

MEETING OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wednesday, 31st August 2016, 6.30 pm

In the Cafe at Horley Methodist Church, Victoria Road, Horley, RH6 7AS

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome Pauline Newton

Present: John Hellyer, Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor, Janet Glass, Elizabeth Gregory, Conrad Hicks, Helen Letley, Philip Luscombe, Shelagh Morgan, Pauline Newton, Andy Packer, Bonni-Belle Pickard, Michael Richardson, Ian Suttie, Helen Richardson in attendance

2. Apologies: Rose Westwood and Anne Haggarty

3. Opening devotions were led by John

4. Minutes of the meeting of the District Council held on 18th June 2016 **signed**

5. Matters arising and matters to report not covered elsewhere

5.1. Worthing Circuit

John Hellyer

Merger takes place at midnight tonight. Thanks to Ian and his colleagues for their work. We aware that the district needs to consider additional support moving forward for circuits involved in mergers. Only issue so far is the renumbering of the circuit has meant limited access to things like the consents process, and minor errors where the old circuit name has still been used. Financial commitment for the circuit to cover additional expenses incurred this year just closing is approx £1500. Suggestion is that we make a contribution to cover this expenditure accrued during 2015-16, as a one off grant. **Agreed.** A dedication service to launch the new circuit will be held in October. Gratitude to our URC colleagues for their help.

5.2. District Children's Holiday

John Hellyer

Robin Selmes continues the work following on from 2 meetings ago. Philip reports that a number of churches saw value in the holiday club but none could take it on. This year's was cancelled but, at very short notice, Tonbridge church took up the booking. This crystallised the view to formally close the holiday club in its current form but a number of possible alternatives are still being considered. These are not necessarily viable and Robin and others have agreed that the holiday in its current form will need to close. There is still a meeting to be held, and Robin will then report back in time for the next meeting for a final decision to be made.

6. Reports

6.1. Report from Conference, issues needing District attention

Shelagh Morgan

Good conference

Marriage and relationships- Districts and circuits to use existing resources

Safeguarding there may be some changes to job descriptions and line management, minimum number of hours, changes in legislation, staying refreshed and aware.

3Generate- v good presentation- 3 manifestos: reflect what they as young people/young Christians feel. District directed to engage

Larger than circuit- v tight vote. Lots came up. Task group to review and report back

Reply to the District memorial.

Justice and Holiness. Bonni-Belle will do something at Synod

Supervision- exemplary session by Jane Leach

6.2. Stationing 2016 and 2017

John Hellyer

2016- Everyone has arrived! Dorking and Horsham superintendency has now been filled. Continued prayers for John Scrivens who is staying in his Southampton manse for a recuperative year at connexional expense in the hope he can take up his appointment in September 2017. Decision about whether this will be possible will be taken later in the year so neither John nor the circuit are disadvantaged.

2017-Subject to circuit meetings- 5 or 6 ordained presbyters; 1 superintendent; 1 probationer presbyter, 2 deacons. There is a curtailment in the pipeline.

Creation of a Diaconate appointment in the Central Sussex United Area (Peter Rayson's current appointment) etc Sustainable appointment. **Approved**

Probationer appointment in Berks and Surrey Borders- 3 churches combined membership of 170 **Approved**

Rose has decided not to seek re-invitation. New CSUA appointment may be developed, Brighton and Hove also interested in developing appointment.

Deadline of 14th Sept to decide which appointment will be for the Assistant Chair. Need therefore to delegate –**Agreed** to delegate to the Leadership team.

District need to put one person on the circuit invitation committee, with both District and Circuit having a veto. Shelagh to be District rep **Agreed**

6.3. Safeguarding

Helen Richardson

Helen presented the following and took questions:

'Looking back over the past year, Safeguarding training has been one of our main concerns. Taking part in the pilot for the new and updated version of the Foundation Stage training material was very successful. Well over a hundred people were trained and comments were sent to Connexion to help finalise the material. Several more training sessions are booked for the autumn. I have linked up with Natalie Newton from the DMLN to hold two sessions of the Leadership Module. This means that most people requiring this training have now completed it. Natalie has also arranged for two sessions for "Train the Trainers" to be held in the autumn, since all trainers should have a refresher course emphasising the findings of the Past Cases Report.

The Past Cases Report still has not finally been completed. I was asked to look at five Cases from our District. Unfortunately, they are being looked at in minute detail and I have spent 'many hours' trying to get more details about them. I have now told the Safeguarding Team at Connexion that I am unable to spend the amount of hours needed to follow up Past Cases, when I have a busy schedule already.

I continue to get cases referred to me by Circuits, but one which has been causing much upset for over 18 months, ended with the lay employee taking his own life. Some cases are very complicated and this was one of them. The Police took over a year to complete their investigation into the individual concerned and they eventually decided that there was insufficient evidence to proceed. Following Methodist procedure, a Risk Assessment was carried out and the Advisory Board made the decision to stand him down from most of his roles until such time as the DSO felt that he was ready to return. While discussions were taking place about how this should be managed, he died unexpectedly. The Methodist Church has put in place an Enquiry, to see if there are lessons to be learnt. I have been interviewed by the person leading this enquiry.

Last year a meeting was held of all Circuit Safeguarding Officers and it proved to be very successful. There is to be another one on 9th October arranged by the Safeguarding Group.

Since Tim Carter took over as the Senior Safeguarding Manager at Connexion, there have been several day training sessions for DSOs; these are very helpful. Often we have visiting speakers, question and answer sessions and useful information given out. We also get an opportunity to get to know each other and learn about how DSOs operate in their respective Districts.

As usual it has been a very busy time but I believe as a District we are becoming more aware of how to keep each other safe.'

Helen has access to the support group to share in confidence and opportunities for supervision, 1:1 and legal advice is all available to Helen. She also meets with other Districts' safeguarding officers.

John gave a great word of gratitude to Helen for all her work.

7. District Development Plan

John Hellyer

7.1. District Website

Deacon Joy Everingham has agreed to design a new website. It will include a more easily updated calendar, a members' area where we will explore putting information that is in the district directory, when data protection issues have been resolved. Wendy Cory will be able to make any changes directly. Aiming for January for up and running.

7.2. Appointment of Safeguarding Officer

This piece of work will need to be done in 2017. The Connexional Safeguarding team will be offering more guidance and support in the process as well as supervision for the person appointed. Work referred to in last minutes is not yet done. By the next meeting, John will have the mechanism in place for the appointment of the new Safeguarding Officer, including budget, hours of working, Job Description, overlap period. Lay employment panel, professional supervision etc

7.3. District Staffing

Should we consider employing another person to pick up the growing work of the District? Chris Linford does a lot of work for property is retiring next August. Developments in new housing in some parts of the District- could we sponsor someone to work in this area? Strengthening the support circuits get when doing property schemes, post regrouping for mission, is there a job here and if so, how big, viable etc? Leadership team suggests engaging consultant to help scope out the work and do feasibility study.

What sort of costs? Could be some overlap with building and property? Important to scope to ensure tight and helpful rather than having something woolly. Strong feeling from extension and invitation group, as John is the first point of call, the job is too large and no one person can do it all. Are there bits that John doesn't have to be the person who does it. Yes. It is important that anyone was the right person. Scoping would need to include working out where the funding would come from.

Can scope Chris's bit but need help scoping the rest. Consultant would be able to give some idea on costs and likelihood of appointing someone on eg 10 hours a week. A couple of people have been suggested- Judith Jewell, and someone else. Delegate the Leadership team to contact these 2 people and explore what help they could offer and potential costs; if leadership team agree that there is a way forward at appropriate costs, they should proceed, up to a limit of £2000. **Agreed**

8. Ecumenical relationships

8.1. Policy on models of shared ministry in Single Congregation LEPs

John Hellyer

Need to develop our policy –John outlined some of the models for ordained ministry in ecumenical partnerships within the District (Ashford, Leatherhead/Cobham, High Cross, Sheerwater) with alternating ministry most common rather than shared ministry. Need to

start a conversation of strengths and weaknesses of different models to enable churches to select a model that is most sustainable for the particular situation.

Philip- there are almost as many models as there are situations! Collaborative model if there is time commitment to it. Need to avoid one denomination taking the lead and the other being 'the second minister'. Assumption that it is the role of the minister to maintain the tradition of the denomination when rotating ministry. Drifted into ecumenism rather than theologically committed. Better protocols would help, especially when there is almost a post denominational understanding, when governance grates. No appetite to tackle this nationally, but we face the issues locally. Sponsoring body and review groups do exist but are patchy. Need to have an ongoing conversation, eg local URC/Methodist Liaison Group. Ask for national conversation at national liaison group.

- 8.2. Agreement with Diocese of Guildford about Wellesley development *Conrad Hicks*
Anglicans and Methodists have jointly bought a manse and employ a pioneer minister to work on new housing. There is no church building- general hope that the Christian community that builds will become a worshipping community. There is no single congregation LEP and no church council. There will be a mission initiative agreement and a council until such time as a church council can be formed, hopefully within 6 years and become a giving community making contributions to diocese/district. TMCP and Diocese will need agreements signing- need a small group-6 Anglicans and 6 Methodists plus 2 others from other denominations, draft form, delegate to John, Conrad and Peter Hills to sign off whatever TMCP and Diocese need. **Agreed**

- 8.3. Ebbsfleet Garden City (North Kent) *John Hellyer*
First houses are being built. Specific request from the Baptist worker, Penny, 'are we as Methodists interested in being involved in building a church centre' and Anglicans also approaching us. What is our policy- do we wait for the circuit to make a grant application? Should we try to reserve some funds/set up a fund/appeal for donations from Model Trust Funds from others. What about other models for church planting? Local circuit are likely to be interested- we need to be prepared to be at the heart of the community and try and know what is happening. Fresh expression ideas already being explored by the circuit. Timing sounds right.
Need a large sum of money to fund a worker for eg. 6 years. Can we link somehow the closing of churches and releasing property for God's mission to church plant in another Circuit. This is being looked at connexionally.

Circuit already involved. District also supportive. Other denominations also interested.
Agree District needs to review this whole area strategically.

Pauline Newton is interested in visiting all circuits to meet and find out where the money is. People are happier to give their money if they know where it is going and could set up twinning type arrangements.

9. Finance

Michael Richardson/Pauline Newton

Michael Richardson reported that £20,000 had been transferred from the surplus reserves in the District Expenses Account to the District Advance Fund. This matter was considered at the Circuit Treasurers Meeting last Autumn and reported at an earlier Council Meeting. Following an established practice, the District Expenses Account paid for Training Grants, Courses, Superintendents' "Residentials", etc during the year and was reimbursed from the District Advance Fund. Similarly the costs of the Safeguarding Officer and related costs and a contribution to the London Committee for the services of Chris Linford in respect of his acting as the District Property Secretary were likewise costs to be reimbursed from the District Advance Funds. These totalled approximately £40,000 and would be shown the Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2016.

At a recent meeting of the District Treasurers in London, Pauline Newton and Michael Richardson were informed that the District Assessment for the District Contribution to the Methodist Church Fund for 2017-18 would be a little less than for 2016-17.

Michael had started the “hand over” to Pauline Newton to enable her to commence her responsibilities as the new District Treasurer. He would prepare the Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2016 and present them in draft form to be “Examined” by the new Independent Examiners – Wilkins Kennedy.

John thanked Michael for all his work, done with grace and charm.

Wendy is putting the Statistics for Mission membership figures from Oct.2015 in the district directory, and Pauline will use these for calculating year 17/18 assessments. Incentive for churches to get their numbers in accurately from now on! In ecumenical situations, we will divide the total membership by the number of partners. District & Methodist Church Fund Assessments are calculated from the same set of statistics so this will provide comparable information in future.

She will work with John to prepare a draft budget for the next meeting.

CFB takes one signature to move money. **Authorised** Shelagh to be a co-signatory. Michael needs to remain on for now. All people need to be directed to Pauline for anything from midnight.

10. District Management and Administration

10.1. District Risk Policy Ongoing.

Shelagh Morgan

10.2. Manse inspections

District does not have a District Manses Committee as part of our doing things differently, however SO requires one and the task is to run manse inspections. By and large not been missed really, Graham Hindle began work on a self inspection programme that was done online but not followed up. Jack Delbridge agreed to be a trouble shooting visitor if a need arose. The SOs have been strengthened: inspections are now required before a minister leaves and the Probationer application form asks for the date of the inspection. **Agreed**, we do need to do manse inspections. Need a small group to work on the practice- mixture of ministers and circuit people, along with a District rep (John to ask Jack to arrange this.)

10.3. Lay employment matters

Following a safeguarding issue it was identified that the District has no way of knowing if an employing body has failed to issue a proper contract of employment. The current arrangements offer support in setting up a job and preparing the correct documentation. A list of lay employees is maintained.

The meeting agreed that as it was the legal responsibility of the employing body to issue the contract, the district does not have the capacity to take on responsibility for monitoring whether the correct employment contracts are actually issued. Superintendents and Circuit Stewards are to be reminded of the legal responsibilities of Circuit Meetings and Church Councils when they employ lay people.

10.4. Authority to sign Licence Agreement with Basepoint **Agreed** to give John authority to sign.

11. Applications and Authorisations

John Hellyer

11.1. Policy on Authorisations to Preside at Holy Communion for Lay Employees.

We have a policy- lay employees should not automatically be given authorisation to preside, but it can be given, by other route as a member of the circuit. Note- need to make circuits aware when they may be employing lay employees as it can't be assumed. Time limit is in place.

11.2. Subgroup to consider Authorisation to Preside and Local Preacher On Trial extensions. Wait until we know the new membership of the DC.

11.3. Authorised Presbyter: Rev Jackie Maw Wellesley initiative. **Agreed**

12. Appointments and Vacancies

John Hellyer

12.1. Probationers' Committee: Rev. Asif Das, Rev. David Faulkner, Rev. Catherine Bowstead, Deacon Pru Cahill. **Agreed**

12.2. District Reconciliation Group: Rev. Andy Lowe. **Agreed**

13. Any Other Business

Future Meetings and other significant District dates to be noted

Risk assessment for the upcoming District synod. Noted this will be implemented.

Membership of the DC- we need 6 representatives electing at Synod.

District Council:

Wednesday, 25th January 2017

Wednesday, 29th March 2017

17th June 2017 at St Columba's House

Wednesday, 30th August 2017

Representative Synod:

Saturday 10th September 2016, High Cross Church, Camberley

April 29th 2017 The Meeting Place, University of Sussex

Thanks

Closing prayers