

Sheffield Methodist District Leading Team Meeting on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 7.00 pm via ZOOM



Present

Gill Newton (GN); Dave Burton (DB); McCauley Key (MK);
Margaret Mwailu (MM); Neil Harland (NH)
Welcome to new members: Gill Daly (GD) -Lay Stationing Representative and Claire Rawlinson (CR),
Worship and Preaching Office.

(non-voting) Katrin Hackett (KH)

Opening Business

1. Opening worship – Exodus 3, beginning at verse 12

Let us listen for the voice of God.

2. Apologies for absence

Julie Coates; Mick Neal: both on sabbatical

3. Minutes of the DLT on 9 March 2022

These have been circulated and accepted as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

4. Presidency Support Group (funding) – The group has met and is confident that all areas are covered. Julie Coates will be covering a number of these. Revd Philip McDonald is moving to Trinity Circuit as a supernumerary and has agreed to serve in the circuit to back-fill for Julie for 2 days a week. The cost of this has been approved by the Methodist Council

11. Connexional Assessment – There has been no response to the letter sent by GN. NH joined a District Treasurers meeting and a five-year financial plan will be going to the Conference this year. This will be based on a 3% increase in real terms each year. NH did feed in that this might be difficult to sustain over the full five years. There are changes planned in connexional spending, which may impact on this. It might be difficult to challenge at Conference. NH is willing to meet again with other District Treasurers on this. This is something the Conference Reps can discuss.

5. Decisions made between meetings for ratification

There were no decisions made between the meetings

Items For Discussion and Decision

6. Mission Strategy Update

The paper has been circulated. The format has been to help keep people informed with an overview of the whole strategy and a more focused discussion on a specific topic. More recently it is an update rather than any new projects starting.

The District Staff Team will be having another Away-Day over the summer and hope to have a view of the direction of travel for the next year.

The pool of Local Preachers' Tutors is currently at 7 where we need 8. There are some more possible names in the pipeline. The biggest issue is changing tutors over, but it hoped that in future all tutors will be able to see the progress of all, via the online system, to help with handover etc.

7. Warm Spaces report

This has been deferred to the next meeting.

8. Lay Employment – Andrew Crawford

Andrew was welcomed to the meeting at 19:25

- a) **Support** – a paper on the Employees Assistance Programme has been circulated. This came out of a conversation with the Lay Employee Sub-Committee. AC has spoken to 3 possible providers; BUPA seems to be the best option with some approximate costings. Is this something that should be for District Staff or include Circuit employees as well? The cost would be borne by the employing body. A survey of Lay Employees across the circuits might be a good idea. MK suggested that support is also necessary for those involved in managing employees, such as line managers and management groups.

AC thinks it is a good idea to have access to specialist impartial counselling.

NH: It can be difficult to access independently such support, so to have a system which makes this available is a good idea. However, it is something that will need to be well advertised, so it doesn't get forgotten. Others supported this idea as something that they would value.

Yorkshire North & East District employ a Well-being Officer, but this is externally funded and for a limited time period. Nottingham & Derby District had also employed one in the past, again this ceased due to funding issue.

The proposal is to trial this for the District Staff for one year.

The Superintendents will be asked for their views on a survey of Lay Employees. This will help employees to feel that they have a voice. AC will take this to the Superintendents as coming from the Lay Employment Sub-Committee. This is to explore how we can better support our employees.

DLT agreed to ask AC to do more work on costings etc to bring the next meeting, and to send (via the District Office) the survey, after informing the Superintendents

- b) **Staff Handbook** – DLT are asked if this should be finalised and distributed and could this then also be adopted by circuits. AC would work with the circuit to adapt to their own circumstances. This handbook would be kept on the District website to be kept updated by AC as necessary.

DB: Sheffield Circuit are considering setting up their own lay employment group and this would be an invaluable resource. GD also felt this would be used by Derbyshire North East.

AC – some of the language may be adapted.

DLT agree to allow this work to be completed and available to District Staff on the website. GN will ask Julie Coates to invite AC to a Superintendents Meeting to discuss this further at Circuit level.

AC asked if DLT want to see each policy as it is written or are they content to entrust this to the Lay Employment Sub-committee. GN & NH are on this committee.

DLT agreed that the Lay Employment Sub-committee will do the work, and DLT will be advised of the final content.

- c) **Policies** – this is deferred to another meeting

Andrew was thanked for his work. He then left the meeting at 19:56

9. Sheffield District Methodist Ministers' Housing Association

A paper has been circulated. Peter Metcalf, Judith Calvert, and John Bailey joined the meeting at 19:58. They were thanked for the paper that they had prepared.

A question was asked if there has been any thought about merging with the Methodist Ministers' Housing Association. There is some resistance to this idea, as the organisation was established in this District and would like to retain this local level. Such a merger would lead to rental differences and a change in letting terms and conditions.

How could the SDMMHA work more closely with the District? The ideal would be for the District to take this on fully, but this would be a very big request. It might be that the SDMMHA could buy into more specialised support from the district, perhaps have some external consultancy, someone to offer advice and guidance on the best way forward for the Association and its tenants.

Current involvement is very minimal. GN chairs the Association, all but one member are members of the District, but it was established as a separate entity. There is some limited financial support from some of the circuits.

There could be a way to enable a closer support arrangement, but merging might not be possible. Advice will need to be sought from connexional legal and property teams on this. GN will approach Joanne Anderton, Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, to find out what the legal position will be. The paper will be shared with Joanne to help with the background. NH will work with SMDDHA to look at more detail about what might be possible from the district. The group were thanked for their time. They left the meeting at 20:18. There is still a need for such housing, but not as much as there has been in the past.

10. Grant Overview

- a) Totley Rise – The application has been circulated. This is something that does need action to enable the building to continue to be used. The Sheffield Circuit have not yet awarded a grant due to short-term cash flow issues. This might yet happen in the future. Other grants have been applied for. John Lashmar joined the meeting at 20:27. He reported that they were still waiting to hear back from other grant applications, apart from the Sheffield Circuit; an approach to TMCP may go in following tonight's meeting. They have one tender in from the preferred contractor which has come in under the budget, the City Council application won't be until June. The Environment Agency state that work must be done in July to September. JL was thanked for his work. He left the meeting at 20:35.
- b) St John's Swinton – This is the final step in a long refurbishment. The Circuit mission plan was not included in the papers circulated but has been seen by NH. Ed Archer-Siddall joined the meeting at 20:36. The issue with the roof is with a tree next to the building which they are hoping to take out at some point. This has led to the roof tiles being degraded to becoming porous. The building is the only community building in the area and is very well used. This work would have to cease if the roof is not replaced. The area is not well-off financially. More rooms are being made available to let to help increase the financial stability of the building. EA-S was thanked for his time and work on the application. He left the meeting at 20:42.

DLT agreed to support St John's Swinton with a grant of £4000
DLT agreed to grant of £3000 to Totley Rise subject to the Sheffield Circuit also offering a similar grant and if the additional funding is not forthcoming.
- c) NPNP Rossington – McCauley Key moved to a break-out room due to his relationship to the application. The papers have been circulated. The proposal has been presented to the circuit and it was well received. It has been through the connexional process. DLT agreed to support the grant of £20,000 as outlined in the paper. MK rejoined the meeting and was informed of this decision.

11. Treasurer's Report

The report has been circulated. NH gave a brief explanation for the benefit of the new members. The recommendation is that Lay Salaries continue to be increased in line with the annual stipend increases. This was agreed, noting that this can be reviewed in the future if necessary. GN will write to District Staff to confirm this. NH was thanked for his work.

12. EDI Policy/JDS Strategy Impact assessment

GN has reminded Superintendents and Circuit Stewards about the need to do the EDI training. GN will speak with the EDI officer to help raise awareness of this.

13. DLT Membership

The District Synod approved the new constitution. Other new members will be recruited from other roles. The Superintendent role will be recruited in September when the new ones are in post. Sean Adair will join the next DLT meeting as the Superintendent Rep (and possibly chair the meeting). The

Synod representation will be elected by Synod. The other roles will need to be advertised. The role description will be looked at by GN & NH. MK suggested that those interested might be invited to shadow a meeting. KH will send the existing role description to GN & NH

Other Matters

14. Methodist Council Report

The Synod Report contains the main report. There was a meeting of the Council today which looked at merging Cornwall & Isles of Scilly with Plymouth & Exeter – this is still ongoing; Four Districts – Lancashire, Bolton & Rochdale, Cumbria and Liverpool have agreed to merge and this proposal will go to Conference

An Appeals Committee for Lay Authorisations has been approved

DB was thanked for representing the District on the Council

15. AOB

There was no other business

16. Closing worship.

The meeting closed with prayer at 21:12

Dates for DLT meetings 2022/23

Tuesday 4 July