

MEETING OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wednesday 31st January 2018 at 6.30pm

At Horley Methodist Church, Victoria Road, Horley, RH6 7AS

Minutes

Prayers

Present: John Hellyer, Chris Blake, Debora Cornish, Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor, Joy Everingham, Janet Glass, Elizabeth Gregory, Conrad Hicks, Philip Luscombe, Shelagh Morgan, Pauline Newton, Alison Noakes, Claire Potter, Alan Wood.

Apologies: Natalie Newton, Bonni-Belle Pickard

In Attendance: Paul Glass (Chaplain)

1. Preliminaries

- (a) Apologies- Bonni-Belle (on Sabbatical)
- (b) Minutes- signed
- (c) Matters arising- none that don't come up elsewhere

2. General policy

(b) Chaplaincies including KWM- Introduction from John, within the District there are a wide range of chaplaincies, models, full time/part time/ lay/ordained/volunteer etc.

Kent Workplace Mission report (Alan Wood)-Trustee and treasurer. Document presented to the meeting. Big impact on Bluewater; exploring faith partnerships for anyone in distress able to refer on someone of another faith. over 40 chaplains in the group. Run training days, conferences, retreats, conference speaker will be on mental health this year. Recognised issue at Bluewater. Get chaplains from outside the area coming to their conferences. Looking to liven up their profile on social media. KWM doesn't seek to take over chaplaincy but embrace organisations already there, support chaplains in small or sole working situations for networking, support and insurance. Meeting response: Very good to hear more details of the work, Alan expressed gratitude for the funding from the District.

Chaplaincy report (Paul Glass) circulated prior to meeting-District fortunate- has 9 schools a mixture of independent and maintained. Recognise that lots of Methodists and chaplaincy happening in non-Methodist schools as well and exploring how DMLN might support these. Chaplains to organisations that have Methodist in the name find themselves being the ethos keeper. Leading worship for people who are 'pressed' to be there so need to make worship relevant and the students will 'tell you as it is'. Conference made some important decisions last year around- MAST, MIST, - national ethos committee, Wesley trust- Academy arm- any school can academise with Wesley Trust. In Canterbury and East Kent, the 4 Methodist schools work together. Invitation to possibly challenge circuits to fund and be involved in new schools in new housing areas. Teenagers won't accept platitudes- there is a thirst for the spiritual. Live topic of mental resilience and health. Pastoral Visitor role- groundbreaking work in other schools- mental health first aid and Growth mindset.

Review Chaplaincy Policy - reaffirmed for 12 months

(c) District Development Plan

Positive Working Together- Connexional programme to combat harassment and bullying: DMLN
Graham Hindle- intention to draw together the work done over last 2 years so that by next June we will have refreshed, renewed and trained the District Complaints, Support and Mediation groups.

New Housing

Exploring in North Kent-real conversation to make an appointment, and then looking for other opportunities-however move afoot for connexion to release resources to fund district position to support mission focussed developments so there may be an opportunity to use this money to support work in new housing developments.

Use of IT- need to try and get a move to everything across to office365 and appoint an IT consultant.

Manse Inspection- those circuits expecting probationers should have had a visit and Jack Delbridge still trying to recruit people. Probationer manse inspections are now required.

Resourcing Mission Officers completion of probationary period-Job share role is in place and going well. Both Stephanie and Adrian Roux getting known around the District and being invited in early into circuits, which is good. Being a critical friend. **Agreed** John to sign off the probationary period.

3. The Circuits

(a) Boundaries – Staines and Feltham- Conrad. Conversations have not proved fruitful- decision taken by the Teddington Circuit not to pursue. Remain concerned about the viability of S&F. Leadership of Thames Valley open to the idea of taking half of S&F but not the whole circuit. Might the other part look to London or elsewhere in this district. Let the dust settle for a couple of weeks and then go back to the lay leadership and the staff to see whether the DC needs to intervene. Anticipate a discussion at next DC.

(b) Discontinuance of worship, closure of chapels. The request to discontinue worship at Laleham Methodist Church for which paperwork was distributed has been withdrawn pending further conversation in the S&F Circuit. At the time of the meeting, it is still expected that Wendover Road, Staines and Feltham will have its last service in August 2018. **Agreed** recommend to synod permission to cease worship. We remember them in our prayers.

(e) Stationing Priorities-This year, as a way of trying to manage the gap between appointments and ministers we have categorised- must fill, need to fill, hope to fill. This has led to only filling about 50% of appointments in this district. Going to be reviewed, behind that, growing view of strategic need to fill appointments and sustain ministry. Perhaps in future years everyone needs to be more honest about hope to fill, -should this category be removed? How can we better articulate a good, viable appointment and generate appropriate profiles to open up missional opportunities, and accept that the challenge is to manage and plan for fewer presbyters. Is there something we can do as a District to support this? The ideal would be that there are only 'must fill' appointments and these all get filled and not that if you can afford a minister, you get a profile in the book. Churches who have good paid lay leadership can develop new ways of working with less minister time. Methodism has a tradition of strong lay leadership and we could 'get back to that'- Messy church, lay workers, new church opportunities. Timescale consideration- profiles

written in the gap when they are looking for a minister rather than writing a profile much earlier- effectively a mission document. Large circuits are always in stationing. Some circuits are better than others at writing profiles- need to be smart in the use of words. The District offers advice. Challenge for circuits to recognise the big picture of having different models of ministry eg chaplains. Should the Connexion or District make the final decision about whether a profile is accepted and categorised as must, need or hope to fill? This year the Connexional Officers over looked some crucial areas of district policy and John had to appeal their decisions. Leadership team will need to prepare in May and think carefully for this coming year. May need to get circuits together to manage strategically and support some circuits. Would hope that circuits would be honest enough to choose not to put an appointment forward if not needed.

(g) Authorisation to preside

Probationers in Wey Valley and West Sussex (Coast and Downs)-Sydney Samuel Lake, Agreed, Daniel Balseden **Agreed** (Both subject to final checking)

(h) Connexional Grants- Report from Wey Valley re Cranleigh- Claire Potter reported grant turned down first time, turned down again, despite advice from connexional grants. Taking the decision to try and do a reduced project without the grant. Distinct gap between advice given and the grant making committee. That committee now require a District report.

(i) Assessments. Paper presented. Two Circuits disputed the amount requested. Malta will discuss this further at meetings in April and Redhill & E Grinstead Treasurer offered new ways of calculating Assessments. We accepted the calculations for 18/19 but this will be reviewed for 19/20 – see Agenda item 6a.

(l) Property Consents

Purchase of new manse in Ebbsfleet by North Kent Circuit -paper presented. Should the money for garage conversion be ring fenced so that when an incoming minister would need the garage conversion there would be no embarrassment- perhaps not ring fence it but ask for assurance that circuit would find the money rather than tying it up and preventing using it. **Approved**

4. Ecumenical

(b) Sharing agreements, local ecumenical partnerships, ecumenical partnerships in extended areas that do not require shared governance, ecumenical areas.

Wey Valley – Guildford St Mary's A proposal for setting up two ecumenical groups to lead and manage this partnership without forming a single congregation LEP was presented by Conrad Hicks. To go to circuit meeting still. Final document in an acceptable form for Methodism so can confidently ask for approval from DC subject to circuit for this new way of governance. Might they move closer together? Possibly much later but probably not now. **Approved**

Staines and Feltham – Christchurch Feltham (John): We gave at a previous meeting approval for them to cease worship, but it is not far out from the middle of Feltham and the Diocese of London approached us to ask to plant a church and maybe buy it off the circuit later. Our constitution won't allow us to lease a church building to another denomination without us also worshipping in the building. Anglicans open to an alternative model where it is a full partnership perhaps. John in continuing discussion with the bishop.

Farnham: Conrad-voted to form a single congregation LEP with the URC across the road. Developing together a new partnership for town mission. Agreed to shared ministry and joining the URC across the road. Exciting. Paperwork in place and approved.

The church will need to consider whether they want a designation to delegate of powers of the Methodist Church Council to a new ecumenical governing body under SO 611 and make the appropriate request to Synod.

Recommend to synod

(c) Associate Presbyterian South Kent Circuit- Rev Richard Webb (Philip Luscombe) Richard is a retired priest in Charing-no Anglican church, already involved in life of the circuit. **Agreed that we support this application to the Conference**

Rev Andy Melvin - Baptist Minister employed on lay worker terms. Associate Minister or Authorised Minister? Paperwork presented for Associate Minister- we could approve this now and tell them that if they want to we suggest consideration of a later request for him to become an authorised minister. **Agreed that we support this application to the Conference.**

5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding officer probationary period completion (Philippa Read) Report issued. Full time role is definitely a good decision- time to make positive relationships with circuits. Passed her probationary period. Signed off.

6. Finance

(a) District Accounts for year ended 31 August 2017 were received, approved & signed. The letter of representation to IE Wilkins Kennedy was approved and signed. The Budget for 2018-19 was approved. We will be using the balance of monies received from District Children's Holiday for 3Generate related items so there is no new figure for 3Generate in the Budget.

Managing District Finances document issued at the meeting - generated following an objection from 2 circuits following the assessment proposals. Propose formation of a 'Task and Finish' group to review a number of financial matters and how decisions are made, to report back to DC in June. This fully supports Pauline and ensures she isn't isolated. Limited lifetime single action group. Bring together some skill and expertise. Should it have the power to co-opt, is it large enough/robust enough. 3 circuit treasurers, hopefully one from each area including the treasurer who brought the objection and try and get a good range of size of circuits. Delegated recruitment to this group to the leadership team.

(b) District Grants, District Advance Funds, London Committee and model trust money.

Report from Ian Severn (Grants Secretary) Neil Dobson (Grants Treasurer) figures of grants awarded in the last 12 months. circulated. Noted.

7. Ministry

(c) Local Preachers including extensions of time on trial. None.

(f) Ministry training and development, including grants. To note- DAF significant amounts of training being funded. A mix of mostly smaller grants with a few larger ones doing further study.

8. Lay Employment and Appointments

No report

9A. 3Generate

Report circulated. A positive experience despite the travelling! The presbyters who went are keen to do something more local for the 28 who went.

11. Appointments

(c) Casual vacancies and unfilled appointments to be made before the next September Synod

Sabbaticals: secretary to take over from Janet, and Debora is taking over from Philip.

Nominations to District Council (Conrad) Can we shift our process somehow so that we don't ask someone who we approach to have to say to the synod why they are suitable. We should in these cases write a reasoned statement to present to synod.

12. Other matters

(a) Data protection (Shelagh Morgan) Papers presented. Shelagh has already asked district officers etc. who may hold information to try and audit what information we hold. Nothing received from Connexion yet such as privacy notices. Someone is working Connexionally seconded for 6 months. Each entity (District, Circuit, Church etc) needs to be its own Data Controller. Some churches may already have started, and we should remind circuits at synod perhaps? Shelagh will continue to ask the connexion. A reminder that there are reasons why records can be kept without consent, including safeguarding reasons.

(b) Chair's Nomination (Shelagh Morgan)-update- panel/committee has met and started putting together a District and Chair profile. Final drafts will come to the March meeting. If anyone on the council have or know people who have particular knowledge on the various sections, please let Shelagh know. Original dates for interviews are not possible due to date of synod so dates now in August to go to September synod. Need to change the composition of the committee as Philip and Pru leaving the district, others on holiday. Approaches will be made for nominations to April synod. Will also need to move the date of the August/September DC meeting to be later to meet the nominee. Possibly keep the existing date for the main meeting and hold an extra meeting for those able to attend- agreed to hold a 1 item meeting later and keep existing date.

(c) Assistant Chairs Appointment of Rev Helen Hollands **Affirmed**

(d) Training for members of Complaints Support Group (Covered by positive working together DMLN)

14. Date and place of next meeting(s).

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| DPC 2016-17 – March | 21.03.18 | Horley Methodist Church |
| DPC 2016-17 – June (Saturday) | 23.06.18 | St. Columba's House |

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| DPC 2018-19 – August | 29.08.18 | Horley Methodist Church |
| DPC 2018-19 Sept to meet nominated chair | 11/9/18 | Horley Methodist Church single item meeting 7pm |

AOB- renewal of the District Office fees. Moving to an annual contract where we can give 3 months notice. Rents will go up anyway but only £300 rather than £1000 or more. From 1/1/18.