

Circuit Stewards Gathering held on Zoom

15 November 2023

Present

- Doncaster - Kathryn Harris, Alan Mendum, Chris Raper
- Sheffield – Joyce Wiles, Maryke Turvey, David Burton (also involvement in Trinity), Matt Irons, Jenny Bywaters, Katrin Hackett
- Trinity – Joy Fuller, Spen Welchman, Hillary Bennett
- Peak – Malcolm Letts, Tom Donoghue, Heather Thomas, Sheila Travis
- Rotherham & Dearne Valley – David Ryan, Vic Loveday
- Barnsley – Heather Hague
- Derbyshire North East – Gill Daly, Roger Jones
- District – Neil Harland (Mission Enabler), Rev Julie Coates (Deputy Chair)

Apologies:

- Margaret Mwailu (Synod Secretary)
- Sheffield – John & Sue Dilks, Ann & Arthur Lyons
- Doncaster – Carol Corbridge, Christine Ogley
- Barnsley – Ellie Peet, Michael Sanderson & Dawn Webster
- Rotherham & Dearne Valley – Anita Andrew, Jent Hampshire, Graham Hudson

Sharing news from circuits

Peak Circuit will be opening bookings for their Peak Wesley Way pilgrimage in the next few weeks, with first pilgrims able to start in the spring. Working as a coordinated circuit and in smaller focused teams has been essential to this. Local people beyond our churches have started providing support.

Trinity – some challenges, but also some churches worshipping differently and using resources in new ways – glimmers of hope

Doncaster – setting new plans for mission in partnership with a new superintendent (John Henry). One congregation leaving Methodism is causing pain. Lack of local preachers is a big challenge

Rotherham & Dearne Valley – also have a new superintendent (Andrew Fox), are starting circuit-wide mission planning

Sheffield – it is now ten years since the new circuit started. All congregations are being asked for their views on a new plan through a “Casting the net on the other side” consultation on mission and ministry. This will likely result in creating clusters of churches to make the circuit staffing more affordable and increase connectedness

Derbyshire North East – are in stationing for a superintendent. Had been exploring multisite model, but this is now on hold. Are recruiting a youth pioneer and hopefully soon a circuit operations manager. Finances are still difficult and reliant on property sales.

Lay employee salaries

- Real Living Wage increase is being implemented from December in Derbyshire North East and Trinity, but Barnsley are waiting until April.

- Peak Circuit have set up a review group to bring consistency to salary rates and job descriptions, and to set plans for better line management. Sheffield have recently set up an employment support group
- Suggested that representatives from each circuit meet with Andrew Crawford (District HR Officer) to look for consistency

Mission strategy update

Neil shared update on district mission strategy and support available. Neil to circulate slides from this ASAP (note from Neil, a tidier version will be on the way soon)

Other news

Out of the Ordinary – Julie shared Connexional Christmas resources, including discussion starter postcards. These also tie in to advent worship resources. Muddy Church resources linking to these are available at https://ko-fi.com/s/0ef029e186?fbclid=IwAR2gl3ON1DrYdZiOqPehcsFzEL_z3sUxGx5IDcljKcTeQhf1cfGDdnb9kWs

President/ Vice President visit 2024/25 – Julie will circulate details of this opportunity. Offers of activities worth including on a visit are sought

EDI training – this has been a hard sell, course materials are not user friendly, and are dependent on the expertise of the trainers. Running as a form of worship proved engaging. Notwithstanding this, it is a very important subject, and what we do practically beyond training is crucial as we embed a culture change.

GDPR – Katrin emphasized that important churches do what they can, and that support is available from her

Life on the Breadline – exhibition and engagement resource will be coming to the district in lent <https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/churches/lent-course/> , which was well received on the Positively Rural webinar

Next meeting

7:30pm Wednesday 1st May on Zoom. Andrew Crawford will be invited to this meeting