

## **Peak Circuit Staffing Strategy from 2024**

### **For Presentation to the District Leadership Team on 7<sup>th</sup> September**

Since September 2022, following Conference resolutions on minimum membership of local Churches, and the move to reduce the number of committees at every level, the Peak Circuit have made it a priority to try to discern a way forward, that reduces the burden placed upon the shoulders of a few people, and which more efficiently and more fruitfully responds to God's call and fulfils what is required of us

Since then we have held 3 rounds of open meetings for the Circuit, where we initially outlined the circumstances and needs, and have been discussing how best we can manage the resources we have, along with the legal responsibilities relating to Church Councils, finance and personnel.

Feedback has been recorded and circulated from those meetings, and the CLT have subsequently discussed and identified possible ways forward in light of the feedback.

Rev Julie Letts, Circuit Minister covering the Hope Valley section is due to retire in August 2024. Considerable time, prayer and energy has been, and continues to be given, to agreeing a way forward in order to 'serve the present age'.

The latest round of meetings were invited to discuss the possibility of reducing ordained staff to one Presbyterian, with a view to developing a broader staff team to oversee new forms of ministry in our Churches and communities. There are 2 main reasons why we believe we need to reduce ordained staff. One reason is that as things stand, the Circuit are not in a position to sustain 2 Presbyters financially, which includes the cost of both a manse and stipend. The other reason is that from the responses to a recent consultation about the position and needs of local Churches, we believe it will be more fruitful and productive to consider different forms of ministry in order to fulfil what we believe God is asking of us, and to more productively meet the needs of local Churches and communities.

It is probable that some Churches will need to close, some may share resources more with local Anglican Churches, and where there is a clear missional focus, we are looking carefully at resourcing Churches with Lay Pastors / Workers or a Pioneer Minister, that can be either ordained or Lay.

We will need to reduce Church Councils, due to a number of Churches not having sufficient Trustees to be quorate, so the Superintendent Minister will only be required to chair a small number of Church Councils in a year.

One of the greater challenges is with regard to the provision of worship, but we will continue to talk together with all Churches about ways we can meet those needs.

Whilst there is some reluctance from some members of the Circuit, it is also recognised that even if we had sufficient finances, the appointment of another Presbyterian from September 2024 will only serve to maintain a model of leadership and ministry provision that we believe is unsustainable and which will not best serve the Kingdom of God in the future.