

Sheffield Methodist District Leading Team

Meeting on 8 November 2022 at 7.00 pm via ZOOM



Present

Gill Newton (GN); Julie Coates (JC); Neil Harland (NH); McCauley Key (MK); Mick Neal (MN); Jon Bellfield (JB); Dave Burton (DB) (non-voting) Katrin Hackett (KH); Erica Dunmow (ED)

Opening Business

1. **Opening worship : based on Luke 4: 14-21;**

2. **Apologies for absence**

Margaret Mwilu (Sabbatical)

ED was welcomed to the meeting

3. **Minutes of the DLT on 8 September 2022**

These have been circulated and accepted as an accurate record

4. **Matters arising from the minutes:**

Presidential Support Group – this has been established and will be meeting next week.

Safeguarding Provision – The other 2 Districts in the Yorkshire Plus Region have advertised for the Assistant District Safeguarding Officer role, but if we decide to join in, the hours would be increased. The papers were circulated for reference. KH has been tracking her hours on Safeguarding; it is slightly more than Val due to also picking up the hosting element for online training. Alison Hill (DSO) feels she is doing more realistic hours due to KH picking up more admin. More Safeguarding Training is being planned, including spiritual abuse training. If DSOs are to pick this up, it may affect her hours. She is keen to support work on New Places for New People and Ukrainian refugees. She suggests that it might be valuable to work regionally with regard to the online training, which might help with workload.

MN suggested a regional safeguarding team might be a way forward. If the connexion are increasing the training requirements, then this might be a solution, especially if the LN are not involved. There is some connexional conversation around DSO becoming connexional employees. There are budget concerns. It might be beneficial to wait and see rather than commit at this stage.

KH & ED moved to a breakout room while further discussion took place and it was agreed that this District would not join in this initiative at this stage.

Items For Discussion And Decision

5. **Missional Grants overview**

Christian Centre, Stocksbridge - (*started while KH was in break-out room*) The papers have been circulated. The Sheffield Circuit has expressed support in principle, via the Mission Vision Team. MK noted that there is a concern that it could become “just a community centre” and wanted to explore this further about how the mission would be envisioned (the God element)

Ian Lucraft joined the meeting (19:30). This is a church whose life has been centred around this. It has worked and maintained a worshipful, prayerful approach to faith at its core. The food bank would be serving a need. The church understands it is there to serve the community, and to offer conversations if requested. Ian was asked to lead the food bank into a new development, before he was asked to be minister of the church.

MN asked about funding – is this for the church or foodbank. There are 2 projects in play here; the church building which is not ideally designed and needs to be turned into a building for today-the community hub; the second is setting up the food bank and community cafe. A separate bank account is being set up. The first money will be for adapting the building, unless any funding is ring-fenced for the food bank.

JB wondered if there might be opposition from food providers, given the faith element. Good conversations are being had with the Co-op, Tesco, town council etc. The Food Bank will be in a separate part of the building.

GN thanked Ian for his time.

Discussion: NH suggested that any grant would be conditional on the Circuit funding; JB suggested it should also be conditional on more of the applied funding being agreed.

DLT unanimously agreed that it was a project worth supporting.

Funding: the District would not normally support a Food Bank, MN suggested that 10% is offered to the two phases, the second is the space which is intended to house the foodbank. NH suggested £20,000 at this stage, but to come back if really struggling to fill a short-fall. DLT are in favour of this suggestion, conditionally on the Circuit supporting the project and the mission plan being developed. NH will inform Ian Lucraft.

The Missionnal Grant overview was circulated and there were no further comments.

6. Treasurer's Report

The report has been circulated. General fund has a slight surplus despite the donation to the Pension Fund and the increased Communications Officer Salary. Advanced fund is expecting a significant sum to come from levies on Circuit Model Trust Funds. There is money available to support new and riskier projects. The Connexion have made a Cost of Living allowance for ministers (including supernumeraries), is there a response to be made for District lay staff. GN will be speaking to Superintendents on this, and we will make a district response following this. There are complexities to this.

There were no questions on the report – and NH was thanked for his work on the finances.

7. Mission Strategy Update

The paper has been circulated. The uptake on the Warm Spaces grants is encouraging. The Sheffield Justice & Peace group are keen to extend beyond the Sheffield Circuit. It is suggested that this become the Justice Seekers Community of Practice.

There were no questions on the report.

8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion/Justice, Dignity & Solidarity

Erica was welcomed to speak to the meeting.

Updates on what is happening nationally –

a paper was shared which suggests that mandatory EDI training at foundation level will be introduced. This will be for most office holders (as with Safeguarding). There is currently no information on who will delivery this, implementation etc. Training will be tested by on-line assessment, which might be a challenge for some. There will be an option for gathered sessions. There is no time scale as yet.

The challenge will be to make this a positive thing to do, rather than something people have to do.

The Connexion has wanted District to have JDS groups, the proposal regarding the Sheffield Justice & Peace group might be a possibility for this District. There is some concern if the agenda is taken over by top-down initiatives. Further discussions are ongoing. NH is also involved in this, steering away from a committee with a fixed membership to a community of practice.

MN noted that there are people who engage in justice issues (Church Action on Poverty etc), what makes this different? The Community of Practice is about sharing ideas together, to advocate and encourage.

DLT are content to allow these conversations to continue to see where this leads.

Erica shared some questions on EDI –

Members of the meeting shared examples of EDI developments over the last 2 years, such as the number of churches registering for Same Sex marriage, folk undertaking the unconscious bias training, growth of Prospects Church, & Autism Awareness services, Mental health issues, Dementia friendly churches. This is an encouraging list and should be celebrated.

On a scale of 1-10 on best practice, members agreed the district probably scored somewhere between 3 & 4 – an honest reflection.

What blocks are there, what action point could be needed:

Blocks: not talking, and not asking the right questions; people are more likely to learn from seeing good practice than from compulsory training. But some people may need this training to give them the wider understanding.

This is a way to be with each other, not a thing to do to each other. Start the conversation around how we behave with each other, rather than training.

GN thanked Erica for her time. Erica left the meeting.

9. The Foundry – alcohol licence (SO 922 3a)

The paper has been circulated. The Victoria Hall Church Council had a robust discussion prior to giving its approval. There is something to celebrate in our tradition of no alcohol. However, the precedent has already been set, and there is a clear plan to keep this under control. Agreeing may allow the building to continue to serve in the community. The paper had been circulated to the Circuit Leadership Team for comment, with no adverse reactions.

DB declared his interest as a member of the Foundry Board.

Voting took place: 4 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstain.

We note that this is a complicated issue, but NH will feedback the outcome of the decision to The Foundry.

10. Presidential Visit

The letter from the President has gone out. We note that GN will be the President 😊 It is perfectly in order to invite GN to events. If there are particular things happening which it might be appropriate to invite GN in her presidential capacity these can be advised the Presidential PA. GN will have conversations with Superintendents on this. This also applies to the Vice-President.

11. District Officers

A reminder that we still need a manses secretary, to replace NH as treasurer, and more DLT members. GN is having a conversation with a possible new DLT member.

If by the next DLT meeting we have been unable to recruit any new members, we should consider revisiting the constitution of DLT.

12. Methodist Council Report

The report had been circulated. There were no questions

13. Authorised to serve application

GN has received a request from the Sheffield Circuit to grant the status to Tracey Morris, an Anglican presbyter who has taken up a post at St Columba's and Stephen Hill Methodist Church. This is simply a reporting matter and there is no further action for the DLT to take.

Meeting closed with prayer and at 21:0

Dates for DLT meetings 2022/23

Wednesday 4 January – on zoom

Thursday 9 March

Thursday 11 May – note the change of date

Tuesday 4 July