



Serving the Methodist Church
in South Yorkshire,
North Nottinghamshire
and North East Derbyshire

Reports to Synod April 2021

This Synod Reports booklet that you are holding in your hand right now, or more likely reading as a pdf on your computer screen or tablet, is an intriguing document. I confess that there are years that I've given it scant attention and thus disrespected the effort that has gone into preparing it and dishonoured the work of each of the groups whose hard work and commitment that are represented therein.

Nevertheless, it does, directly and indirectly, give testimony to much work that is going on in the District, often behind the scenes, often making a subtle but significant impact, and collectively representing an incredible amount of workhours carried out both by paid staff and an army of volunteers.

Please do take time to read the reports and to read them prayerfully as you prepare for the forthcoming Synod. Moreover, give some thought as to where the information contained might be shared beyond the membership of the Synod with people in our local Circuits and Churches in order that we can be reminded of our calling to be part of a Connexional Church, that is, always a part of something bigger than what we are directly involved in at a local level.

Thank you, on behalf of us all, to each contributor to the reports and particularly to Katrin Hackett (District Admin) who has pulled it all together for us into the product you now hold in your hand.

Yours in Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean C. C. Adair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reverend Sean C. C. Adair
(Deputy Chair of District)

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Archivist

The archivist's office is very crowded - there are six large boxes of catalogued material ready for depositing at the relevant record office just as soon as they reopen as well as a considerable amount of material that might be of interest to local history collections.

As explained last year, the Society of Cirplanologists has now finally closed and I have been granted membership of the Wesley Historical Society.

Keeping to the subject of Circuit Plans it has been Connexional policy that every 5 years all circuit plans for the District were deposited in the Rylands Library in Manchester. The Sheffield District has been very good at complying. However, this has not been the case for all Districts especially those without an archivist.

Rylands has recently indicated that deposits have been patchy, questioned if they were the correct place and indicated that the shelf room was needed for other things.

I believe that the correct place for these plans is with the relevant Record Offices for the benefit of local historians and would not be in agreement with creaming off certain sections, such as say Primitive Plans going to Engelsea Brook and other sections to other organisations.

At the moment I am trying to open a conversation with the Connexional Archive and Heritage people based on the fact that a decision will be taken within the next two years.

If anyone has a view on this, please let me know.

Though I have recently been in hospital, I am now recovering at home and dealing with normal enquiries.

John Tranter
District Archivist

Candidates' Committee

I regret to say that we did not have any candidates for ordained ministry in the Sheffield District for the 2020-2021 cycle of candidating. Those districts which did have candidates carried out their meetings by zoom. Please encourage anyone that you are aware may be considering a call to ordained ministry, despite restrictions we are still able to engage in the process of discernment.

Mr Keith Abel joined the committee this year and we look forward to welcoming and working with Keith when we meet over the coming year.

On a personal note, I will be leaving the Sheffield District this summer. I am delighted that Revd Debora Marschner has agreed to take on the role of District Candidates Secretary from September 2021. I have found this a fulfilling and rewarding role and am glad to have had the privilege of serving the District in this way. I am very grateful to the members of the District Candidates Committee, and

to Revd Gill Newton as chair, for the wisdom they have contributed and the support they have given me during my time working alongside them.

I continue to serve as District Candidates Secretary until August 2021 so please do get in touch if you have any questions or are aware of someone who is interested in candidating this year.

*Revd Marion Olsen
District Candidates Secretary*

We thank Marion for her time with us and wish her well in her new appointment.

Communications

Last year has been like none we've ever known. A global pandemic has changed the way we work, as well as most other aspects of our lives. As District Communications Officer it is my role to make sure we are communicating in the best ways possible and ensuring the right messages reach the right people.

In September we launched a new District website which sees, on average, 1,780 visitors per month. The new design, created by ThenMedia is more modern than the previous website and its easy to navigate structure means people are finding what they need in only a few clicks. Sheffield, Barnsley and Derbyshire North East Circuits also have websites designed by ThenMedia and other Circuits are also following suit.

In January, to coincide with the launch of the new mission strategy, ***For Such A Time As This***, the District launched two new logos.

- The new District logo incorporates the Methodist Orb and our District mission Learning, Changing, Joining In has been placed in the centre to show it is always at the heart of what we do and plan to achieve.
- The "***For Such A Time As This***" logo, again uses the Methodist Orb, but to reflect the job at hand and the urgency, a pocket watch has been incorporated.

During the last 12 months, more and more of us are relying on the internet to keep in touch with people and also to find out the latest news. The District social media channels have grown in during the pandemic. The District now works across four platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube.

Over the last six months we have seen a rise in our social media followers.

Channel	% increase in followers
Facebook	38%
Twitter	25%
Instagram	32%
Youtube	35%

How many people do our social media channels reach?

Channel	Average Reach
Facebook	120 different people view our posts
Twitter	6,945 tweet impressions per month
Youtube	People watch our videos for 977 minutes per month or 16 hours 20 minutes (collective total)

We have also created a Facebook group to share digital worship resources and content.

As Communications Officer it is my role to share stories and we do this in a number of ways. We create videos which are shared via our YouTube channel. We use our weekly mailing, which is sent direct into hundreds of email inboxes each week and we use our other digital channels too.

My role also involves supporting Circuits and Churches with help and advice about all aspects of communications. If you'd like to find out more about how I can support you with your communications needs send me an email to comms@sheffieldmethodist.org

Follow us on social media:

- Facebook @Sheffieldmethodist
- Twitter @SheffMethDist
- Instagram @SheffieldMethodist
- YouTube: search Sheffield Methodist District

Sam Roberts
District Communications Officer

District Leadership Team

The District Leadership Team has met four times this year over Zoom. We are grateful that the technology exists to enable us to meet in this way (and it does save on travel time 😊)

The Team's regular and continuing work includes setting and monitoring the District's budget, approving grants, and considering requests for authorisations, extensions for On Trial preachers and church closures. During the year the DLT has received a variety of reports about work in the District, in particular from all District employees and the main District committees.

The DLT has considered in detail the budget for 2021/22 and subsequent years, and the Treasurer's report sets out the decisions reached.

Applications for lay authorisations to preside at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were received as follows:

- from Sheffield Circuit:-
Melissa Quinn (renewal); Michelle Deans (probationer minister stationed from September 2021); Nick Waterfield (new - missional)
- from Doncaster Circuit:-
Susanna Brooks (renewal); Barry Parker (renewal); Jack Key (new - missional)

The DLT supported these applications but the Synod may make comments upon these.

The following lay authorisations will be automatically renewed:

- 3rd year:
Keith Abel, Graham Lee (Trinity); Alice Curry, Sue Pickering (Doncaster); Anne Holmes, David Guy, Clive Taylor (Rotherham & Dearne Valley)
- 2nd year:
Mark Carrick (Derbyshire North East); Edward Archer Siddall, Wayne Ashton (Rotherham & Dearne Valley)

Requests to sell the Barugh and Hoyland which had both previously been used for worship by multisite churches of in the Barnsley Circuit were considered and supported.

A request to cease worship at Priory Place, Doncaster Circuit, was considered and supported. **These decisions require Synod approval.**

A request was received from Trinity Circuit to confirm that the Governing Body of the Crossing LEP are also acting as the Methodist Church Council (SO 611). **This was approved but will need to be ratified by the Synod.**

Katrin Hackett
District Administrator

Ecumenical Officer for Derbyshire

My role as the District's ecumenical representative in Derbyshire is now proving next to impossible, and not just because of Covid. We just cannot do what ecumenical rules require, namely to provide periodic reviews (and not just when asked for) of our very numerous LEPs - never mind anything else.

Our splendid Anglican colleague is vicar of two busy parishes in suburban Derby and has a quite disabled wife. He has asked for support, but it has not been forthcoming. We may or may not get a URC colleague to help with a review at Oakwood. And there is Langley Mill, where my Methodist colleague from the N&D District is married to one of the two ministers, so I may have to help with that...

We hope for our fairly customary 'Derbyshire Day' in Matlock LEP on October 2nd, but what I have written in my diary is 'Churches Together in Derbyshire funeral?'.

We have tried hard, and had some little successes, but we are really not coping. The Synod may not be able to help?

Revd Paul King

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Awaiting report

Erica Dunmow

EDI Officer

Grants - District Advance Fund

Report to Connexional Grants Committee as required under S.O.963(3)

Period 1st Sept 2019 to 31st August 2020

1. Ministry Grants paid			
<i>Circuit</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Amount</i>	
Sheffield	Wesley Hall youth & childrens workers		4,000
Bolsover & Staveley	Freedom Community Project ops & finance		20,000
Doncaster	RE Scheme		10,000
Sheffield	Victoria Hall Outreach Worker		2,000
Sheffield	Firth Park soft play manager		4,000
Sheffield	Emmanuel Waterthorpe youth worker		3,000
Sheffield	Gleadless access & welcome project		4,000
Doncaster	Persian ministry interim funding		4,000
Doncaster	Community outreach worker		12,000
Doncaster	Junction Manager, Hexthorpe (continuation)		4,000
Doncaster	NMCGB equipment		2,500
The Peak	Hope at Hub Development Worker		10,000
various small grants	Keep Fishing Fund		2,500
various small grants	Easter appeal		250
various individuals	Learning and Development grants		2,508
various individuals	Ministerial development		1,230
		Total (A):	85,988

2. Property Grants paid			
<i>Circuit</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Amount</i>	
Bolsover & Staveley	Bolsover Big Build		60,000
Sheffield	Greenhill 2020 Vision (phase 2)		60,000
Sheffield	Highfield Trinity welcome project		10,000
Sheffield	St Peters Ellesmere flooring & heating		3,000
Barnsley	Hemsworth Little Fishes soft play		27,000
Trinity	Grove Street toilet & accessibility		2,000
		Total (B):	162,000

3. Future Commitments (as at 31/8/2017)			
Year	Amount committed		
2020/21	£	159,950	
2021/22		27,000	
2022/23		9,000	
	£		
Total future commitments	£	195,950	

4. Summary of Accounts			
Income	£	Expenditure	£
Levies rec'd from circuits	171,688	Ministry Grants paid	85,988 (Total A)
Other circuit contributions	2,054	Property Grants paid	162,000 (Total B)
CAPF distribution	0	Other expenditure	812
Interest	3,543	District costs - MDSW	11,858
Other income	0	District costs - PPRDE	10,944
		District costs - Venture FX	21,045
Total (A):	177,285	Total (B):	292,647
Bal b/fwd from 31/8/2019	365,345		
Net Income / Expenditure	-115,362	A-B	
Bal c/fwd @ 31/8/2020	249,983		

District Officer's comments and report on the use of the District Advance Fund during the past year:

The Sheffield district continues to support an increasing range of outreach projects. The investment in people continues with success in many different ways. Three major build works have been supported at Greenhill (Sheffield), Bolsover and Hemsworth. Of these the Greenhill and Hemsworth build projects have progressed well in spite of the coronavirus effects. The Bolsover project was held up by six months due to the pandemic but is now effectively completed.

The Mission Development Support Officer has developed his initiative to fund quickly a range of smaller projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation of grant-funded work undertaken during the year:

Monitoring of projects continues to show that in all cases objects stated in the grant applications are being achieved and funds have only been used for the purpose specified in the grant letter agreement.

All funding has time/date validity and all projects which are not using the funds allocated within their date validity have been investigated and where necessary the funding returned to the district. The uncertain social and political situation (Brexit and coronavirus) has had effects which are only now becoming apparent. A new set of challenges have emerged...

John Purdy
District Grants Officer

Inter-faith relations

Like most things, inter-faith relations have been deeply affected by the pandemic, with far fewer opportunities to engage in meetings, visits and conversations than before. However, at both local and national level, ways have been found of keeping in contact.

Like individual faith communities and places of worship, some local inter-faith bodies have used Zoom to continue meeting. In Sheffield, the Shirley House Interfaith Centre, Sheffield Interfaith and the Dialogue Society have all organized events over the last year, and one of the Shirley House meetings was held jointly with the Sheffield branch of the Council of Christians and Jews. At a more civic level, a Faith Covid Group has met regularly to engage with ongoing developments as they affect faith communities. I'd be glad to hear of any examples from other parts of the District that I might not be aware of.

Personally, I've tried to keep in touch with as many local faith groups in Sheffield as possible. After Covid restrictions were eased in the summer, I was able to visit two local mosques, the Orthodox Synagogue and the Sikh Gurdwara, and have been glad to be able to join a number of faith groups and congregations online.

National inter-faith organisations have been very active via email and social media. The Inter Faith Network for the UK have set up consultations in different regions and regularly publicized examples of faith groups working together to support their local communities, as well as keeping members up to date with government advice. The Council of Christians and Jews have arranged regular Zoom meetings for the chairs of local branches and have developed numerous educational and social action projects for members to engage with.

One of the most important events in inter-faith relations is the national Inter Faith Week, which takes place in November every year. I was heartened to see the letter, full of warmth and respect, written last year by Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence, the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, and addressed to "Brothers and Sisters of all Faiths", and I'd like to finish by quoting from it:

"Inter-Faith Week ... is an occasion when we celebrate our friendships and also when we consider what we share in common. The Methodist people are known to be friends of all and enemies of none. That friendship we would like to extend to you again this year, with respect, and indeed love... John Wesley, the father of Methodism, taught us to acknowledge the work of God in all peoples of faith. To recognise the finger of God, to rejoice in God's work, and praise God with thanksgiving for God's presence and work amongst people of all faiths... This year in particular, Methodist People have been reflecting on the fact that in spite of all the suffering and struggles we have faced collectively as a Kingdom and worldwide that the best of all is that God is still with us. This we choose to affirm in faith and hope of a better future."

Revd Gareth Jones
Inter-Faith Officer

Lay Employment

At the start of the year we learnt that Rob Cooper would be stepping down in his role as Lay Employment Officer to concentrate on his consultancy work. We have been very grateful to Rob for all his work in the Sheffield District and wish him well in the future.

We are delighted to welcome Andrew Crawford, the District HR Officer, who will be introducing himself at the April Synod.

Learning and Development Working Group

‘Live as if you are going to die tomorrow; learn as if you’re going to live forever’

M. Gandhi

Most of our ‘live’ events, courses and programmes of learning have continue to be closed down although the hope of a successful ‘road map’ and the hugely encouraging vaccination programme means we must not only plan for the present restrictions but also anticipate what might emerge later in the year. It has been a year of opportunity as well as loss of friends, freedoms and face-to-face activities.

The Learning and Development Working Group has continued to meet regularly and successfully planned and responded to many learning opportunities. We have been pro-active in proposing on-line opportunities in which to participate, in addition to download-able materials for churches or small groups to share for study, reflection, worship or prayer. We continue to marvel at the rich diversity of opportunities offered via the internet and have contributed some of our own materials, in different forms and from different locations, to YouTube, in order that we can share widely and generously. We have organised successful Webinars and have initiated a Book Club, studying Brian McLaren’s book: *Faith after Doubt*.

As with other aspects of our lives, most of the learning opportunities would not have been possible if we were relying on ‘live’ events.

You will be well aware that the website of our District has been re-vamped and we have spent lots of time reflecting on how best to present information about learning opportunities and activities so that, no matter what you are searching for, the associated, relevant learning information is available. So a search related to events could lead to further learning resources; looking for something to help with Children and Young People might offer some learning and development materials too. Of course, we have a dedicated ‘tab’ for Learning and Development where you can search for ideas, materials and resources related to such diverse opportunities as Lay Employment Training or Spiritual Development. We have plans for further on-line activities – particularly concerning our health and wellbeing. We recognise that if we don’t look after ourselves in these challenging times, we won’t be able to fulfil our faith commitments to help our neighbours, our communities and our world.

The grant system also continues; we have recently developed an easy on-line form to help you to complete the simple application and apply for money to assist with both group and individual learning. This could be to purchase materials for a house-group, to join a ‘course’ or for individual study; the opportunities to learn are

endless! We simply request that you ask your church and circuit whether they can offer support at the same time as making a request from the District.

Our group actively links with the Learning Network and all the opportunities they facilitate and supports our District Strategy, *For Such a Time as This* as well as *The Methodist Way of Life*. Learning informally, with friends and church family to inform, explore, challenge and build our faith or formally, studying theology more deeply, are golden threads in weaving the tapestry which such strategies and frameworks support. They equip us to be followers of Christ.

As the heading suggests, ‘...learn as if you are going to live forever.’

Jan Eldred

Chair of the Sheffield District Learning and Development Group

Learning Network

See separate report

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Find out about us at: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning/network-regions/yorkshire-plus-region/>

Follow us on our Social Networks:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LearningNetworkYorkshirePlus>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LNYorkshirePlus>

Manse Advisory Committee

As with all during the pandemic, this past year has been out of the ordinary and the work undertaken by the group has been modified accordingly.

The 2020 Presbyterial leavers received modified ‘Charter Leavers Visits’. These were done remotely, and the Circuit Stewards / Administrators notified of the findings. They were well aware of the state of the Manses and already had plans to prepare for the new occupants. Towards the end of this Connexional year, three ‘Charter Visits’ are planned for the Sheffield Circuit and one in the Barnsley Circuit. These will be done according to the Pandemic restrictions in force at the time and in consultation with all concerned.

The 2020 scheduled visits to the Derbyshire North East Circuit Manses were mutually postponed and are rescheduled to take place this autumn along with six Manses in the Sheffield Circuit.

There is a backlog of Quinquennial Inspections of Manses as a result of Pandemic restrictions. Several Circuits are in the process of renewing inspection contracts,

some continuing with the trusted surveyors, others going through a tendering process.

Thanks need to be recorded for the superb attitude and diligence shown by the Group members, Circuit Stewards and administrators who have the responsibility of keeping the Manses within the Distinct up to a high standard.

The group also recorded our thanks to Margaret Wilson who has stepped down after many years of faithful service. We are very pleased that Sue and John Dilks have joined the group and also that Revd Maurice Stafford and Deacon Janet Stafford have agreed to be involved in the group.

During our meeting we also discussed the situation regarding the Circuit's responsibility to only provide a cooker in a Manse and that other 'white goods' are the responsibility of the occupant. To this end, consideration should be given to allow space for free standing appliances when updating kitchens or modifying kitchens when purchasing new houses.

Lionel Derry

District Manse Advisory Committee Secretary

Methodist Council

The Council has continued to do its business online using the 'enabling resolutions' passed by the 2020 Conference allowing Church business to be conducted in this way. However, these resolutions are only in place until the 2021 Conference, and only whilst government legislation prevents physical meetings. Recognising that there is some value in being able to meet online it is expected that the Law & Polity Committee will propose amendments to Standing Orders at the 2021 Conference allowing such meetings to continue as part of our practice after the pandemic, but only where this is appropriate.

Reports presented to the March Council meeting included a report from the Inclusive Church Implementation group 'Strategy for Justice Dignity and Solidarity' which aims for a profound change to the culture and attitudes of the Church so that all Methodists are able to be full participants in the Church's life, so that this becomes not just something we say but something we live out in practice. A revised report will be presented to the Conference for adoption and action.

As always finance and property take up much of the time in Council meetings. The council adopted changes to Model Trust 20 policy which allows sale of property at under value to Methodist and other charities in certain circumstances, these will come into effect from September 2021. Work is ongoing to consider also permitting leases to Methodist and other charities at less than market value and proposals will be brought to Council for approval in the autumn.

Recognising the impact of the pandemic on Church finances a reduction of 1% in the Connexional Assessment to the Districts is proposed for 2021/22 with further reductions in assessment of 2% and 3% in the indicative budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This reduction in funding will partly be managed by running a deficit in

the Methodist Church Fund in 2021/22 and partly by holding down expenditure at pandemic levels wherever possible.

Work continues on Oversight and Trusteeship. The Council agreed to recommend that the minimum size of a local church be raised to twelve members from six. Churches with less than twelve members will not be expected to close or to cease worship, but to examine creative ways of working with other local churches so they are not over-burdened with matters of trusteeship.

The 2020 Conference referred a memorial to Council concerning how the Church could reach net zero emissions by 2030. The Council agreed to recommend a reply to the memorial, proposing that the Conference agrees an aspirational target to become a net zero Church by 2030, recognising that all parts of the Church will have to commit significant resources to making this happen. The response also suggests developing partnerships with outside agencies such as Eco Church and A Rocha to help make this happen.

This just highlights some of the Council's recent business, full reports are always available on the connexional website <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/latest-council-papers/>

*David Burton,
Methodist Council Representative*

Methodist Women in Britain

As, like everything else, activities planned over the past year have been extremely limited. The programme we planned for this year has sadly not happened.

Looking forward, we hope to be able to meet for our District Day on **July 7th** at Whittington Moor Methodist Church the speaker will be Val Ogden (previously a mission partner in Fiji). Confirmation will be sent out nearer the time.

Looking forward, we will be deciding on which project to support next year; any suggestions would be welcomed.

After the past year we look forward to being able to meet up and plan for the coming year.

*Pam Meek
MWiB Sheffield District President*

Ministerial Development Review

Ministerial Development Review is a process which enables Presbyters and Deacons to reflect, with input from others, on how their ministry is being experienced and fulfilled both in relation to the Church as a whole and within the particular context in which their ministry is being exercised. Every Presbyter or Deacon in circuit or district appointment, every District Chair and every Supernumerary who has entered into a formal agreement with a Circuit to undertake pastoral responsibility in one or more Local Churches is required to engage in Ministerial Development Review.

The process envisages that there will normally be reports on three areas as a result of the review:-

1. **Hopes and Goals** – Ministers are encouraged to record up to three hopes or goals which have been identified as a result of reflecting their ministry and which have grown out of the review meeting's discussion about their ministry and circuit/ district/ connexional priorities. The recorded hopes and goals are confidential to the three participants at the review meeting.
2. **Points for action regarding the wider context** – If there are changes or developments within the circuits / district / Connexion which have implications for the Minister that need to be discussed with people not involved at the review meeting the points should be recorded and the nature and extent of disclosure would be agreed by the three participants.
3. **Areas for learning and development** – It is intended that the review will assist in identifying learning and development opportunities that the Minister can take up to enhance their existing gifts and skills. The process for reporting needs to the District Office and seeking reimbursement of expenses has been clarified.

Whilst the requirement to engage in Ministerial Development Review is still in place, the additional pressures placed on Presbyters and Deacons has meant that in practice, in the Connexional year ended August 2020, few if any reviews have been carried out.

I understand that the Connexional review of the relationship between MDR and Supervision has been carried out, and we await Connexional guidance on how this relationship will be managed in future.

John Lashmar
MDR Officer

Mission Development Support Worker

Over a year ago, when only the medics amongst us knew the difference between a coronavirus and a PCR, we settled on a theme for our new [strategy for resourcing mission](#): *for such a time as this*. This scripture seemed pertinent because of the enormous challenges facing many of our churches and circuits, grappling a perceived loss of agency, strength and relevance to many people beyond our shrinking membership. It also spoke however of the sufficiency of God's provision and recognition of a prevenient God who creates opportunities for us to minister most powerfully from a position of brokenness.



Like all of you I have spent the last year attempting to listen for God's voice and respond to a rapid sequence of unpredictable "times".

GROWING DISCIPLES – Zoom has enabled new communities of practice – people engaged in similar ministries sharing stories and ideas – to gather regularly, and to bring expertise of our Learning Network and other specialists to many of us. This

year has seen the launch of the Methodist Way of Life, a new framework for accountable small group discipleship. This is fundamentally important for all of our being, not just our doing, church. Starting new discipleship groups has been incredibly difficult during lockdown. There have been some encouraging stories, and I hope to have more to tell over the coming months.

PASSIONATE CONTEXTUAL WORSHIP – since April last year we have been creating opportunities for people leading worship in the often strange land of video-streaming and connecting communities of faith in new ways to gather and explore together. Some new people have engaged regularly with worship, whilst others have struggled with new patterns. Having experimented with the very forms of worship through necessity we all need to find patterns of worship that we leap out of bed eager to join, as will those beyond church we invite.

SHARING STORIES – Thank you to everyone who has allowed us to share their story in video, word or photos over the last year, and a massive thanks to Sam Roberts and Katrin Hackett for stepping up our communications and social media during this period. We will keep telling these stories, and look forward to hearing how sharing testimonies of God at work in our lives becomes a normal part of most of our acts of worship and church meetings.

TRANSFORMING MISSION – Even amidst the financial, emotional and logistical carnage of the pandemic I have continued to support a number of churches and projects as they plot a new course of risk-taking mission. I was particularly encouraged recently by recognition that the growth in people engaged in creating new Christian communities already means we need to find new ways to support them.

SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES – We have replaced our district website to make information easier to find, and are working on responses to other inefficiencies which suck precious time and energy away from sharing stories, passionate contextual worship and transforming mission.

PROPERTIES FIT FOR MISSION – we will have a lot to do in the coming years as we work through which properties we need, what we need them for, how we drastically reduce their carbon footprint, and how we avoid this distracting us from growing disciples. Additional support for you is being prepared.

As ever I am happy to speak with churches of any size as you navigate your [roadmap for a post pandemic world](#).

Neil Harland

MSDW mission@sheffieldmethodist.org 07483 308008

Peak Park Rural Development

The pandemic has had effects in this past year, but with creativity and Holy Spirit intervention, we have continued. The use of outside worship and the active 'presence' practiced by some of the chapels and projects in the Peak Park has been refreshing. Here is a snapshot of the work I am involved with.

The Hub

This pioneering church gathered outside to worship, when permitted. We communicate by WhatsApp. We created palm wreaths and palm crosses to hang on our doors as a witness. The travelling harvest, in a decorated Land Rover created a high visual impact. We are seeking further funding to continue. Initially 5 of us, we now have regular contact with 35 people of all ages.

Edale Chapel

This 200 year old chapel continues to fund raise for renovation, building progress on the outside is encouraging. More people, especially families are getting involved with worship activities in the garden, when permitted. We had an ecumenical walk from church to chapel and more are planned. We will increase disciples and share the good news by holding at least one gathering each month as well as offering hospitality to residents and visitors to the area.

Lowberdale Farm

Lowberdalefarm(.org.uk) a charity formed by Christians of differing denominations, to support young people has had a challenging year. Referrals were prevented by Covid. However, we have recruited four new trustees to improve the strength of the board and two new support volunteers. We hope for new referrals from September 2021.

Messy Church

On-line gathering and social media contact was not successful however, 'Messy Takeaway' is. Following Covid safe guidelines, pizza boxes are filled with activities and then collected from a gazebo on the green. Messy church usually welcomes around 15 children, but we have been handing out nearly 40 boxes!

High Peak Partnership Village Chapels and Covid-19

Some small rural chapels are struggling and considering ways forward. Change and letting go is challenging. It is a journey with many more steps to be taken. This could be a time of great sadness or a time of great excitement for new mission. We are engaged with ecumenical conversations as parish churches are also struggling. There is an urgent need to deliver sustainable mission to rural areas that will not have pastoral or spiritual care if all churches close.

Positively Rural

Rev Andrew Web suggested setting up a zoom support for rural ministry. We agreed on webinars called Positively Rural, focusing on positive attitudes to rural ministry and targeting the Yorkshire Plus region (others join.) Sheffield District Administrator and the Learning Network Team enable us to facilitate all that is needed to make these events happen. Meetings are quarterly, last 90minutes and include a speaker and group discussion. Our next topic is 'Festivals as Outreach'. We generally have round 30-40 people attend.

Townend Community Garden, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

A development in the church field from a shared vision of chapel members. Co-ordinated by a gardener, supported by a management group which includes members of the local community. It comprises accessible gates and paths, raised beds, communal areas, sensory area, fruit trees, veg beds etc. It has helped local

families by providing outside exercise and home grown food. Outdoor worship includes reflective trails at Christmas and Easter. It is featured in Country Way, the Arthur Rank Magazine.

Rural Support Group.

This group supports the National Rural Officer for the URC and the Methodist Church. It has continued via zoom. We approach a time of transition. The current post holder is sitting down, and the URC are not replacing their half of the post in the coming year. Methodists are recruiting to a full time post.

Ecumenical Work in Tislington

I am supporting two congregations in the village as they consider ways of being "The Church" in the village.

Deacon Lorraine Brown

Peak Park Rural Development Enabler

Probationers' Committee

The 2020 - 2021 District Probationers' Group includes our only Probationer Mark Carrick, from the Derbyshire North East Circuit who is in his first year of Probation. This year Mark, Gill Newton our District Chair, and I have met entirely on Zoom monthly for support, prayer, learning, and theological reflection. Mark has also been included in some of the Under 10's in Ministry gatherings.

As part of his training in Presbyteral ministry, Mark has continued academic study for an MA through The Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, he meets regularly with his Minister in Oversight, Supervisor, Worship Development Group, and Befriender (new role this year to replace the District chosen mentor and is now chosen by the Probationer). In January Mark completed his Orientation Project in which he reflected on his context and early experiences in ministry through exploring a Hybrid Church.

Again this year, District Probationers' Committee members were given an opportunity to meet with Mark and get to know each other over Zoom in November. The Committee completed training in exploring the new competencies by which Probationers are assessed. This time provided the foundation; along with reports submitted reflecting on Mark's first year of Probation, for the more formal interviews which took place in early March on Zoom. This year we note, as will be the case with all Probationers, there are aspects of Presbyteral ministry Mark has been unable to exercise or explore due to restrictions. But in Mark, we see much potential for when restrictions are lifted and he can explore these aspects of ministry with the support of his Circuit. For Mark, however, these restrictions have not been a barrier, but an opportunity to explore new ways of exercising ministry. We see immense potential in Mark to flourish in this ministry and can see that his gifts and graces will be valuable to his Circuit and Churches but also the future life of the whole Church.

Many thanks to Mark's Circuit, his Minister in Oversight Rev'd Sean Adair, his Supervisor Rev'd James Morley for their support of Mark. Also many thanks to the

District Probationers' Committee for their careful work and discernment using the medium of Zoom when we met in March.

Revd Katie Leonowicz
Sheffield District Probationer Secretary

We thank Katie for her work and wish her well in her new appointment.

Property Panel

The joint District Property Secretaries system continues to work well and is continuing in its present form. The District Property Panel remains unaltered.

There have been 12 property projects considered during the past 12 months and are listed in the Schedule below.

The whole Panel has not met this Year.

There are 5 projects awaiting Circuit support.

There is 1 project awaiting Connexion support.

There are 2 projects awaiting Consent but have outstanding issues.

There are 4 projects put up by Managing Trustees but have gone no further.

Number	Circuit	Church / Manse	Description	Cost £	Date Approved
39995	Sheffield	Greenhill	Redevelopment phase 2	607,887	14/04/20
41695	Rotherham & Dearne Valley	33 Church Street	Sale of manse	1	11/03/21
44266	Sheffield	Greenhill	Redevelopment Phase 3	283,475	14/10/20
44543	Derbyshire North East	Bolsover	Refurbishment scheme phase 2	245,645	26/08/20
45545	Sheffield	William Temple Church	Refurbishment of Stage, Hall, Sanctuary & Meeting Room	160,000	03/06/20
46515	The Peak Circuit	Bradwell Manse	Sale of surplus manse		23/09/20
46527	Sheffield	268, Granville Road	Sale of surplus manse		12/10/20

Number	Circuit	Church / Manse	Description	Cost £	Date Approved
46540	Sheffield	Gleadless Church	Refurbishment of extension	40,000	10/08/20
46587	Sheffield	39 Bright Meadow	Letting of surplus Manse	100	10/06/20
46634	Derbyshire North East	Barlow & Cutthorpe	Building Improvement Phase 2	4,811	28/08/20
46669	Sheffield	20 Grove Road	Renew Rental Lease	100	24/04/20
47010	Sheffield	14, Chelsea Court	Letting of surplus Manse	100	18/08/20
47135	Sheffield	Mosborough Church	Re-roofing scheme	70,000	30/03/21
47377	Trinity	Grove Street Church	Restoration of ceiling and Painting Sanctuary.	73,211	08/03/21
47439	Rotherham & Dearne Valley	28 Broomfield Grove	Sale of Manse	1	22/12/20
47474	Sheffield	10 Burnt Stones Close	Letting of surplus manse	100	18/01/21

*Tom Sykes & John Bailey
Joint Property Secretaries*

Sabbaticals

As for so many aspects of our lives, Covid 19 has often required ministers to reconsider and adapt their plans for sabbaticals during this past year. I am grateful for their willingness to do so and have been moved by the reports of those who found God within the changes they had to make, still appreciating the gift of time offered by the sabbatical.

During this connexional year, DSAG has received and approved reports describing the sabbatical experiences and insights gained from Revs. Richard Harris, Katie Leonowicz and James Morley. It agreed that the sabbatical for Rev Cameron Stirk be delayed until April to July 2021 and those for Rev Mark Goodhand and Rev Debora Marschner until the 2021/22 connexional year. The group has also considered and approved prospectuses together with sabbatical timings and arrangements for Revs Tracey Harris and Gill Newton. The list of those due to take

sabbaticals in the 21/22 Connexional year includes Revs Tim Crome, Gareth Jones, Mick Neal, Jen Mullis, Adrian Perry and Angela Pothecary. The DSAG expects to consider their sabbatical prospectuses along with reports of any completed sabbaticals at its next meeting which is currently scheduled for October 2021.

We are very aware of the importance of the Local Sabbatical Support Groups (LSSG) in enabling sabbaticals by supporting ministers and their families and ensuring adequate cover during sabbatical periods, as well as helping to explain the purpose and value of sabbaticals to local churches. We are grateful to all members of LSSGs for the time and commitment they give to this and the DSAG provides a Terms of Reference document to help them in their task.

I am very grateful to the members of the District Sabbaticals Advisory Group – Gill Newton as District Chair, the District MDR Officer (John Lashmar) and two lay people or supernumerary ministers (Agnes Tranter and Rev. David Hunter). for the time and care they give to the process of considering and approving sabbatical prospectuses, giving advice, receiving reports and supporting ministers.

Revd Liz Wills
District Sabbaticals Officer

Safeguarding

I started in the role of District Safeguarding Officer halfway through the first Covid 19 lockdown. Whilst some may see this as unfortunate, I actually feel the opposite. Thanks to new technologies I have been able to speak, virtually, face to face with so many people and this has allowed me to develop a service that is bespoke to peoples wants and needs.

By writing monthly safeguarding newsletters, I have shared emerging safeguarding issues, which I hope give people a greater, more relevant understanding plus practical support pathways at a local and national level.

I have chosen the District weekly newsletter to cascade safeguarding issues identified by the Connexional Safeguarding Team. My hope, in taking this approach, is that people no longer feel overwhelmed by the volume of information being presented to them but instead feel confident that they are informed about the most important aspects.

Working alongside the Circuit Safeguarding officers we have been able to identify strengths and weakness in circuit safeguarding. Taking a strengths-based approach allows us to maximise those strengths to enable circuits to achieve Connexional expectations. It is also allows circuits to meet people's needs and improves the safety of all involved in the life of the church and in their community.

Whilst a year of Covid restrictions has stopped us from being church in the more normal way it has allowed us time to reconsider basic safeguarding elements, in particular those found in the Safer Recruitment process. I was delighted, in my first Safeguarding Briefing session in January 2021, over 70 people joined in to

consider ways of improving the recruitment processes their area. As we work together to tackle weaker areas, we again demonstrate a commitment to all those who give their time to support their churches and to acknowledge our commitment to keep all people safe from harm.

One thing we have had to stop during lockdown is providing the Safeguarding training at both the Foundation and Advance level. Reassured by Connexion that safeguarding training can and should be put on hold we still have an ever-increasing number of people requiring safeguarding training for their role. As I type a new, online version of the Foundation Module has been created and will be rolled out shortly by those locally who feel able to do so. Hopefully the Autumn will see a similar role out of an online version of the Advanced module.

The core elements of safeguarding, responding to practical issues and concerns, may have slowed down over the last year but has most definitely not stopped. I continue to co-ordinate and oversee safeguarding procedures as well as act as first point of contact for anyone with concerns. Working in partnership we are able to ensure that everyone is protected and able to have a fulfilling and safe experience whilst attending church.

Since starting in post, I have met with the District Safeguarding Group on three occasions. The group continues to oversee the work and promotion of safeguarding across the District. In particular to: ensure support to all circuits and churches in implementing District and Connexional policies; to support the DSO, advise on policy, practice and training developments and to; work collaboratively with other relevant groups on safeguarding issues.

Alison Hill
District Safeguarding Officer

Stationing

We started the 2021 stationing round in May of 2020. Both the meetings with individual presbyters and the training for Circuits were held on Zoom, a medium with which lots of us have become increasingly familiar. The timing of the Circuit training for stationing and re-invitation was moved to a Saturday morning to try to accommodate as many as possible.

We held our District Stationing Forum on 22nd July 2020, again on Zoom. All Circuits in the District were invited to attend and share information on their particular circumstances and hopes for the future development of ministry. This did give us an early indication of which appointments we would wish to be critical should they enter stationing, and the possibility of probationer presbyter and diaconal appointments.

The October 2020 conversations with our two presbyters entering stationing, and the training for our two Circuits seeking appointments, were both held on 21st October over Zoom.

At the beginning of the 2021 stationing round there were ten presbyters across four Circuits prayerfully seeking to discern God's calling upon their ministry. As time progressed, seven sought and were offered re-invitation, two entered stationing, and one returned to a sending church. Five appointments for two Circuits were identified. Initially, one presbyteral appointment was submitted to stationing. This remained unfilled after Stationing Matching Group 2, and following reflection and consultations with the Ministries Team, was then withdrawn from stationing and converted to an appointment for a minister from another Church or Conference (MOCC.) The other appointments developed into one for a probationer presbyter, and three diaconal appointments.

The stationing process for 2021 has resulted in a broader range of ministerial appointments. For the first time in a stationing round, all five appointments, MOCC, probationer presbyter, and diaconal appointments, fell into the category of direct stationing. We thank God for very positive and encouraging 'virtual visits' and the issuing of letters of understanding to our five incoming ministers. So, subject to stations being called at the Methodist Conference, we will welcome Probationer Deacon Emily Hoe-Crook to the Trinity Circuit, and four ministers to the Sheffield Circuit: Presbyter of another Conference Revd Dr Claude Kimpinde; Probationer Presbyter Michelle Deans; Deacon Jackie Wright; Deacon Annabel Terry.

We will soon be starting the stationing and re-invitation process for September 2022. Circuit Invitation Committees should be appointed this month. A stationing leaflet, giving May and October 2021 dates for training for circuits and conversations with presbyters, has been published and circulated. We were initially hoping that the May dates might take place in person, but they are now planned to take place via Zoom, and will be with me and Revd Sean Adair, Deputy Chair of District, with Revd Gill Newton, Chair of District, being on sabbatical. The October dates will likely, with current understanding, take place in person. The Code of Practice 2022 for all involved in the Invitation and Stationing Process of Deacons and Presbyters will be published this May. There are currently nine presbyters in three circuits across the District who are starting to think and pray about the future direction of their ministry. Your prayers for the process to be as positive and affirming as possible, and for sensitivity and integrity, in these times of continuing uncertainty, are invited.

Gill Daly
Lay Stationing Representative

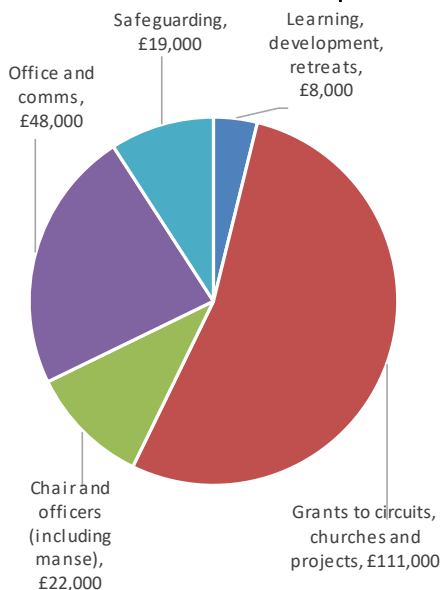
Treasurer

Full statutory District accounts for 2019/20 have been presented to the District Leadership Team for approval. Copies are available on request. A summary of the District finances is provided here:

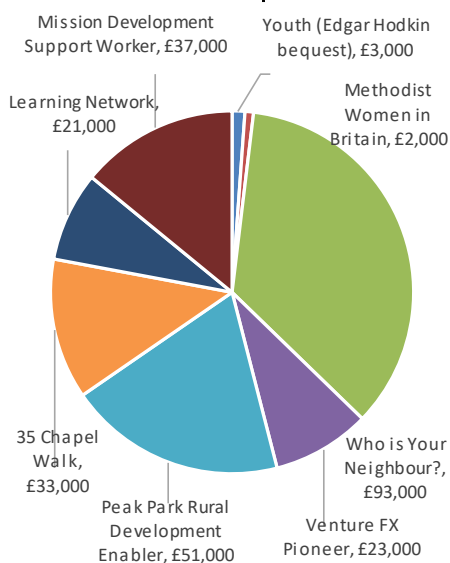
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INCOME					
Unrestricted	119	108	100	99	132
Restricted	205	282	149	132	130
District Advance Fund	178	159	202	170	170
Total Income	502	549	451	401	432
EXPENDITURE					
Unrestricted	108	103	88	111	111
Restricted	263	288	271	200	151
District Advance Fund	116	157	261	76	298
Total expenditure	487	548	620	387	560
SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)					
Unrestricted	11	5	12	(12)	21
Restricted	(58)	(6)	(122)	(68)	(21)
District Advance Fund	62	2	(59)	94	(128)
Total surplus/ (deficit)	15	1	(169)	14	(128)

The main source of unrestricted and Advance Fund income continues to be contributions from our circuits. £46,000 was transferred from general funds to restricted funds during the year as match funding for external grants totalling £205,00.

Unrestricted and Advance Fund Spend



Grant Funded Spend



FUNDS HELD AND OUTLOOK	31-Aug-20	31-Aug-19	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-17	31-Aug-16
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CLOSING FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds	268	259	316	376	441
District Advance Fund	54	36	34	117	23
Restricted funds	119	131	75	101	116
Total funds	441	426	425	594	580

Months unrestricted expenditure held as liquid funds	6	4	13	16	23
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We are now compliant with our policy of holding between three and six months unrestricted expenditure as liquid funds (i.e. cash and debtors, less creditors). During the covid pandemic we have seen some small reductions in costs from activities moving online. We have remained in contact with circuit treasurers and remain grateful to everyone for maintaining assessments so that we remain financially able to bear the costs of implementing our new strategy for resourcing mission ***For Such A Time As This.***

Neil Harland
District Treasurer

‘Who Is Your Neighbour?’



This time last year, as the pandemic was taking hold, it was no longer possible for groups of people to meet together, which meant we were unable to hold dialogue sessions, the bread and butter of our work. At the same time, many major grant funders temporarily closed to new applications and we were aware that one of many impacts of the pandemic would be less money for grant funders to distribute to a larger number of applicants. At that time our Project Manager, Tariq Bashir, caught the Corona Virus and was off work for about three months. Our Operations Manager, Cath Chirgwin, worked incredibly hard with members of the management committee on responding to the impact of the pandemic on our work.

Cath and members of the management committee produced an emergency funding plan and a longer-term funding plan to try to ensure the future survival of the project.

On his return to work, one of Tariq’s priorities was to work with our group of dialogue facilitators on adapting how we run sessions so that we are able to facilitate dialogue online. We have run a number of online dialogue sessions, but these have not been with groups we were planning to work with before the lockdown, many of whose members are not set up to use platforms like Zoom. We are currently working on how to hold online sessions with those groups. With the prospect of groups of people being able to meet later this year, we are looking forward to being able to work face to face again and we anticipate that our delivery will be a mixture of face to face and online sessions.

To increase the impact of what we do, we have been building up relationships with three national partners with whom we will share our learning and skills so they can use them in their work. One of these is the Methodist Church Regional Learning Network. The others are the Local Government Association (the umbrella body for local authorities) and the Housing Diversity Network (a membership body for housing associations).

When our project began, we deliberately worked 'under the radar' and we haven't given much attention to publicity. We don't have a website. We decided a few years ago that we should join the 21st Century and that decision is starting to come to fruition as we have appointed a Communications Team on a six month contract to develop a communications strategy including publicity, branding, a website and advice on how we participate in the world of social media. We plan to have funding in place for a Communications Worker to sustain this work.

When we began ten years ago, the Sheffield Methodist District offered to be a home for our project. This year we will become a charitable organisation in our own right. Many thanks for hosting us for the last ten years and we look forward to continuing working with you once we are an independent organisation.

Tariq Bashir

Worship and Preaching

Awaiting report

Revd Jen Mullis OBE

Worship and Preaching Officer