

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



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Foreword

The beginning of winter saw unprecedented levels of fuel poverty being recorded in our country. Sadly, energy companies did very little to help those in need and the unabating cost of living crisis meant that many people suffered during this time. All this was taking place in the midst of a government in turmoil, economy teetering on the edge and unions encouraging strikes from most sectors of the working community.

The book of Jude offers us hope in this time by reminding us all of that basic of Christian principles:

“But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”

Jude 1:20-21NRSV

Simply put – ‘Keep the Faith’!

And that is exactly what most of our circuits did, to whom we are so grateful! Warm spaces were established throughout the District and cost of living support was offered in the form of winter coat schemes, shared cost of living payments to help with bills, cooked meals and fellowship, and pastoral visits providing companionship to the lonely and those unable to reach our church buildings.

These acts of charity were a true indicator that as a district we are ‘keeping ourselves in the love of God’ by showing care and providing for those less fortunate than we are. Thank you very much for all your efforts, seen and unseen!

Throughout this year’s annual report, you will read of the many aspects in the life of the district that indicate God being at work in our midst. The works of the Commissions continue to show us hope in what we do to proclaim our Risen Lord Jesus Christ as present in human endeavour.

The consistent work of our Learning Network team will be a source of hope for us as we see how much our district members continue to benefit from the learning and equipping they offer.

Soon you will hear also of the work of the newly established New Places for New People team (NPNP) and the exciting proposed work in this regard.

Whilst stationing continues to be a challenge throughout the Methodist Church in Britain, we continue to be encouraged in the London District by the creative work done by our Superintendents and Circuit Leadership teams to find creative and lasting ways of offering ministry and repositioning our circuits for works of service by all God’s people. Thank you to everyone for all

your efforts, planning and faith diligence.

Our prayer is that through this report, you will see that God is not done with us, and that the harvest continues to be plentiful in spite of the workers being few in some areas. Your work is noticed and appreciated greatly by all of us in the District Council.

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain”

1 Corinthians 15:58.

Thank you for all that you do as you collaborate with our hard-working district team and may the year ahead bring us all more hope as we keep the faith.

Every blessing



Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle

Revd Nigel Cowgill

Chairs of the London District of the Methodist Church

District Vision and Priorities

As the people, churches and projects of the London District of the Methodist Church, our mission is:

‘To share the good news of Jesus Christ throughout Greater London and the surrounding areas, and to improve the wellbeing of people and their communities.’

We do this by:

- *Engaging pastorally and prophetically with the communities in which our churches are located and with the wider region*
- *Equipping and developing faithful and fruitful disciples and congregations*
- *Equipping and developing faithful and fruitful preachers and ordained ministers*

Our ways of working include:

- Engaging in theological reflection and prayerful discernment which will help us to fully understand our mission
- Building quality relationships across our Circuits, with wider Methodism and with ecumenical, interfaith and community groups
- Building quality relationships with civic and political authorities in the area covered by the District
- Seeking to communicate effectively and work collaboratively
- Living and working creatively with diversity and difference
- Deploying the resources over which we have stewardship, effectively and flexibly
- Developing and sharing best practice

As adopted by Synod in April 2014, the priorities of the District are:

- To develop lay leadership—in breadth, depth, numbers and confidence

-
- To ensure that every minister and local preacher is engaged in an intentional review and development of their ministry
 - To increase participation in social and civic action, by identifying and sharing good practice and promoting networks of practitioners—rooting such engagement in our Methodist identity

These goals are by no means exhaustive or embrace the range of activities carried out in the name of the District. Their purpose is to help focus the major developmental work that is key to the next phase of the District's life as it seeks to support the ministry and mission of local churches, circuits and engage with London as a global city.

Chairs' Responsibilities

From September 2022 – Mid February 2023

Revd Nigel Cowgill

Circuits

35/31 Barking, Dagenham & Ilford
35/05 Battersea and Wandle Valley
35/28 Blackheath and Crystal Palace
35/42 Bromley
35/04 Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham
35/41 Croydon
35/24 Ealing Trinity
35/38 Kingston Upon Thames
35/06 Lambeth
35/30 Lesnes Abbey
35/43 Orpington and Chislehurst
35/40 Purley
35/25 Richmond and Hounslow
35/07 Southwark and Deptford
35/39 Sutton
35/37 Teddington
35/03 Westminster
35/06 Wimbledon

Commissions and Committees

Discipleship and Congregational Development
Social Responsibility Commission

Revd Dr Jongi Zihle

Circuits

35/35 Barnet and Queensbury
35/01 City Road
35/34 Enfield
35/33 Forest
35/10 Hackney and Stoke Newington
35/13 Harlesden
35/36 Harrow and Hillingdon
35/11 Islington and Camden
35/12 London Mission North West
35/22 New River
35/20 Newham
35/14 Notting Hill
35/32 Romford
35/09 Tower Hamlets
35/23 Wembley
35/01 West London Mission

Commissions and Committees

Authorised Ministries Commission

From Mid-February to Mid-May 2023

Revd Nigel Cowgill

Circuits

35/31 Barking,
Dagenham & Ilford
35/05 Battersea &
Wandle Valley
35/28 Blackheath &
Crystal Palace
35/42 Bromley
35/04 Chelsea,
Hammersmith &
Fulham
35/41 Croydon
35/24 Ealing Trinity
35/11 Islington &
Camden
35/38 Kingston Upon
Thames
35/06 Lambeth
35/30 Lesnes Abbey
35/43 Orpington &
Chislehurst
35/40 Purley
35/25 Richmond &
Hounslow
35/07 Southwark &
Deptford
35/39 Sutton
35/37 Teddington
35/03 Westminster
35/06 Wimbledon

Revd Faith Nyota

Circuits

35/01 City Road
35/13 Harlesden
35/12 London Mission
North West
35/22 New River
35/14 Notting Hill
35/09 Tower Hamlets
35/23 Wembley

Revd Roz Hollingsworth

Circuits

35/35 Barnet &
Queensbury
35/34 Enfield
35/33 Forest
35/10 Hackney & Stoke
Newington
35/36 Harrow &
Hillingdon
35/20 Newham
35/32 Romford
35/01 West London
Mission

Woven: District Theme 2019 - 2022

Overview

Woven centres on the power of storytelling to transform and renew us in our lifelong discipleship as followers of Christ. Sharing our stories is how we live, laugh, cry and connect authentically with the communities around us and it's how we see depth in our relationships.

The vision of Woven is:

- To see increased confidence and ownership of the beautiful weaving of our stories into God's story.
- For God's story and our faith journeys to be shared confidently within and beyond, our church walls regularly and more widely.



God's Story. Your Story. Every Story.

The Past Year

The Woven Project and theme was launched in 2019 and the intention was to run the project for two years, mirroring other District projects. However, because of the pandemic delaying the introduction of some

elements of the project, and to utilise the amazing resources that had been produced, it was agreed to continue the project until the end of 2022; thereby allowing the initial vision of Woven to be fulfilled.

The following collaborations and achievements took place:

Woven Lent study booklet March/April

We reproduced last year's well received study for circuit and church groups, generously contributed again by Revd Michaela Youngson. Hard copies are available for future use and electronic copies can be downloaded from the District website.

Woven Lent Resource DVD March/April

Hope through Darkness was a series of conversations with 6 church members across the London District sharing their stories and experiences of lockdown and reflections from the pandemic. Their stories highlighted that we continue to be woven together in both the hope and the darkness of this time.

The stories shared have been recorded on DVD and distributed across Circuits as an aid to our reflections during Lent. Additionally they were made available on the District's YouTube channel.

'Tell It Live' music and spoken word event

On Friday 10 June at Walworth Methodist Church we gathered together for the first in-person version of 'Tell It'; a night of spoken word, music and poetry from young adults across the London District.

Musicians and spoken word artists inspired us with performances focussing on telling stories of faith. While the

attendance at the event was relatively low, we had six poets performing on the night, and feedback from those who did attend was unanimously positive.

Tell It Live was recorded and is available on the District's YouTube Channel (as either the whole event, or individual performances).

District Away Weekend at High Leigh Conference Centre

From Friday 22 – Sunday 24 July 2022, the District's Weekend Away took place. The theme was 'Prophetic Living and Peace Making', and featured Revd Ruth Harvey, Leader of the Iona Community, as the keynote speaker.

An exciting line up of worship (with a good balance of modern and traditional hymns), workshops and other activities were also organised.

The workshops (nine in total), were centred on 'imaginative contemplation' and were well received.

The youth stream, ran by the District Youth & Children's Coordinator went smoothly, and for those of a younger age, the creche provided by our friends at St Vincent Family Project provided lots of fun.

A total of 84 people from across the District attended the weekend.

Reflection on Woven

As the project drew to a close, the Weekly Update featured an item / event from the project sporadically, pulling out key highlights and resources from Woven, reflecting and celebrating the conclusion of the project but also providing a path for future use of the amazing resources created over the last few years.

Our Project Coordinator, Joanna Kelly, made the decision to leave the District after the Summer of 2022, and therefore it seemed appropriate to bring the project to close before the remaining initiatives were started. We thank Joanna for her commitment and vision for the project.

Future Plans

As we move forward through this connexional year and beyond, we will continue to promote the resources from the project.

Joanna Kelly & Sam Redding
Project Coordinator & Senior Admin
Officer



DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council

Overview

The Council is the London District's Policy Committee which seeks to think strategically about the life and mission of the whole District. It coordinates the work of the Commissions and is responsible for the continuity of District business between Synods. Its membership comprises representatives of Superintendents, Circuit Stewards and other relevant groups. The fifteen members meet bi-monthly under the leadership of the District Chairs.

The Past Year

Following the inception of the District Review in March 2022, the Council maintained oversight of the extensive work undertaken both in consultations within the District, and of conversations in a wider context. At its awayday in May 2022, the Council considered in depth the letter from the Secretary of the Conference to District Policy Committees, and the potential consequences for the District's life and future mission. The Review is ongoing, taking into account the Connexional responses to the views expressed by the Districts.

The Autumn Synod, which it had been intended to hold in person, was changed at short notice to online as a consequence of the planned rail strike. Once again, the District Team rose to the occasion magnificently and the Council is grateful for their expertise, (apparent) calm and diligence in somewhat difficult circumstances.

As ever, there have been personnel

changes on the Council and we welcomed John Logan, our new District Synod Secretary, Revd Steven Cooper who became the District Representative to the Methodist Council and Deacon Kathy Johnson, our first Diaconal Representative to the Council. Revd Andrew Dart continued on the Council in a different role, as the new Representative of the Authorised Ministries Commission, and we said farewell to Revd Tim Bradshaw who stepped down from being a Representative of the Superintendents.

The Council has continued to fulfil its remit of overseeing the formal consents, authorisations and approvals required for the ongoing work of the District.

Future Plans

The District Review will continue, re-focussing where necessary in the light of Connexional imperatives, with a view to offering recommendations and a proposal for consideration by the Council.

Following a decision to extend the Woven Project until the end of 2022, possible new themes will be explored and evaluated.

Hilary Porter
District Council Secretary

Chairs Nomination Committee

Overview

“ A nomination committee shall be appointed in the last year but one of the existing Chair’s current term of service” SO 421A(1) or

“ Where an extension of that term is being considered.....” SO421a(2)

The Chairs Nomination Committee appointed by Synod should consist of nine members and three substitutes. Synod also appoints a convener annually and the London District Synod has tended to appoint the Synod Secretary as convener, although nominations from others could be considered.

During the last year neither of the two Chairs of District had reached the last year but one of their current term of

service. Therefore, there has not been a formal meeting of the Chairs Nomination Committee. Should the committee need to be reconvened, the group will meet as appropriate.

John Logan
Convener of the Chairs Nomination Committee

Human Resources Group

Overview

The District HR Group provides advice to the District, Circuits and local churches on all lay employment matters. It is an advisory group only and does not negate the wish of Churches and Circuits to seek employment advice from other HR specialists or employment lawyers.

The District HR Group has provided advice on matters ranging from recruitment and non-complex behaviour/management/relationship issues to complex employee relations and change management issues.

While Churches and Circuits have continued to seek advice from the group on recruitment issues, especially with the design and quality checking of role profiles, the group's input to the recruitment and selection process also extends to include the approval of recruitment and selection/ onboarding documentation pre and post appointment.

The Past Year

The frequency of recruiting into posts by churches has lessened. While a number of churches streamlined their lay employee complement during lockdown, the cost-of-living crisis means they continue to undertake rigorous review of their resources before committing to any increase in their lay employment staffing. To manage and mitigate risks, churches have also been considering different options for employing people including self-employment which we have supported through the provision of fit-for-purpose templated documentation.

It's encouraging that many churches now recognise their lay employees have been on minimum/statutory terms and have begun to review their terms and conditions of employment including: appropriate salary structure and structured, higher-than-statutory

sickness absence payment. We have supported many of the proposed changes with purposeful advice and we continue to assist churches and circuits to think through their change management processes where these may affect the employment of lay people.

Churches and circuits have become more aware of their obligation as employers and our advice and support have been sought in an increasing number of employee relations cases which vary in complexity. For many churches and circuits there is deep intent and necessary rigour to ensure that processes are followed that are not just legal and satisfactory to the needs of the church/circuit but are also sensitive to the lay employees involved. We have endeavoured, as best we can, to support and guide churches and circuits to healthy and effective solutions.

Future Plans

It is clear that churches and circuits have learning and development needs in the area of lay employment management. With our advice and support, many are getting better at it and are making informed and intentional decisions in this regard. Workload and time excepting, we will look at the best way to equip, support and engage superintendents/circuit ministers/circuit stewards to ensure they undertake a pastorally-sensitive but risk-free management of lay employees.

The Learning Network has run some excellent training sessions for those responsible for managing lay employees and will repeat this in the future.

The Methodist Church website has a rich resource of materials which churches and circuits are encouraged to access and use, especially in the area of recruitment and selection; as well as employment policies which churches/circuits can adapt for their use. These resources are regularly reviewed and updated.

We will continue to provide churches and circuits with effective support and advice in all areas of the lay employment journey where our intervention is sought.

For churches and circuits requiring assistance with any employment-related issues, please contact the Chair of the HR Group – Janet Arthur. Her contact details can be obtained from the District Office.

Janet Arthur
**Chair, District HR Group and Lay
Employment Secretary**

**AUTHORISED
MINISTRIES
COMMISSION (AMC)**



Authorised Ministries Commission

The AMC oversees the work done by the various groups that comprise the commission (Ministerial Sabbaticals, Ministerial Development, Local Preacher Training, Probationers oversight, Early Years in Ministry, and the District Ministers Retreat).

Our goal is to ensure that every minister and Local Preacher is engaged in an intentional review and development of their ministry (primarily through programmes of Ministerial Development, supervision training and continued Local Preacher development).

Furthermore, the Authorised Ministries Commission (AMC) exists to share the good news of Jesus Christ through Greater London and surrounding areas, and to improve the wellbeing of people and their communities by equipping and developing faithful and fruitful preachers and ordained ministers.

Candidates Committee

Overview

The key role of the Candidates Committee is to meet with candidates for Presbyteral and Diaconal ministry. Using Connexional criteria and processes, the committee seeks to discern God's calling on the candidate's life and whether they can be recommended to enter pre-ordination training.

The Past Year

Following their recommendation from the Connexional Candidates' Selection Committee, two candidates from the District started their training at the Queens Foundation in Birmingham in September 2022; one presbyteral and one diaconal.

Three people expressed a sense of call to presbyteral ministry and entered the candidating process by 31 August 2022. They, and their Superintendents, met with the District Chair, the Candidate's Secretary, and a member of the Learning Network team in September. The candidates then had regular meetings facilitated by the Learning Network Officer to support their preparations for submitting their portfolios at the end of November, and their presentations to the District Candidates Committee in January 2023.

Building on the experience of previous years, the committee members' training and preparation for the day of the committee took place on Zoom. They then met in person at the Battersea Mission on Saturday 14 January. The Committee met three candidates for presbyteral ministry, all of whom were recommended to go forward to the

Connexional Candidates' Selection Committee in March 2023.

Due to the decisions made at Conference 2022 to alter the candidating process from 2023, a District Candidates Committee will no longer be required. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the members of the committee, lay and ordained, who have given their time, diligence, and wisdom to this process of discernment over many years. I would also like to offer my thanks to ordained colleagues in the District, who have agreed to be portfolio mentors for candidates or offered placements and placement supervision. I must also acknowledge Sally Rush, Learning Network Officer, for her active attention to and participation in, supporting the candidates. And finally, to the District Admin Team for their time and skill in offering administrative support to the process.

Future Plans:

I have been drawing attention to the new candidating process which is now in place.

I encourage ministers and Superintendents to familiarise themselves with it, particularly as the

dates for applying and joining the process are not the same as they were previously.

More information can be found on the [Candidating for Ministry](#) pages of the Methodist Church website.

Revd Dr Eleanor Jackson
District Candidates' Committee
Secretary

Probationers Committee

Overview

The role of the Probationers Committee is to hear reports on individual probationers from their circuits and the college overseeing their studies to ascertain if they are ready for ordination, or if a recommendation to extend the probation period is more appropriate.

The Past Year

There are currently four probationer ministers serving in the London District: one deacon in her first year of probation, one presbyter and two deacons in their second year.

In November 2022 all probationers met with representatives of the District Probationers Committee (DPC) for informal conversations. Committee members were generally impressed by the progress of all the probationers. The full DPC met in mid-February to discuss in depth the progress and training needs with the probationer ministers. A great debt of gratitude is owed to the members of the committee who work with dedication and enthusiasm. They have to digest a great deal of written material in preparation. This year we welcomed three new members to the committee: a presbyter, a deacon and a lay person.

We also thank the superintendent ministers and circuit stewards who support our probationers. Their comprehensive written reports as well as personal reflections during the committee day are incredibly valuable.

Having begun the connexional year with a short residential meeting, alongside ministers in their first five years at Pleshey Retreat House in Essex, the probationer ministers are looking forward to their annual retreat alongside their peers from the South East District. This year the retreat will be held in Malta, which is part of that District. We look forward to learning more about the travels of St Paul in context.

Future Plans

I will be standing down as Secretary at the end of this Connexional year. Serving this committee has been an enormous privilege and I have learned so much from all the ministers that have come to the London District for their first appointments. I trust that my successor will gain as much from the role.

A Testimony Service for those moving forward to ordinand this year will take place at Wesley's Chapel on Sunday 14 May at 6.30pm.

***Revd Andrew Letby Secretary
District Probationers Committee***

Continuing Development in Ministry

After reception into Full Connexion and ordination, all presbyters and deacons are required to engage in further study, training, and professional development.

The District recognises the crucial importance of continuing learning and exploration for the development and growth of presbyters and deacons; and the financial implications of this.

Funding is available for ministers who are seeking to attend courses and other events that will seek to facilitate their continuing development.

In the last Connexional year, we have received funding applications; which have included funding for academic work as well as day conferences, retreats, and much else in between.

An application form for funding, which provides guidance on the application process, can be found on the CDIM page of the District website.

Revd Faith Nyota
CDIM Secretary

Early Years in Ministry

Overview:

The purpose of this group is to provide peer support alongside the District Chairs and Secretary. This also consists of two led retreats per year (one for just the London District and one with the South East District), and a forum for ministerial development and training.

The Past Year

We currently have 13 ministers in the London District who are in their early years of ministry.

In September 2022 probationers and ministers in early years went to The Diocese of Chelmsford's retreat centre at Pleshey, Essex. The 24hr retreat was led by Revd Nigel Cowgill and Revd Andrew Letby, the theme was health and wellbeing.

In February the London District joined the South East District for a retreat in Malta. The Methodist appointment in Malta is shared with the Church of Scotland and the group were invited to spend a few days at the Jesuit Retreat Centre.

A line management training afternoon was planned for December 2022 unfortunately due to the rail strikes this was postponed until the New Year.

Future Plans

- We are keen to hold the Line management training (facilitated by the Learning

Network) which was postponed last year.

- 24hr and 72hr retreats are to be arranged
- Social gatherings
- Responding to the ministerial development needs

Deacon Dawn Canham
Early Years in Ministry Secretary

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

Overview

The role of a District Local Preachers' Secretary involves advocating for local preachers and worship leaders within the District, and supporting local preachers' meetings in their role as communities of fellowship and learning.

The Past Year

The final moderation of portfolios prepared by local preachers and worship leaders under version 2 of the Worship: Leading & Preaching course took place in Autumn 2022. Congratulations are due to all students who submitted portfolios and to their tutors. Version 2 of the course is now closed, so all students should by now be working on WLP 3.0.

Where a local preacher in training has been "on trial" for five years or more, the circuit is required to seek an extension to the period on trial from the District Council. I have been involved with several new applications for extensions over the past year and have also followed up the progress of those who have received extensions in previous years, but have not yet completed the course. Some increase in extension applications has been expected as some students' progress was hindered or interrupted as a result of the pandemic; and the change from WLP 2.0 to WLP 3.0 means that some students will now need to produce new portfolio work.

Local preachers and worship leaders continue to appreciate the continuing

development and other training events organised by the Learning Network regionally and connexionally. Our regional Learning Network's work in arranging tutor support for those circuits who do not have tutors of their own is also greatly appreciated.

The local preachers and worship leaders of the District continue to exercise their ministries faithfully and conscientiously week by week; and the service of those who also support their LP and WL colleagues as mentors, tutors and circuit LPWL secretaries is much appreciated.

Future Plans

I look forward to continuing to build and maintain relationships with local preachers' and worship leaders' meetings around the District; and, where possible, resuming the occasional visits to circuit LPWL meetings.

Janet Tweedale
***District Local Preachers and Leaders of
Worship Secretary***

Data Protection Resource Group

Overview:

The purpose of the Data Protection Resource Group is to support and guide churches and circuits across London in reaching data protection compliancy and continuing this good practice. TMCP's (Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) annual data protection checklist will be used as the initial indicator of compliance for the District Resource Group. The support and guidance provided by the group may be achieved through specific resourcing material, training, drop-in sessions and/or signposting as deemed appropriate by the group.

The group will be responsible for educating church and circuit trustees on the legal requirements of data protection (as outlined in Standing Order 019) and outlining the consequences of non-compliance.

The Past Year

In 2022, the group have worked to encourage churches and circuits to complete TMCP's data protection checklists. The return rate for 2022 was much healthier than 2021 (when the return rate was 54%), with returns in the last year at 70.35% by the deadline of 31 August.

To encourage completion of the checklists, the District continued to advise via Superintendents and Circuit Administrators from April, and then ad hoc throughout the next couple of months. The group held an online drop-in session towards the end of May to help anyone with questions regarding data protection.

Future Plans

The group are preparing a Data Protection Resource page for the London

District website which will offer data protection tips and provide shortcuts to TMCP's data protection resources in a more user friendly format. It is hoped that churches and circuits will also send in their own data protection 'top tips' for this page, so it will be a space whereby we can all learn from each other. It is anticipated that this page will go live in March/April 2023.

The group have considered how they might provide direct support for those circuits where checklist submissions were very low. Contact with these circuits will begin in early 2023 to identify the best ways in which the group can support them.

Revd Roz Hollingsworth
Data Protection Resource Group Chair

Sabbaticals Advisory Group

Overview:

A sabbatical is a gift from the Church to all presbyters and deacons, providing the opportunity for a three-month break from the normal requirements of circuit life in order to do something different: for example study, travel or work experience in a new context. These can be used to inform and help presbyters and deacons to reflect on their ministry, and to act as a period of spiritual, mental and physical refreshment. Sabbaticals are compulsory for Methodist ministers and are taken after every 7 years of ministry. It is anticipated that planning for a sabbatical will take twelve months or more, with preparations at circuit, District and Connexional level, and frequently wider still.

The purpose of the Group is to receive, review and advise on the content of prospectuses submitted by presbyters and deacons who are preparing for a sabbatical. The combined wisdom of the members can be extremely helpful in refining initial ideas into a fruitful sabbatical time. Within this process, the role of the secretary is to coordinate the work, act as the point of contact between ministers and the Group, keep track of those due for sabbatical in the future and respond to their many and varied queries.

The Past Year

The membership of the District Sabbaticals Advisory Group consists of both lay and ordained people, with a lay secretary/convenor. Dawn Downes was appointed to this role at the April 2022 Synod.

During this year the Group has met via Zoom rather than in-person and has also continued to find email a useful and effective means of consultation and decision-making. Recommendations were submitted to the Spring and Autumn meetings of Synod for approval.

As we have emerged from the challenging pandemic period, more

ministers have been able to achieve their sabbatical programmes without the need for scaling back initial plans; and some who deferred rather than cancel plans, have now been able to catch up.

A number of ministers due for sabbatical in the next Connexional year have already sought advice and are well into their necessary planning. Presbyters/Deacons are mandated to share their plans at their circuit meeting before and after their sabbatical in order to stimulate interest within the circuit.

Future Plans

The Advisory Group continues to encourage the sharing of experiences

in the form of a report on return from sabbatical, and some brilliant and thought-provoking feedback has been received during the year. This information is valuable to circuits and the District and is also a very useful resource for those planning their sabbaticals. The [sabbaticals section of the District website](#) contains examples of this post-sabbatical feedback and it is planned to add to this collection in the near future.

Dawn Downes
District Sabbaticals Secretary

Stationing Report

The stationing of ministers into circuit appointments offers challenges in any year and this last year was no different. We were delighted that stationing-matching rounds one and two took place in person this year. As always, the Chairs are grateful for all the care circuits' offer to ministers and their loved ones through the process of stationing. Thanks are also due for the patience of those making visits, and the trust that they and their families have shown as they prepare to move in 2023

At the start of the stationing matching process in November, there were 107 circuit profiles and 72 presbyter profiles across the Connexion. 43 of the circuit profiles were for a Superintendent.

As a District, throughout the process we

had 16 appointments to fill:

- 3 diaconal appointments
- 1 probationer appointment
- 12 Presbyter appointments

At the time of writing, we still have 6 appointments unfilled within the District, 5 of which are Superintendent appointments. We continue to pray for those circuits as they look at what ministry might be like for them in the next year. We are reminded that stationing each year is not complete until after the Methodist Conference, which meets in June.

As noted in previous reports, we can no longer take it for granted that when a minister's appointment ends, another minister will immediately replace them. The challenge for circuits continues

as we ask them to consider what kind of ministry they need to support their mission- which may be specialist lay ministry, diaconal ministry or Presbyteral ministry. Circuits need to consider the possibility of accepting probationer ministers or ministers from other conferences and churches around the world.

Those responsible for stationing in the life of the church are working hard to be as fair as possible in the deployment of ministers to those situations that are most in need.

Training for circuits and ministers who may be involved in stationing for 2023 will take at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster on:

- Saturday 22 April at 2pm
(after the morning session of Representative Synod)
- Thursday 25 May at 6:30pm

Please hold in prayer, the many circuits across our Methodist Connexion which carry vacancies in this coming year; pray for more people to be called into ministry and for all those within the life of our churches to recognise we, both lay and ordained, have ministries to fulfil as members of the body of Christ.

Revd Nigel Cowgill
London District Chair



**DISCIPLESHIP AND
CONGREGATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Safeguarding Report

Overview

The role of the District Safeguarding Group (DSG) is to support and guide safeguarding policy and practice across the District. The DSG continues to meet regularly. Its members are called on to share their extensive knowledge, to advise and guide the District Safeguarding Officer on existing cases and best practice. This is also a place where current trends and concerns are discussed.



The Past Year:

This year has seen a couple of changes in the District. Karen Stapley (former Assistant District Safeguarding Officer (ADSO)) left her role in the summer, with Becky Skinner (former District Safeguarding Officer (DSO)) leaving in the Autumn. We wish them well with their future endeavours and thank them for their contribution and positive impact in the District

I began the role of DSO in January, working alongside Rachael Pielow in her capacity as the new ADSO, and we will continue to support and improve

safeguarding practice within the London District.

Following the success of 'Brunch with Becky', a new monthly safeguarding online drop-in session 'Coffee with Claire' was launched on Friday 24 February 2023. This was attended well and will continue to be held monthly on various day in the week to ensure all have the opportunity to participate. This event is promoted in the Weekly Update and can be found on the District Calendar.

There has been a good response by the Safeguarding team to DBS reviews from

the Connexion, with the number of outstanding cases declining. It is hoped that the roll out of our new database system- 'Beacon' - will also help with this.

Safeguarding updates for inclusion in the Weekly Update will continue to be submitted where necessary.

Since October, the District has facilitated 5 Advanced Module training sessions and 2 Train the Trainer courses.

The London District welcomed delegates on Saturday 18 March, to the annual Safeguarding Conference, held at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The conference theme was 'Safeguarding Dignity'. We were fortunate to welcome Malcolm Payne who opened the conference with his keynote speech.

This was followed by workshops run by Grahame Snelling (Financial Abuse) , James Pickin (Unconscious Bias), Brian Smith (Safeguarding in a Youthwork Context), and Bevan Powell (JDS Strategy and how it impacts Safeguarding).

We welcomed the opportunity to meet everyone, and catch up with people .

Future Plans

The Annual Audit will start at the beginning of June. In the weeks before this, information will be rolled out to support circuits to complete this effectively. We have listened to concerns around the amount of work required for the audits and we hope to be able to make this an easier process.

Rachael and I will continue to arrange circuit visits to introduce ourselves to colleagues.

The availability of trainers and the willingness of members to attend training, is something that is currently being looked into to ensure that everyone is trained to the required level. It is hoped that now we are able to meet in person, training events will be easier to access.

Despite only being here for a short amount of time, although aware that I am still 'finding my feet', I am beginning to understand the processes, procedures, and the joys, of working for the Methodist Church and would like to thank everyone for their help and support and for welcoming me into the team.

Claire De Stefano
District Safeguarding Officer

Learning Network

Overview

The role of the Learning Network is to equip and resource the Church through a wide range of contextually relevant learning and development opportunities. Priorities for learning and development are established both by the Methodist Conference and through the regional Learning & Development Forum, with the aim to support circuits to be places of lifelong learning and sharing, so as to encourage and inspire Methodist people in all aspects of [Our Calling](#). This work takes three strands:

- Church and circuit-wide work: This is bespoke and at the request of churches and circuits.
- District-wide work: This includes District wide events, such as mission planning tasters or communities of practice.
- Connexional work: These are pieces of work that the team are involved in which enhance the Learning Network offer to the District.



The Past Year

The London Learning Network team now has a complete staff set with the appointment of Sally Rush last year, which has brought a welcomed increase to the capacity of the team.

Church and Circuit work

The team has been listening to superintendents and circuit leadership teams through meetings and has signposted or delivered relevant training opportunities for these circuits. Requests include a wide range of work in circuits around the following:

- Local Preacher and Worship Leader support: This includes working with those on trial through their study of the W:LP course, working alongside Local Preacher tutors and, where possible, matching circuits who don't have a tutor to a 'flying tutor'.
- Mission Planning work: This has included work with circuits wanting to redistribute resource or establish a vision for their mission and ministry.
- Reconciliation and Mediation work: Linking circuits up with the RMT project, or which London is in the trial phase of
- Pioneer Support: Working with churches who are considering pioneer projects, or coaching those who are pioneers in the District.
- Church and circuit stewards training: Delivering training and support to church and circuit stewards.

District wide work

Our District-wide work has ranged from some delivery of events to development work across the District. This has included:

- Supporting the District Review process
- Supporting safeguarding training, including Train the

Trainer events and Advanced Module delivery

- Supporting the setup of the District New Places for New People team
- Running events around contemporary culture and theological reflection

Connexional work

Our Connexional work has included:

- Line Management training
- Worship Leader tutor training
- Study skills for those studying on the W:LP study course
- Positive Working Together course delivery
- Leadership Essentials and Transformational Leadership Learning Community
- Inputting into the new candidating process and vocational strategy

Future Plans

Over the coming year, the priorities and plans for the Learning Network are as follows:

- To support the New Places for New People guiding team
- To explore and expand our offer to lay employees in London
- To support vocational exploration through both

the Explore and Encounter programs

- To continue to offer learning and development support, advice and guidance to circuits that request it

If you have any questions about what is contained within the report or would like to explore learning and development for you circuit, please do contact [James Pickin](#), Regional Learning and Development Coordinator.

[James Pickin](#)

Regional Learning and Development Coordinator

Youth and Children's Work

Overview

The work of the Youth and Children's Work Coordinator is to provide support, guidance, encouragement, resources, and advice to all those involved in Children's, Youth, Families and Young Adult Ministry. It also falls within the remit of Youth and Children's Work to create and deliver training programs, workshops, webinars, and other appropriate opportunities for development.



The Past Year

Over the last 12 months the District has adopted and put into practice a three-pronged approach to supporting and encouraging churches and circuits to be more intentional about their ministry with children, young people, young adults, and families. The three approaches are:

Approach #1: Listening

This relational approach is about engaging churches and circuits in a conversation about their ministry with children, young people, young adults and families; listening to what they need and

then providing ongoing support on their journey to a more sustainable ministry.

Approach #2: Empowering

Create a suite of resources designed to encourage circuits and churches to explore the why, the how and what support they need to develop a sustainable ministry with children, young people, young adults and families

Approach #3: Equipping

Providing appropriate and targeted training and development opportunities to support the churches, circuits and individuals' engagement with children, young people, young adults and families.

The District continues to have a presence at 3Generate, the annual Connexion-wide youth and children gathering, specifically at the 'On The Margins' venue. At this year's event, the On the Margins venue explored the impact of conflict and the call for reconciliation and peace-making. 3Generate was very well attended and it was great to see around 100 people from the London District in attendance. Funding continues to be available to assist churches and/or circuits to attend.

The Youth and Children's Community of Practice was established in partnership with the Learning Network, in order to offer those who work with youth and children the opportunity to share good practice, learn from each other and pray for one another. These sessions originally ran on a bi-monthly basis and this has now evolved into a monthly, hour-long 'Lunch and Learn with Brian' session.

Future Plans:

The District's Youth and Children's Coordinator will be leaving us at the end of March.

The District will work with the Learning Network on continuing our commitment to, and exploring new ways to support youth and children's ministry.

Brian Smith
Youth and Children's Work Coordinator

Social Responsibility Commission

Overview

The Social Responsibility Commission (SRC) continues to seek to advise the District on policy and priorities for Methodist Social Responsibility involvement in London; to co-ordinate and advocate that involvement, and to encourage theological reflection on its nature and significance as an expression of Christian discipleship.

The Past Year

Over the past year, SRC convenor, Anthony Boateng has taken a step away from the group to fulfil his role as Vice President of the Methodist Conference. The group looks forward to his return once the Connexional year is over.

The SRC has contributed to the following areas of work:

Homes for Ukraine / the rehoming of refugees fleeing the Ukraine war

The war in Ukraine combined with the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme launched by the government and supported by many organisations, including the Methodist Church, led to the SRC creating a database of resources for wider use within the District. This information was shared with the District via the Weekly Update and can also be found on the District website.

HIV Chaplaincy

The SRC supported the ongoing work of the HIV Chaplaincy through a proposal to DAF (District Advance Fund) and the District Council to fund the continuation of the Chaplaincy's work. This proposal was granted, allowing the chaplaincy to continue supporting a number of people who had engaged with its services. Full

details of the work of the HIV Chaplaincy can be found on page ?? of this report.

Future Plans

There continues to be a need to recruit more members to the SRC, particularly the younger generations, in order to facilitate its work and increase the visibility of the group within the District.

The SRC acknowledges that there are a number of issues that it would like to play a part in, be it through collaboration with other groups, the production of resources or through signposting where necessary. The group looks forward to tackling a select number of projects or issues and presenting them to the District as well thought out bodies of work.

Saturday 22 April is Stephen Lawrence Day and this year marks 30 years since his murder. The SRC will be working alongside the District Chairs, and other people within the life of the District, to put together a racial justice themed Synod in the autumn.

Revd Nigel Cowgill
SRC Chair

London HIV Chaplaincy

Overview

The work of the HIV Chaplaincy is concerned with restoring the health and wellbeing of HIV+ people who have experienced rejection for daring to ask questions, highlight abusive attitudes and who have been stigmatized for refusing to accept a passive role as victims by faith groups and families.

Thus we:

- Provide individual holistic support to HIV+ clients who have had that demeaning experience and help them to restore health, wellbeing and meaning to their lives
- Enable people living with HIV in London to negotiate the complex contemporary reality of living with the virus, thus enabling them to make decisions that are appropriate and of benefit to themselves
- Take seriously that despite negative issues arising from initial contact with churches, the people who present themselves as seeking support have a clear and crystal desire to find in the teachings of Christianity and the life of the churches a means of seeking wisdom and goodness

The Past Year

August 31 2022 saw the end of the London HIV Chaplaincy as an independent charity as funding pressures becoming too acute. As we were winding down it became graphically obvious that despite lots of talk about health service support for mental health, addiction and self-harm; the situation on the ground was that requests from service users for assistance meant addition to interminable waiting lists, at best, or went completely ignored, at worst.

The situation with specific provision for HIV healthcare is one of managed decline. Our clients are being pushed away from vital support systems to overburdened and unprepared (or

sadly in some cases indifferent), general practices. It was therefore a real lifesaver when Bala Ganapragasam initiated and oversaw the re-establishment of client care on a part-time basis through a self-employed chaplain. Specific supervision of the chaplain is generously provided by Revd Dr Jen Smith. The situation is an eminently satisfactory one in which the chaplaincy is once again directly answerable to the London Methodist District; removing the need to compromise on an explicitly Christian and ecumenical form of support.

More than fifty percent of our clients are non-white women; most of the men are gay or bi-sexual. All are eager to be given the possibility of re-engaging with life, managing their addiction problems

better, and for several clients, the awakening of an intellectual hunger to think and know for themselves.

Future Plans

The Chaplaincy has been in the process of some collaboration work with the Susanna Wesley Foundation of Southlands College. It has sadly been delayed by the ill health of one of the collaborators from Susanna Wesley, but we hope to bring to fruition its insights in the near future.

The aim is to:

- Produce learning resources based on the clients relation to Christology
- Develop webcasts spelling out the ethical and linguistic/ conceptual boundaries churches need to have in place to prevent harm to the sensitive and sincere spiritual seeker
- Study how the principles and structure of the ‘twelve step’ programs used by AA and NA might enable further development of the structure and content of group work with service users
- Compare and contrast the issues around workplace bullying and PTSD to see if any common ground can shed light on the problematics of spiritual abuse and the presenting problems struggled with by clients.

Now more than ever the Chaplain and service users are deeply grateful to, and commend the London Methodist District for having the generosity, courage, and humility, in accepting the trustworthiness of the Chaplaincy, to fund it as we attempt to care for our clients and to put right a violation of trust; and above all to see this Chaplaincy as part of the mission of the London Methodist District.

Phil Schneider
Chaplain

District Complaints Group

The Complaints Support Group offers support for people who are going through the complaints process of the Methodist Church.

Our support means we provide a listening ear to both the complainant and the respondent in a complaint. We will also explain the process as individuals progress through the various stages of a complaint. The work is confidential.

We are very grateful to those members of the support group who offer their time to support people in this way.

Revd Jonathan Mead
Convenor

FINANCE AND PROPERTY



District Financial Report

Overview

A summary of the accounts for the year ended 31 August 2022 are set out on the following pages. They are an abridged version of the full audited accounts. Copies of the full version of the audited accounts will be emailed to all Circuit Treasurers and Superintendents. They will be available at Synod in April and are available on the Charity Commission Website.

The Full Trustee Report and Accounts are aligned with the Charity reporting requirements FRS102. This is further explained in the full report and accounts along with the comparative figures of 2020-21 accounts where relevant.

The Past Year

The District General Fund (non-designated) operated with deficit of £36,278 for the year. The reason for the deficit was the decision not to increase Circuit Assessments recognising the financial pressures on Circuits during the Covid pandemic.

The District own two manses and these were revalued in 2017-18 accounts. As there has been little change in value since that time the only impact on the Manse Value Fund is the depreciation of the buildings.

The Benevolent Fund continues to provide the support needed by ministerial staff in special circumstances. In the year, grants were made of £5,041 and interest income earned was £35. The fund held £3,137 at end of year.

New grants awarded from the District Advance Fund amounted to £148,800, of which £28,800 was paid in the 2021-2022 year and £120,000 is transferred to Liabilities for payment in future

years. DAF Grants of £697,535 held for expected payments in future years.

The Jean Richardson Endowment Fund exists to assist exchange visits between UK and Overseas youth organizations. No grants were made. The fund held 71,760 at the end of the year.

Trust Fund 20520- East End Mission- remains under the management of the District Trustees, for the benefit of the Tower Hamlets Circuit, who received grants of £111,760.

Other funds shown relate to District projects funded by the DAF, the Connexion and contributions. They cover Youth Enablement, Training, Chaplaincy, and the District Mission theme of Woven.

At the year-end, the finances were adequate for the continued progress and development of District activities.

George Kulasingham
District Treasurer

Consolidated Financial Activity (Sept 2021 – August 2022)

	2021-22	2020-21
Income		
Assessments from Circuits	1,545,740	1,545,740
deduct: Payment to Methodist Church Fund	1,317,396	1,296,156
District Assessments	228,344	249,584
Donations	10,000	7,240
Contributions from Circuit Advance Funds	470,859	409,643
Total from Circuits	709,203	666,467
Contribution from Connexion to cost of Chair	86,490	127,296
Interest on deposits and investment income	54,407	41,860
Other Income (e.g. Rent, Grants, training)	50,368	57,170
Grants (incl trfs from DAF & General fund)	106,625	176,947
Total Income	1,007,093	1,069,740
Expenditure		
Grants and Donations committed in year	251,351	491,621
Salaries and associated costs	402,876	402,087
Property Costs (incl. Ins., C tax, utilities etc.)	44,052	73,043
Office Expenses (Admin., tel. travel etc.)	29,262	24,676
Synods, Commissions, Committees, Conference, etc.	28,128	2,483
Depreciation (now incl. of manse buildings)	20,430	20,550
Training	10,926	0
Other Expenditure	37,341	35,910
Audit & Accountancy fees	9,625	9,396
Total expenditure	833,991	1,059,766
Net income	173,102	9,974
Gains/(losses): on investment assets	(155,847)	18,809
Net	17,255	28,783
Fund Balances from last year	5,132,573	5,103,790
Total Fund Carried Forward	5,149,828	5,132,573

Balance Sheet (as at 31 August 2022)

	2021-2022		2020-2021	
Fixed Assets				
Manse & Property (Depreciating)	1,687,184		1,706,586	
Investments with TMCP	1,558,644		1,714,491	
	3,245,838	3,245,828	3,421,077	3,421,077
Current Assets				
Cash in Bank and in hand	137,022		174,675	
Central Finance Board Deposits	176,570		244,043	
TMCP interest accounts	2,244,113		2,153,481	
Debtors and Prepayments	38,602		22,255	
	2,596,307	2,596,307	2,594,454	2,594,454
Current Liabilities				
Creditors (due in under 1 year)	24,772		11,660	
Grants payable (within 1 year)	561,535		676,287	
	586,307	586,307	687,947	687,947
Long Term Liabilities				
Grants Payable after 1 year	106,000	106,00	195,011	195,011
Net Assets		5,149,828		5,132,573

Balance Sheet (as at 31 August 2022)

Fund Balances and Movements	Opening Balance	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Gains on revaluation	Transfer to other funds	Closing Balance
	£	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds						
General Fund (excluding manse fund)	186,954	326,577	(362,855)			150,676
Designated Funds						
London District Advance Fund (incl. loan to circuit)	234,790	495,362	(124,477)			605,675
Manse Value Fund	1,704,758		(19,100)			1,685,675
Manse Refurbishment Fund	112,489	518	(7,669)			105,338
District Training Personnel & Facilities	12,355	-	(3,524)			8,831
District Youth Enablement	18,480	52,000	(46,099)			24,361
London District Chaplaincy	7,370	33,810	(38,800)			2,380
Growing London Leaders	6,745					6,745
District Focus	56,142	21,873	(50,083)			27,932
WL & LP Training	3,973					3,973
CSS Advanced Level Training	8,761	8,926	(7,024)			10,663
Emergency fund	1,121	-	(500)			621
3 Generate Coaches	500	-	-			500

Fund Balances and Movements	Opening Balance	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Gains on revaluation	Transfer to other funds	Closing Balance
Media & interfaith project	11,050		(11,000)			50
New Community Church Project	13,483		(6,765)			6,718
CDiM	7,057		(2,725)			4,332
ADSO	10,966	23,826	(18,619)			16,173
Covid 19 Support	54,882	-	(10,402)			44,480
Total Designated (excluding DAF)	2,030,132	140,953	(222,310)	-		1,948,775
Total Unrestricted and Designated	2,451,876	962,892	(709,642)	-		(2,705,126)
Restricted Funds						
London District Pastoral & Benevolent Fund	8,143	35	(5,041)	-		3,137
Tower Hamlets - Sale-Land Stepney East End Mss	2,574,453	42,797	(119,097)	(152,576)		2,345,577
London Regional Network (incl. deferred Income)	528			-		528
Inter Circuit Support	23,700		-			23,700
Total Restricted Funds	2,606,824	42,832	(124,138)	(152,576)		2,372,942
Endowment Fund						
Jean Richardson Bursary	73,873	1,369	(211)	(3,271)		71,760
Total Funds	5,132,573	1,007,093	(833,911)	(155,847)	-	5,149,828

General Fund Budget – unrestricted non-designated (September 2023 – August 2024)

London District of the Methodist Church Budget 2023- 24

	Actual 2021-22 £	Reforecast Budget 2022-23 £	Draft budget 2023-24 £
Income			
Income from assessments on circuits	1,545,740.75	1,622,216	1,670,882
Roundings			162
Total after rounding	1,545,740.75	1,633,216	1,671,044
<u>Less Assessment to Connexion</u>			
Methodist Church Fund payments	1,317,395.73	1,312,031.00	
Contribution to pension reserves	25,000.00		
Net Income from circuits	203,344	310,185	
<u>Add Other Income</u>			
Donations	10,000		
CAF interest receivable	5		
CFB interest receivable	1,738	0	0
DAF grants paid through district	0		
Total Other Income	11,743	0	0
Less Operating Expenses			
General and Governance			
Audit fees	9,625	9,860	10,352.00
Bank Fees	107	74	78
Consultancy	0	8,500	0
Ecumenical grants	3,128	5,293	5,557
Hospitality& gifts	1,290	1,419	1,489
Meeting facilities (Non commission)	899	1,419	1,489
Miscellaneous	34	355	410
CCLI License	237	347	364
Methodist recorder subscription	0	0	0
Minutes of conference & cpd	314.50	431	453
Travel	15	689	645

	Actual 2021-22 £	Reforecast Budget 2022-23 £	Draft budget 2023-24 £
Total General and Governance	15,644	29,177	21,710
Chairs Expenses	5,252	6,857	7,200
Commission, Synods, Methodist conference etc			
Authorised Ministries Commission	5,405	8,169	8,577
Social Responsibility Commission	0	1,205	1,265
Superintendents' meetings	2,573	2,829	2,971
Methodist Conference	254	342	359
Synods	3,486	3,890	4,085
Total Commission, synods, Methodist conference etc	11,718	15,522	16,298
Finance expenses	279	401	421
Office Expenses	13,564	14,789	18,033
Property costs			
Manse costs	11,652	17,809	18,449
Office rent	23,581	23,581	24,780
Total office rent	23,581	23,581	24,760
Total Property costs	35,232	41,389	43,209
Safeguarding costs	1,441	4,093	4,297
Salaries & Associated costs	167,489	193,450	201,423
Training costs			
Staff training- non project	488	1,000.00	1,000.00
Chairs' training	260	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total training costs	748	2,000.00	2,000.00
Total Operating Expenses	251,365	307,678	314,590
Net Profit / -Loss	-36,278	2,507	-73,660
Less Depreciation		2,000.00	2,000.00
Net Cash surplus/deficit		4,507	-71,660
Less Capital Costs		4,000.00	4,000.00
Cash surplus /-required		507	-75,660

Circuit Assessments 2023 - 2024

Circuit number	Circuit name	Circuit assessments 2022-23	MCF	District expenses	Quarterly payments
		100%	85.6%		
		£	£	£	£
1	City Road	56,612.00	48,459.87	8,152.13	14,153.00
2	West London Mission	52,828.00	45,220.77	7,607.23	13,207.00
3	Westminster	44,464.00	38,061.18	6,402.82	11,116.00
4	Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham	27,664.00	23,680.38	3,983.62	6,916.00
5	Battersea & Wandale Valley	59,792.00	51,181.95	8,610.05	14,948.00
6	Lambeth	77,676.00	66,490.66	11,185.34	19,419.00
7	Southwark & Deptford	101,556.00	86,931.94	14,624.06	25,389.00
9	Tower Hamlets	22,576.00	19,325.06	3,250.94	5,644.00
10	Hackney & Stoke Newington	44,568.00	38,150.21	6,417.79	11,142.00
11	Islington & Camden Mission	21,744.00	18,612.86	3,131.14	5,436.00
12	London Mission North West	31,868.00	27,279.01	4,588.99	7,967.00
13	Harlesden	19,712.00	16,873.47	2,838.53	4,928.00
14	Notting Hill	12,028.00	10,295.97	1,732.03	3,007.00
20	Newham	36,152.00	30,946.11	5,205.89	9,038.00
22	New River	94,080.00	80,532.48	13,547.52	23,520.00
23	Wembley	34,084.00	29,175.90	4,908.10	8,521.00
24	Ealing Trinity	50,000.00	42,800.00	7,200.00	12,500.00

Circuit number	Circuit name	Circuit assessments 2022-23 100% £	MCF 85.6% £	District expenses £	Quarterly payments £
25	Richmond & Hounslow	37,964.00	32,497.18	5,466.82	9,491.00
26	Wimbledon	26,604.00	22,773.02	3,830.98	6,651.00
28	Blackheath & Crystal Palace	47,740.00	40,865.44	6,874.56	11,935.00
30	Lesnes Abbey	46,432.00	39,745.79	6,686.21	11,608.00
31	Barking, Dagenham & Ilford	54,332.00	46,508.19	7,823.81	13,583.00
32	Romford	53,692.00	45,960.35	7,731.65	13,423.00
33	Forest	82,636.00	70,736.42	11,899.58	20,659.00
34	Enfield	79,780.00	68,291.68	11,488.32	19,945.00
35	Barnet & Queensbury	49,532.00	42,399.39	7,132.61	12,383.00
36	Harrow & Hillingdon	105,860.00	90,616.16	15,243.84	26,465.00
37	Teddington	30,868.00	26,423.01	4,444.99	7,717.00
38	Kingston upon Thames	35,556.00	30,435.94	5,120.06	8,889.00
39	Sutton	61,832.00	52,928.19	8,903.81	15,458.00
40	Purley	26,564.00	22,738.78	3,825.22	6,641.00
41	Croydon	65,608.00	56,160.45	9,447.55	16,402.00
42	Bromley	29,448.00	25,207.49	4,240.51	7,362.00
43	Orpington & Chislehurst	49,192.00	42,108.35	7,083.65	12,298.00
	Total from Circuits	1,671,044.00	1,430,413.65	240,630.35	417,761.00

District Advance Fund

Overview

The purpose of the District Advance Fund of the London District is to support missional and outward looking, creative projects amongst our churches and circuits. Grants approved by the committee meet the criteria which are set out in a [guidelines document](#) on the District website. These may include grants for personnel, training, equipment and property. Funding for the District Advance Fund comes from a levy on circuit model trust funds.

The Past Year

The total of grants awarded between September 2021 and August 2022 was £148,800. These are summarised by category as follows:

Grants awarded	
Category	Total Amount
General	£62,800
Ministry	£66,000
Project	£20,000
Total	£148,800

The total payments of grants made between September 2021 and August 2022, including those approved in previous years was £325,088.

Grants paid out	
Category	Total Amount
General	£14,800
Ministry	£240,288
Project	£70,000
Total	£325,088

Clearly, the year included the second period of Covid lockdown, during which church activities were limited. Nevertheless, as in previous years, the grants were awarded to a diverse and inspiring range of projects. These are a few examples:

- £20,000 to the Blackheath and Crystal Palace circuit towards the installation of environmentally friendly double glazed windows in a church hall
- £66,000 towards the HIV Chaplaincy
- £6,000 towards the work of the Social Responsibility Council and their Tax Justice programme.

The table overleaf provides a detailed breakdown of the DAF grants awarded by the London District Advance Fund Committee between September 2021 and (31) August 2022.

Our thanks go to all committee members who have kept the important work of DAF running through these difficult times. A particular thank you to Bala Gnanaspragam, who has stood down from our committee after many faithful years of service; and welcome to Revd Dr Stephen Day who has now joined us.

Revd Richard Grocott
Secretary of the London DAF Committee

District Advance Fund Grants Agreed (September 2021 – August 2022)

Date agreed	Grant to	Purpose	Category	Years	*DAF	*LMF
27.10.2021	Peckham MC	Kitchen remodeling	General	1	£8,800	
27.10.2021	Wesley's Chapel	Black Lives Matter Heritage Exhibition	Other	1		£5,000
27.10.2021	Sutton Circuit	Community Outreach Worker	Personnel	2		£24,000
18.05.2021	Hounslow MC	Church kitchen renovation	Property	1		£15,085
18.05.2021		Church heating and building repair	Property	1		£15,000
06.07.2022	London District	HIV Chaplaincy	Ministry	3	£66,000	
06.07.2022		Replacement double glazed windows	Project	1	£20,000	
06.07.2022	London District	CRM Project	General	1	£4,000	
06.07.2022	London District	Youth and community worker	General	2	£50,000	
06.07.2022	Hanworth MC	Ministerial support project	Personnel	2		£51,648
06.07.2022	London District	CRM Project	Other	2		£19,000
				Total	£148,800	£129,733

Property Advisory Group

Overview

With the emerging economic crisis, District property became either a financial weight or represented an opportunity to open welcoming warm spaces. Around 30 churches signed up with the Warm Welcome Campaign to use their church property as a warm space for any visitor saving on their own energy bills whilst staying warm and connected with others. This opened new ways to engage with the community that can continue beyond the colder months, emphasising again the tangible worth of having property for mission.

The Past Year

Property Consents Activity

The consents system recorded the creation of 75 new property projects in 2022, which was a marked decrease by 7 points in the average number of new projects created and recorded annually over the previous 5 years. This could be a result of the aftermath of the pandemic years, with reduced finance available for some property projects, but also being a time where the economic crisis became more apparent as the year progressed. The type of property projects undertaken and recorded on the consents system also reflects this.

The percentage of projects relating to the rental or leasing of its properties was at its highest when compared over the past 5 years; and the number of projects referring to the sale of property (5 projects/properties) remained consistent with that of the last two years. These both show a lean towards projects that generate income over financially consuming projects, where the proportion of renovation type projects was at its lowest over the past five years.

Property Returns/Annual Returns

Last year's report focused on how we, as a District, are completing our property/annual returns. The property return forms part of the complete annual return for completion by churches and circuits. In keeping with this focus, the District publicised an early returns submission date to allow good time for any anticipated issues to be communicated, and in time for a reflection of how we are doing as a District, to be made in this report. The picture remains like that of last year, where the completion of online returns remains low with just a 24% submission rate for church returns. It is apparent that completing returns remains an area that lacks attention, the reasons for which the District will need to review to find out what needs addressing; whether that be a support need or a system overhaul.

The Property Advisory Group (PAG)


The PAG put together a Property Seminar in February this year to refocus on the essentials of property maintenance, to assist churches and circuits in their efforts in dealing with the affairs of Methodist property. The aim was to bring awareness to some

of the fundamental requirements for looking after our property, in support of those new to a property role and those needing a knowledge refresh. Methodist Insurance contributed to this event with a slot to bring awareness on our legal obligations with regard to property. The seminar via zoom was well attended by circuits throughout the District, and it became apparent from the interaction and the time required delving further into subjects, that there is a need for ongoing seminars, information and training of this nature.

Future Plans

Responding to the interest shown at the seminar and the possible need for support identified in this annual reporting cycle, the District will be arranging Q&A type Zoom catch-ups throughout the remainder of the year. The PAG will also consider single subject seminars to allow more time for addressing a property area that needs more attention to detail.

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