

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Our strategy for resourcing your mission 2020-25

LEADING TEAM PROGRESS UPDATE

3 January 2024



This paper sets out progress on key actions planned for 2023/24.

Our original strategy including the overall “theory of change” (what is our context, what do we hope will be different in the future, and what needs to be done in the meantime to enable this) is available for reference at: <https://www.sheffieldmethodist.org/about-us/for-such-a-time-as-this.html>

Following discussion at September 2023 DLT meeting, district staff and officers are assumed to be working towards the current actions in the update paper put to that meeting. In the interest of preparing a paper that is concise enough to be digestible, only those items where since the last DLT meeting there has been significant progress, a major change in circumstances, or reason to believe that the actions first proposed are no longer desirable or achievable are listed here. Whilst the number of items referenced here is relatively small, much work is ongoing amongst the team.

FEEDBACK FROM SUPERINTENDENTS RESIDENTIAL

Superintendent’s residential focussed primarily on thinking contained in two books, both recommended:

- [Deep Roots : Wild Branches](#), using Fresh Expressions principles to revitalise existing churches
- [Revive Us Again](#) recapturing our Methodist “why” drawing inspiration from Wesley’s message and methods

I also spent some time discussing For Such A Time As This with them. Key themes emerging were:

- Urgency of forming new Christian communities
- Leading strategic and cultural change in a manner which empowers and inspires local members; avoiding antagonism or becoming bogged down in only reorganising back office functions
- Developing, networking and equipping senior leaders (e.g. circuit stewards)
- Making justice seeking more explicit in our mission priorities
- Sharing quick wins to simplify governance and lift property management burdens
- Getting beyond talking to taking some risks.

GROWING DISCIPLES

Nurture leaders *realising visions not filling roles*

Action	Progress
Trial BUPA Employee Assistance Programme for district staff, with potential to roll out to interested circuit &	Scheme has been amended, and so is now only available for employers with 50+ employees. Andrew is making enquiries about consolidated support getting access to counselling and support lines for all staff across the district, at cost c.£60 p.a. per employee.

church employers if shown to be valuable	
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Equip disciples to serve through local learning *equipping to meet contextual needs*

Action	Progress
	<p>Justice Seekers network, working with Derbyshire North East, Sheffield and Barnsley Circuits will be bringing an exhibition flowing from Life On The Breadline research project into our district through lent. This will include opportunities for people to learn of impacts of poverty, for those with lived experience to be heard, and for some high profile public events.</p> <p>It also links to the new Let's End Poverty coalition supported by Methodism.</p>

TRANSFORMING MISSION

Encourage new innovative mission *Our world is ever-changing and our need for God eternal*

Action	Progress
<p>6 further potential circuit-led NPNP's being actively considered</p> <p>Increasing numbers of people engaging with networking & support for pioneer teams</p>	<p>Positive new Christian communities gathering held in November, with input from Anthony Clowes (Manchester & Stockport). Next gathering to be held on 22 February, with input from Martyn Atkins.</p> <p>New Christian Communities Overview Team has held a first meeting. Proposed paper outlining our district approach to be discussed separately on our agenda. This is broadly describing what has previously been discussed with DLT and is already happening. Its primary purpose is to allow Connexional funding for New Places for New People within our district to be approved without having to wait for the next meeting of the Connexional Missions Committee.</p> <p>The team discussed whether we should increase the value funding to NPNPs, but felt on balance that if circuits were truly invested then £60k would usually be sufficient grant to enable them to start.</p> <p>From discussion at this meeting, we are also proposing creating a micro-grant scheme to encourage experiments with small scale "fresh expressions" style new Christian communities alongside a small number of communities led by paid pioneers. Some form of light touch training would likely be linked to this.</p> <p>Further details would be developed and brought back to DLT.</p>

SHARING STORIES

Creating a culture of invitation to relationship with Christ *trusting God speaks into the hearts of our neighbours*

Action	Progress
Support three churches to start developing active	I suggest that parallel to the support for new Christian communities we create a micro-grant scheme for churches actively inviting people to join

Learning

Joining in

Changing

discipleship exploration pathways	<p>existing congregations, validating the role of flourishing longstanding congregations as part of our mixed ecology.</p> <p>This could build on what we learned from the previous Keep Fishing and Warm Space schemes.</p> <p>Further details will be developed and brought back to DLT</p>
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PROPERTIES FIT FOR MISSION

Property support for local trustees *missional opportunities may arise in societies without relevant property expertise*

Action	Progress
With Learning Network, make available fresh property management training	<p>Property stewards handbook has been published, an introductory booklet linking to more detailed information available online</p> <p>https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/equipping-circuits/offices-and-roles/property-stewards/</p>

Reduce our carbon footprint *being good stewards of creation*

Action	Progress
Begin exploring practical alternatives to gas boilers	<p>As noted in budget presentation, we are likely to have district advance fund money committed to grants for NPNPs which will be paid out over several years. Rather than sitting in our bank account for this period, it could be loaned to churches to invest in energy saving schemes.</p> <p>Details of how this would work and what would be most helpful would need to be investigated.</p>