.

The Rededication Service took place in October at Bents Green Methodist Church followed by lunch and was well attended.

December found us enjoying an Advent Quiet Day with Rev Lisa Quarmby and Deacon Annabel Terry with a time spent in various ways of contemplation with prayer stations, activities and the making of Christmas Wreaths, once again enjoying eating together and fellowship together.

The Annual Christmas lunch and Carols was once again enjoyed by everyone at Frecheville Methodist church and was well attended.

Looking forward to this coming year we are planning several events and it would be great to see more people coming along and supporting MWib.

*Pam Meek*

*MWib Sheffield District President*

## **Ministerial Development Review**

Ministerial Development Review is a process which enables Presbyters and Deacons to reflect, with input from others, on how their ministry is being

experienced and fulfilled both in relation to the Church as a whole and within the context in which their ministry is being exercised

The research conducted in 2019-20 into the implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy revealed a lack of clarity about the relationship between supervision and MDR, a lack of confidence in MDR and concerns about the sustainability of both processes. The research report recommended that an audit of current practice and a clarification of the relationship between MDR and supervision be undertaken.

It is clear from the report that the intention is to introduce an effective system of 360 review that enables ministers and those in lay ministry to receive feedback on a regular basis. The aim being strengthen healthy engagement in reflective practice that is responsive to local needs and mission priorities without confusing the supervision and oversight roles.

The timetable for the introduction of a new system of 360 review is still unclear, in the meantime we would continue to encourage all Ministers in the Sheffield District to engage in the MDR process so that they are well placed once the new system is implemented.

*John Lashmar*  
*MDR Officer*

*We thank John for his work over the years as MDR Officer and wish him well in the future.*

## **Mission Development**

### **FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS – RESOURCING YOUR MISSION**

The pace of change in the life of Methodism has continued to accelerate in unexpected ways since we launched our strategy for resourcing your mission in January 2021. Despite the complex challenges many of us are dealing with, there continues to be grounds for hope.

### **Growing Disciples**

Our September 2022 synod focussed on Nurturing Leaders and included announcement of our intention to launch One Programme: District, a youth internship and leadership development programme.

### **Passionate Contextual Worship**

We have continued to offer social media prayers in response to moments of significance across the life of the district and major festivals and seasons. We will keep developing this based on feedback of what is helpful for our members and our churches as an outreach tool. We also continue to offer support and advice for hybrid and online expressions of worship across the district.





### **Sharing Stories**

We have been encouraged to hear of churches incorporating testimony in worship in a variety of forms since making “Everyone Has A Story” the focus of our April 2022 synod. We are sharing stories and testimonies across the district as an encouragement and witness. Having received a strong positive reaction to our Story of the Year 2022 magazine, we will continue to publish printed magazines as part of making this accessible to a wide range of people.

### **Transforming Mission**

Our new Places for New People pilot launched in Derbyshire North East Circuit, with Jonathan Hood appointed as community pioneer. A district grant of £20k was committed to this project, alongside national and circuit funding. We are continuing to support emerging and potential new Christian communities across our circuits. This has included helping the discernment of opportunities, a gathering for pioneer teams, ensuring that people have access to training and coaching. This will become an increasing part of our activities as starting of new congregations becomes once again part of our normal practice.

This winter we have supported a remarkable 39 churches who have offered warm spaces in response to the cost of living crisis.

During 2021/22 we also provided a £23k grant supporting Manor Church & Community Project in Sheffield, as they look to build on their solid base of community cohesion work.

### **Simplifying Procedures**

We have continued to make incremental changes in the way necessary governance is delivered. We are alert to the sometimes overwhelming levels of administration, and fresh ways that some people are finding to address these. Further improvements are planned in this area.

### **Properties Fit For Mission**

Despite the obvious challenges of managing buildings with utility bills having risen steeply, it has been encouraging to see more churches seeking to develop ways of making their properties fit for new forms of mission. We have launched a scheme providing subsidised energy efficiency surveys to help manage costs and reduce carbon footprint.

During 2021/22 we awarded property grants to The Foundry, Sheffield (Victoria Hall) (£7k) and The Grove, Retford (£20k).

*Neil Harland – District Mission Enabler*

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## Peak Park Rural Development

Continuing rural development, I offer a snapshot of the projects I am working with.

### **Edale Chapel**

This tiny little chapel that is over 200 years old has been undergoing renovations. The pandemic, its effect on delaying necessary permissions alongside discoveries of the inevitable unexpected 'extra requirements' has caused long delays. However, work continues. Further permissions have now been granted and the project was commended at the Peak Park Planning Meeting. Folks continue to gather monthly: hikers and regular walkers continue to drop in especially when we hold an outside gathering.

### **The Hub**

This Hiking and Biking project continues in strength. We gather on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at the chapel in Hope or at an agreed location. We are hiking, biking, picnicking, exploring, celebrating, praying, thinking, reflecting and joining in the wonder of God in our lives. A WhatsApp group holds the community together and is the place we share reflections, ask for prayers, and generally communicate with the rest of the Hub Family. On occasion Hub members ask to meet on intervening Sundays too. We have weekday bike gatherings, and a new discipleship group will commence in the spring of 2023. Commitment is varied but approximately 40 people from babies to grandparents are involved. A monthly youth group has begun and a weekly carer and toddler group.

### **Townend Garden Project**

This continues to thrive. We have many groups such as volunteers, supporting mental wellbeing, social prescribers and children's groups. A greenhouse aids work in poorer weather. Garden volunteers have attended the chapel from time to time. The church people continue to use the garden for outdoor worship and events.

### **Rural Villages in the High Peak Partnership (Flagg, Monyash, Earl Sterndale, Hollingsclough)**

Challenges continue. Monyash hosts a successful Messy Church, and more people are coming forward interested in hearing the gospel story and in finding new ways to share the story. We have applied to be a Caleb NPNP project (within the Manchester and Stockport District) and formed a management group. There is much work to do, but it feels positive. Hollingsclough are working in partnership with a local business to provide a teashop at weekends in the hall and heating has been put in the chapel.

Whilst glimmers of hope are around there remains a need to find ways of sustaining the Christian message in the rural margins of our society.

### **Ecumenical working.**

I work with ecumenical colleagues where possible. The Rural Archdeacon has been a good colleague linking me up with other Anglicans in rural ministry. A vicar has been installed in the Peak rural parishes who, although happy to work ecumenically has a specific and difficult task to achieve. In order to face the difficulties of sustainability she has been appointed to 10 Anglican churches to refocus them as either Chapels of Ease or Festival Churches or where possible, strengthen them as Parish churches.

### **Positively Rural**

Continues to remain popular and I very much enjoy being part of the webinar team which includes members of the Learning Network, administrative support and ecumenical partners. This year we have liaised with “Dreaming Beyond’ a similar webinar run by the learning network in Southern and Islands region to promote different subjects and to encourage attendance at either event.

### **The Peak Wesley Way**

Work continues on the Peak Wesley Way, a pilgrimage that links rural chapels across the White and Dark Peak, telling the story of the local people and of the Methodists in the area. Pilgrims can choose to sleep over night in the chapels. A toilet, shower and kitchenette will be available. It is hoped this pilgrimage will be live by the summer of 2023

*Deacon Lorraine Brown*

*Peak Park Rural Development Enabler*

## **Persian Ministries**

The Persian Ministry Development project started in August 2021, whilst the covid pandemic was still impacting church and other activities. Evolving plans for the project had already been discussed with stakeholders for some time. This report summarises progress to date in Hull, Doncaster, and Sheffield against the originally planned programme of activities. It also sets out some suggestions for priorities over the coming year.

Developed relationship with City of Sanctuary (co-ordinating charity of asylum support in Sheffield). Arman has provided some volunteer interpretation for CoSS and visits the weekly multi-agency drop in. Our new Sheffield group meets next door to CoSS.

Now joining Open Doors drop-in sessions at Princes Avenue Methodist Church in Hull most weeks, offering translation support. Bible studies follow on from this.

Built networks with leaders of other churches working with Iranians in Sheffield (Cemetery Road Baptist, Christ Church Central) and Hull. Arman offers occasional Bible studies. We are alert to ecumenical relationships sometimes being complex

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due to differences in theology or churches feeling they are “in competition” with each other.

Requests for letters of support and court appearances have reduced compared to previous levels. We understand this being due to increasing delays in the asylum process.

Where letters have been requested in Hull, Arman has provided information to Rev Randall Barlow to write these, In Doncaster, with there currently being no minister in place, Arman has written letters himself.

Great care is being taken to ensure that baptism classes in both Doncaster and Hull are not rushed and that applicants have an appreciation of the faith they wish to be baptised into. Those who have been baptised through the project (12 in Hull, 4 in Doncaster) have remained engaged with us afterwards.

Bible studies in Hull have recovered from very small numbers after covid. We are now providing a Bible study plus a separate baptism class each week in both Doncaster and Hull. The majority of those attending are exploring Christianity. Membership classes are also being held for some people who we have baptised.

One to one mentoring has been provided to one of our Farsi worshippers in Hull so that he can start to lead baptism classes.

Bible studies follow a clear methodology of observation leading to interpretation leading to application. Written Farsi teaching notes are provided for each study. Where studies are being led by others, Arman reviews their notes prior to the studies to ensure the quality of what is being offered and to teach the teacher.

A new Bible study has been started in central Sheffield (see below).

Arman made contact with Highfield Trinity Methodist Church in Sheffield in 2021, but there did not seem interest from Iranians worshipping there at the time to engage in midweek Farsi activities. We understand that new Iranians continue to join the congregation and will explore opportunities to partner with the new midweek work at 35 Chapel Walk.

Quality of teaching seems to be appreciated in Doncaster, Hull and Sheffield.

In Hull leadership development has focussed on one-to-one mentoring. Whilst we are seeing an eagerness to learn, Arman is taking care to focus on helping new Christians develop and sustain spiritual habits before pushing people into leadership roles – the parable of the sower is important for this ministry. Arman’s own testimony as an asylum seeker has been important here.

In Doncaster there is an Iranian leadership team that meets monthly with Arman. All the team members have been Christians for at least four years.

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We continue to face challenges of lack of housing and employment for people who have been granted leave to remain, meaning that some potential leaders have been forced to relocate to larger cities.

In Hull, Arman is now involved in worship approximately twice per month, attending worship planning on these weeks. Worship generally includes one Farsi song each week. Some Iranians who have been baptised have taken part in leading of worship

Farsi worship is held in Doncaster each week. There are a few members who can lead worship, and a couple who are starting to preach. Outside preachers are also invited for when Arman is not present. Attendance has recovered post covid to around 30, with a stable core and regular new worshippers.

Attempts to use Methodist resources for training of preachers and worship leaders have been frustrating. The hoped for partnership with UMC Germany did not transpire, due to changes in personnel and strategy in UMC Germany. We have continued to discuss with UK Local Preachers Office how training materials and preacher accreditation could be adapted for Farsi worship. At present there does not seem to be flexibility within the system or funding to develop this. We may in time need to develop our own training resources.

A successful Christmas lunch was held in Hull, and Iranian new year will be celebrated. Soup lunches between Open Doors drop in and Bible studies are an important bridge. More regular meals in Hull would be beneficial in attracting new people and building community, but availability of premises and volunteers could be limiting factors.

In Doncaster fellowship meals are held each month, attracting people beyond the congregation.

We continue to see regular new people attending Bible studies in Hull and Doncaster. Doncaster Bible studies are joined remotely by some people in Iran.

People have also joined our new Sheffield group through invitation.

A national network of Methodists ministering with Iranians has started with a first Zoom meeting in December 2022.

In spring 2022 Arman began a Bible study group in Sheffield with two Iranians who had previously been engaging with our Doncaster congregation. They arranged a Christmas dinner and invited friends, which has led to more people joining the Bible study, including someone who previously worshipped with us in Hull.

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This emerging new Christian community is now meeting in the church-owned shop unit at 35 Chapel Walk, next to City of Sanctuary. It is preceded by a community drop in for Iranians.

*Arman Ghamari - Persian Ministry Development Enabler*

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## **Probationers' Committee**

The Sheffield District's probationers are Deacon Emily Hoe-Crook (Trinity Circuit), Rev Michelle Deans (Sheffield Circuit) and Rev Claude Mwansa Kimpinde (Sheffield Circuit). All three are in their second year of probation.

Probationers meet regularly together with Rev Gill Newton and me for fellowship, learning and support. The calendar of meetings for the year includes a Yorkshire Plus Regional retreat, and a 24-hour District retreat and Quiet day with other ministers in the Sheffield District who have served under ten years in ministry.

Members of the District Probationers' Committee had an informal gathering in November which provided an opportunity get to know Michelle, Emily and Claude outside of a formal Committee setting. It should be noted that whilst Claude is a probationer, as an ordained Minister from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, he is assessed separately at connexional level.

The District Probationers' Committee met with Emily and Michelle on the 28th of February and assessed that they are ready to be recommended for reception into Full Connexion and ordination this year.

For your diaries, please note that there will be a District Celebration Service, at which we will hear testimonies from our probationer ministers, on **Sunday 11th June at 3pm** at The Crossing Church & Centre, Worksop.

Thanks are given to all those who support and encourage Claude, Michelle, and Emily in this formative time of their ministry. Your ongoing prayers for them and their families are valued.

*Revd Tracey Harris*

*Sheffield District Probationer Secretary*

## **Property**

This report into the missional property within the District marks my 18 months in position as a Missional Property Enabler; my role includes that of District Property Secretary as well as somebody who wanted to help and promote better use of property admission and resource in the district.

In the last 12 months, 13 properties have been sold within the District, and several other churches are looking at ceasing to meet as a current congregation. Part of my

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work has been looking at the sale process and how alternative uses are promoted and decided upon for buildings within circuits. This decision is often based on financial or capacity reasonings and the needs of the circuit at that time rather than the missional opportunities or needs of the communities left behind after a church is closed.

This year has also seen an induction of several different initiatives and support. Several resources have now been added to the district website, including a business and missional planning toolkit, tendering documents and specifications resources, and significant input and guidance on the Connexional property website signposted from the District website.

There has also been the launch of the Eco-surveys looking at building efficiency and ways of reducing costs to Church Councils both on the environment and on financial costs. We have seen a 21% increase in churches becoming eco churches registered with A Rocha. Connexional targets have now been set - Net zero by 2030, and 50% of churches to become eco churches by 2026. During the next year I will be working with circuits on how we can do this.

There is still a need across the district and circuits for a deeper and more meaningful approach to building management in the long term, especially with more complicated or complex buildings or users using them. Several initiatives are looking at ways and means of being able to do this long term, but in short, there is not an easy answer apart from direct support and experience from members.

*Tom Rattigan - Missional Property Enabler*

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T: 07483 318 823

## **Sabbaticals**

It is always fascinating to discover the breadth of interests and gifts amongst the District's ministers as they share with us their dreams and hopes for their sabbaticals, and then send in their reports after the sabbaticals are completed. This last year experiences during sabbaticals have ranged from visits to examples of Pioneer ministry to exploring spiritual resources through different faith traditions; from preparing for the transition to retirement to writing songs and 'learning to stop, rest and wait on God'; from visits to churches and communities in Kenya to time spent at the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. The gift of a sabbatical is always deeply appreciated and often ministers return refreshed and re-energised for ministry.

During this year the DSAG has received and approved reports from Revs Tim Crome, Mark Goodhand, Jonathan Gichaara, Gareth Jones, Debora Marschner, Margaret Mwailu, Adrian Perry, and Angela Potheary. The group has also considered and approved prospectuses together with sabbatical timings and arrangements for Deacon Jackie Wright, Revs Julie Coates, Ashley Cooper, Mick

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Neal, Lisa Quarmby, and Carla Quenet. It has agreed that the sabbaticals for Revs Judith Jessop and Jill Pullan be delayed until the next Connexional year. The list of those due to take sabbaticals in the 23/24 Connexional year includes Revs Sean Adair and Claire Rawlinson.. The DSAG expects to consider their sabbatical prospectuses along with reports of any completed sabbaticals at its next meeting which is currently scheduled for October 2022.

We are grateful to all members of the Local Sabbatical Support Groups (LSSG) in enabling sabbaticals by supporting ministers and their families and ensuring adequate cover during sabbatical periods, as well as helping to explain the purpose and value of sabbaticals to local churches.

I am very grateful to the members of the District Sabbaticals Advisory Group – Rev Gill Newton as District Chair, the District MDR Officer (John Lashmar) and two lay people or supernumerary ministers (Agnes Tranter and Rev. David Hunter) - for the time and care they give to the process of considering and approving sabbatical prospectuses, giving advice, receiving reports, and supporting ministers

*Revd Liz Wills*

*District Sabbaticals Officer*

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding, at District level, has now been given a set of standards and criteria to work with. Connexional expectation is that the 13 standards will help facilitate the District Safeguarding Group (DSG) in:

- An overview of the profile of safeguarding in the district,
- Enabling evaluation of safeguarding
- Assisting in determination of priorities
- Supporting the development of a strategic plan
- Enabling review of progress against the plan.

Currently the DSG is in year 2 of a 3-year plan to consider the best way to meet each standard. Year 1 allowed the normal work, carried out by me, to be plotted against each standard. In this 2nd year we are creating strategies to meet the standards which need more attention. Using this Connexional year to create plans demonstrates an intentional approach rather than simply reacting in the moment. Come the start of year 3 in September, we hope to put our plans in place.

One recurring theme running through a number of standards is to “help and support all circuits and churches in implementing District and Connexional Safeguarding policies and procedures”.

With a focus primarily on safeguarding at church level, last Connexional year I wrote a series of letters to Church Safeguarding Officers, detailing the Connexional expectations laid out in the model Church Safeguarding Policy. If forms were



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needed, I created them, hopefully saving our individual church safeguarding officers time and effort.

Over the summer of 2022, these letters were turned into a book – the Church Safeguarding Officers Handbook. Details of the handbook and all the associated documents were uploaded onto the District Website. Churches who completed last year's Safeguarding audit received a letter promoting these new resources plus publicity was also included in the weekly District newsletter.

Feedback from Church Safeguarding Officers has been very positive and so we have had enough copies of the handbook printed so each church in the district can have two hard copies; one for the Church Safeguarding officer and one for the Church Council. These should be with you very soon. If more copies are needed please feel free to download and print: <https://www.sheffieldmethodist.org/what-we-dosafeguardingsupport-for-circuits-churches.html>

Pleasingly, the handbook was spotted by a safeguarding colleague from a different District and by the Connexional Safeguarding team. All agree that providing a handbook of quick and practical ways to embed safeguarding at Church level is a great idea and so Connexion are planning on adopting the handbook and promoting it nationally.

*Alison Hill - District Safeguarding Officer*  
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## **Stationing**

We started the 2023 stationing round in May of 2022. The meetings with individual presbyters were held at the District Office, and the training for Circuits was held at Central (Aston) Methodist Church.

We held our District Stationing Forum on 12th July 2022, at Greenhill Methodist Church. All Circuits in the District were invited to attend and share information on their particular circumstances and hopes for the future development of ministry. This did give an early indication of which appointments we would wish to be critical should they enter stationing, and the possibility of seeking probationer presbyter, diaconal, and MOCC (Ministers of other Churches and Connexions) appointments.

At the beginning of this 2023 stationing round, there were seven presbyters across five Circuits prayerfully seeking to discern God's calling upon their ministry. As time progressed, one indicated his desire to sit down, four sought and were offered re-invitation, one entered stationing, and one decided not to enter stationing.

In October 2022 the conversation with one presbyter entering stationing was held at the District Office. In addition, there were meetings with the three Circuits entering Stationing to consider possible matches from the presbyteral profiles in

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Stationing. The training for these Circuits seeking appointments was held on 18th October at Central (Aston) Methodist Church.

Five presbyteral appointments for three Circuits were identified and submitted to Stationing, with one of the appointments designated 'critical.' By the end of Stationing Matching Group 3, four were matched, with the one without a match remaining in the stationing process. We thank God for very positive and encouraging visits and the issuing of letters of understanding to our four incoming ministers. So, subject to stations being called at the Methodist Conference, we will welcome Rev John Henry as Doncaster Superintendent, Rev Andrew Fox as Rotherham & Dearne Valley Superintendent, Rev Louise Makin as Rotherham & Dearne Valley Presbyter, and Rev Lyn Gregg as Barnsley Presbyter. The Barnsley Superintendent post remains in stationing.

In May 2023, we will be starting the stationing and re-invitation process for September 2024. The situation continues to be that there is a significant gap between ministers available in stationing and Circuit appointments, with the expectation that this will worsen. There was a high proportion of Superintendent posts in Stationing this year.

The Stationing Review Group began its work in January, reviewing the current process of Stationing. We anticipate an interim report at the June Conference.

We continue to encourage all Circuits to prayerfully consider their local situations including staffing, ministerial and lay, in relation to Circuit Mission Plans. Circuit Invitation Committees should be appointed this month. A stationing leaflet, giving May and October 2023 dates for training for Circuits and conversations with ministers, has been circulated. The Code of Practice 2024 for all involved in the Invitation and Stationing Process of Presbyters and Deacons will be published this May. There are currently seven presbyters and one deacon in five circuits across the District who are starting to think and pray about the future direction of their ministry. Your prayers are invited for the process to be positive and affirming, and for sensitivity and integrity throughout.

*Gill Daly*

*Lay Stationing Representative*

(Since this article was submitted, the Barnsley Circuit has been pleased to make a match with Rev Louise Carr who will become their Superintendent from September 2023.

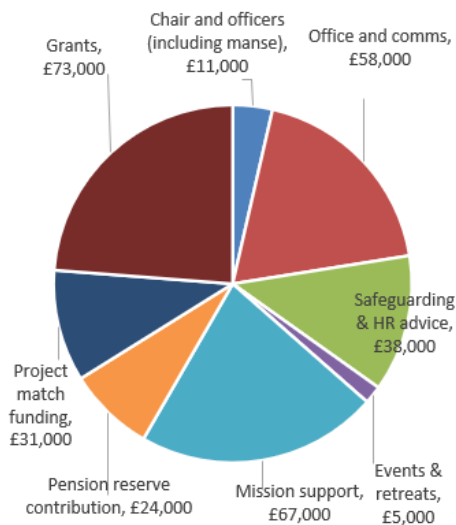
## **Treasurer**

Full statutory District accounts for 2021/22 will be approved by the District Leadership Team. Copies are available on request and will be made public via the Charity Commission website. A summary of the District finances is provided here:

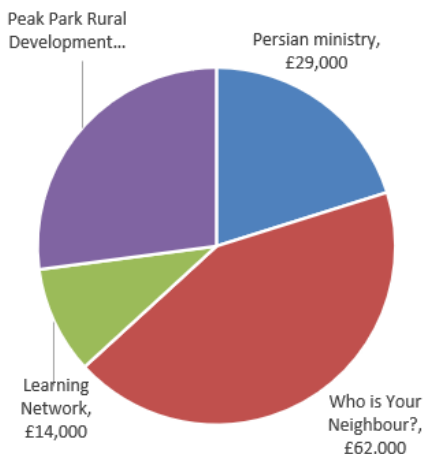
<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>INCOME</b>					
Unrestricted	148	130	119	108	100
Restricted	230	154	205	282	149
District Advance Fund	256	176	178	159	202
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>451</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Unrestricted	142	112	108	103	88
Restricted	328	180	263	288	271
District Advance Fund	142	45	116	157	261
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)</b>					
Unrestricted	6	18	11	5	12
Restricted	(98)	(26)	(58)	(6)	(122)
District Advance Fund	114	131	62	2	(59)
<b>Total surplus/ (deficit)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(169)</b>

The main source of unrestricted and Advance Fund income continues to be contributions from our circuits and distributions arising from property sales. The uncommitted balance on our Advance Fund increased by £72,000 during the year, with income being higher than anticipated. The balance carried forward in the fund is expected to decrease over the next three years as we begin to invest in starting new Christian communities, amongst other initiatives.

**UNRESTRICTED AND ADVANCE FUND SPEND**



**EXTERNALLY FUNDED SPEND**



<b>FUNDS HELD AND OUTLOOK</b>	<b>31-Aug-22</b>	<b>31-Aug-21</b>	<b>31-Aug-20</b>	<b>31-Aug-19</b>	<b>31-Aug-18</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>CLOSING FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted funds	289	286	268	259	316
District Advance Fund	232	160	54	36	34
Restricted funds	65	118	119	131	75
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>425</b>

Months expenditure held as liquid funds	6	8	6	4	13
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Our reserves policy is to hold between three and six months unrestricted expenditure as liquid funds (i.e. cash and debtors, less creditors). The District Leading Team are aware of the severe financial pressures facing our circuits and churches, but also of the need to invest in the future of mission and ministry. We will continue to manage district finances accordingly.

*Neil Harland - District Treasurer*

## **Worship and Preaching**

During the last year, I have endeavoured to talk with Local Preachers' tutors and to visit Circuit Local Preachers' meetings – there are still a couple I need to visit. This has given me a chance to get to know people and discuss some of the issues we are facing in the training of local preachers and worship leaders. There are similar challenges across the district, mainly linked to a lack of tutors and mentors. As a district we hope to create a district tutoring team to support circuits with this element. We have some names already but if you feel called to tutor one module of Worship Leading and Preaching, please do get in touch to discuss this further. Equally if you feel called to support a worship leader or local preacher in training, please discuss this with your Local Preachers' Secretary.

As part of the other side of my role, as a district we developed the district digital Advent calendar with support from local circuits as well as a daily devotion for Lent. This will be followed later in the year with more social media posts to use during this year's Bible Month on the book of Revelation. Thank you to circuits for their support during Advent and we look forward to hearing and sharing more of your stories during Bible Month and in the future.

If you have any further suggestions on what you would like to see as part of digital posts, online worship or need support with, please contact Sam Roberts, District Communications Officer

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**Local Preachers (LP) and Worship Leaders (WL) who have passed away:**

- Dr Peter Andrews was a LP who passed away on 4th April 2022.
- Kay Whiteley was a WL who passed away on 28th April 2022.
- Richard Lindsey was remembered at the September 2022 Synod
- Bill Campbell, accredited in 1952, died in March 2022.
- Doreen Driver accredited in 1959 died on 13th December 2022

*Apologies for any missing information which was not available at the time of writing. Please let Claire know of any omissions.*

Please hold the Worship Leaders and Local Preachers who resource the worship life of our District's Churches in your prayers. Give thanks for them. Encourage them. Pray for God's blessing on their ministries.

*Revd Claire Rawlinson – [claire.rawlinson@methodist.org.uk](mailto:claire.rawlinson@methodist.org.uk)*

