

REPORTS TO SYNOD

Thoughts from the Synod Secretary

Once again we have to meet by Zoom – hopefully it will be face to face next time! You will see from all the reports that follow that work has continued and the Methodist Church is very much alive in the East Anglia District!

Susan Eldridge, Synod Secretary

District Policy Committee (DPC) Report

The District Policy Committee met in October and February, since the last Synod, to carry out the business of the District, review the finances and approve the various grants. It has received reports from the recipients of the grants and from its constituent district groups. It is vital that we share the good News of all that is happening across the District.

Reports have been received from the Methodist Council where discussions on Connexional priorities had taken place. The Methodist Church is going to disinvest in fossil fuels, there is a new committee looking at Trustee Bodies in Circuits and, subject to ratification by Conference 2021, Revd Michaela Youngson has been appointed to serve as Assistant Secretary to Conference. Four major work areas had been discussed which were Evangelism and Growth, restructuring the church at all levels, Climate Change and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Looking forward there was recognition that we would become a hybrid church.

Much work has been achieved by the District Mission Enabler including the highly successful Advent ideas, January Light, training of people in digital technology and a meaningful act of worship and prayer day in March.

Property issues across the District to do with Covid have been discussed. DPC agreed to Wimblington, Dry Drayton and Cotton being closed and Outwell also was wishing to close.

DPC knows that where money is being allocated to the Churches its Mission is growing with some exciting projects.

The District Safeguarding Group (DSG) is working very well under the leadership of Jane Gay with much training being developed on-line to take place across the District. Dates are now available for Foundation Training and training materials are also available.

The Lay Employment Secretary reported that employment matters were noticeably quiet at the moment. A home working policy had been developed and agreed by DPC.

DPC continues to work on the East Anglia District Vision Statement which has been updated and will be developed over the next couple of years. A District Environmental Policy is being developed ready for September 2021 Synod.

Revd Barbara Garwood has stood down as Deputy Chair and a replacement is being sought. Ben Orton is the 3Generate representative, Revd Ann Bossingham is taking over Sabbaticals as from September 2021 and other appointments are pending.

Feedback has been received on the Marriage and Relationships Conference Report and the feedback report will go to Synod on 24 April 2021.

Information on GDPR has gone out to every church in the District and responses are being slowly returned. Deadline is the end of March. They are all being logged as they are returned.

Marilyn Watsham
Assistant Synod Secretary and Secretary to DPC

Sabbaticals report to Spring Synod 2021

The pandemic has resulted in last minute changes for several ministers who took their sabbaticals in 2019-20 and in this current year. In some cases it was thought best to defer the sabbatical for one year because travel in UK or abroad was part of the sabbatical plans; in other cases a slight shift in emphasis on the prospectus was sufficient to ensure that a worthwhile sabbatical could be enjoyed without needing to delay.

Looking forward to 2021-22, we recognise the additional stresses on ministers during the past 12 months and acknowledge that some travel plans may still need to be amended. The District Advisory Group will always seek to advise in such a way that ministers can make the best possible use of this gift of time, needed now perhaps more than ever. We simply ask that ministers stay in contact during the planning stages and consult in good time if any changes need to be made.

The following ministers are taking a sabbatical during this connexional year **2020-21**

Revd Rita Carr, Bury St Edmunds. 12 April 2021 to 12 July 2021

Revd Martin Dawes, Ipswich. 29 March 2021 to 28 June 2021

Revd Peter Rayson, Lowestoft. May-July 2021

Revd Alison Walker, Cambridge. April, July and August 2021

The following ministers are due to take sabbaticals in **2021-22**:-

With permission to defer for one year:

Revd Catherine Dixon (Ely)

Revd Jacqueline Goddard (West Norfolk)

Revd Andrew King, Norfolk Broads

Revd SangWoo Seo (Ely and Newmarket)

Deacon Sheralee Devitt, Norfolk Broads

Revd Derek Grimshaw, Ipswich

Revd Anne Richardson, Central Norfolk

Revd Ruth Ridge, Bury St Edmunds

Revd Robert Roberts, West Norfolk

Revd Colin Smith, Cambridge

Deacon Jen Woodfin, Central Norfolk

From 1 September 2021, the Revd Ann Bossingham will take over from me as District Sabbaticals Officer. I have very much enjoyed being in contact with so many colleagues in the District over the past 6 years, and send my best wishes to all those who will be enjoying sabbaticals in the coming years.

Revd Heather M Walker, District Sabbaticals Officer

ADMINISTRATION GROUP REPORT

Finance & Property

1. The budget for 2021/22 has been sent to the Circuits. All District Accounts are provided in the District Treasurer's Report.
2. District accounts for Connexional year 2019/20 will all be presented to Synod for approval.
3. The District Property Consents Panel members are Roger Pauley (District Property Secretary) Julian Pursehouse, Shaun Cushion, Paul Hornsby, Angus Campbell, and Aileen Fox; need to be appointed

APPROVE: Accounts for 2019/20.

ADOPT: the Budget for 2021/22 & receive rest of the report.

4. A written report should be provided separately by Mr Roger Pauley the District Property Secretary

Personnel & Grants

1. A reminder to all circuits receiving a Ministry & Mission Grant that a report is **now required annually** by the Grants & Personnel Committee to review the work & progress of the project. For District grants which are more than £5,000 per annum, the district requires a monitoring and evaluation report in line with the above.
2. The District offers training on how to approach making **Grant applications**, and also with **Monitoring & Evaluation** reporting. Please speak to Mike Wilson about either of these issues.
3. Since my last report there have been no new schemes receiving any significant District grant funding. At time of writing uncommitted capital in the DAF is £178,180. All District grants awarded by the Grants and Personnel Committee are subject to ratification by District Policy Committee.
4. Proposed Administration Group Representatives to Synod for 2020/21: Mr Paul Hornsby and Mr Angus Campbell.
5. The District Grants Policy: Agreed 5th September 2012.

The East Anglia District of the Methodist Church will consider making grants for work/projects that meet all of the following criteria:

That the work/project

1. relates directly to '*Our Calling*' in at least one of the four constituent parts
2. relates to at least one aspect of '*The Priorities for the Methodist Church*'
3. relates directly to at least one aspect of the District Policy
4. meets the objectives of the Circuit Mission Policy
5. is innovative and/or involves risk-taking
6. will also be supported by Circuit monies

In addition, grant applications will be viewed positively if every effort is made to obtain grant money from sources outside Methodism and/or if they are for projects which are environmentally friendly. District Officers are available to advise and support grant applications at each stage of the process, if the conditions below have been met.

District grants are not normally more than the amount also granted from Circuit resources. Unless exceptional circumstance, grants will not be given retrospectively for property schemes or ministry and mission projects.

Please be aware of the following conditions:

District grants will only be awarded when the District Policy Committee is satisfied that the Circuit concerned has sufficient Safeguarding policies in place and that Circuit employees or volunteers have completed appropriate training.

District grants for the employment of lay personnel will only be awarded when the District Lay Employment Committee has been consulted and approved the arrangements for the relevant post(s).

A Circuit, and any local church in that Circuit, will only receive grant money for new projects (of any kind) when satisfactory Monitoring and Evaluation reports have been received from existing projects.

Adopt the Report

ANDREW KING – Group Coordinator Administration

District Lay Employment for Spring Synod 2021

This has been a fairly static period from a lay employment point of view. At time of writing, we are still in the (3rd) Lockdown. This time has seen some greater use of the furlough scheme and some instances of pastoral staff being flexibly furloughed. There have continued to be very few redundancies, but equally relatively few recruitments and certainly an element of waiting before recruiting for potentially vacant posts. Live streaming and social media skills have certainly become more important as churches look to connect in new, electronic, ways. When church bodies start to recruit again in earnest for roles in our District, and with the challenges we sometimes face in attracting applicants, I will be encouraging consideration of applying for District grants in appropriate cases. This could particularly be where a pastoral role is funded part time but could usefully be full time with additional funding.

A lot of people have needed to adjust to working more from home. Whilst pastoral staff have tended to always work from home to a degree, it has been a bigger change for administrative staff, adjusting to new ways of working, and sometimes the inconveniences of not being able to use their office bases and / or connect so easily with colleagues. If you have contact with a Circuit Administrator or someone in a similar position, do ask them how they are getting on.

I have taken part in discussions with colleagues from other Districts, and a theme mentioned has been the issue of the sometimes use of self-employment arrangements instead of employing people as cleaners, caretakers and for other similar roles. There is nothing wrong with self-employment of course, as long as it is used appropriately and not in situations where someone should be treated as an employee. I will be doing a survey into the Spring of self-employment arrangements to seek to identify if there are any changes of practices we should consider in our District. As ever the challenge is to ensure we are treating people well and doing it right, but not unduly adding to the administrative burden of circuits and churches.

As a reminder, if you are contemplating either recruiting to a post or ending an employment, by redundancy or for any other reasons, please contact me at an early stage. You must obtain the approval of the District Lay Employment Committee prior to advertising / recruiting to a post or terminating the employment of any church or circuit employee.

Finally, just to say, I am here to help with any employment related issues, so please get in contact if you have any concerns.

Mike Garwood
District Lay Employment Secretary

Training Fund Update

The District Training Fund has received one application since the previous Synod. This is not surprising as most requests involved attending training or a retreat on a particular topic, and such things have not been available. The District Training Fund remains open to applications from ministers in the active work to meet training and development needs. The district can offer up to £200 and circuits are strongly encouraged to provide an additional £100.

Rev Alison Walker, District Training Fund Officer

Eastern Region Learning Network – Synod Report

Since my previous report at the start of the new Connexional year there have been significant changes within the Learning Network in this area of the country. In October 2020 the former East of England Region and the old East Central LN Regions were merged into the new Eastern Region. I was asked to take on the role of Coordinator for this new region which now covers East Anglia, BEH, Northampton, Lincolnshire and Notts & Derby districts.

With the new region comes an enlarged staff team currently consisting of Ann Howlett-Foster, John Banks, Nigel Pimlott, Gill Thomas, Michael Wadsworth and myself. As the merger has seen a reduction from two coordinator posts down to one, it was agreed in the preliminary discussions about the changes that another full-time LDO post would be created. Alongside their normal LDO responsibilities this new post holder will also have a brief to embed all aspects of EDI into the life and work of the Learning Network's activities. They will also be available as a resource to churches and circuits to help develop their culture of inclusive church. Sadly, we were unable to appoint to this post first time round but it will soon be re-advertised and we hope for a strong field of applicants. Interviews are expected to be during the week commencing 26th April.

Over the past few months we have begun to explore the differences in the ways of working between the two former regional teams. One major operational difference was that the old East Central region had adopted the model of each LDO being 'aligned' to a district. This practice is the norm throughout the LN however due to the old East of England region being just two districts and having only 1.6 FTE LDOs, we did not follow that pattern as all three of us were able to operate across both districts. However, with a significantly larger region this is no longer possible. Once we have made the new appointment we will look to introduce the 'aligned officer' model to BEH and East Anglia Districts.

Ann and Gill hold similar briefs for their work, focussing on church and community engagement, delivery of training in areas such as Positive Working Together, mediation and reconciliation etc. They also oversee the One Programme Participants. Ann continues to be involved at Connexional level with developing Safeguarding training. Now more of the CSS work is online and as more local trainers are in place for both Foundation and Advanced Modules, our work in the LN with regard to Safeguarding is now focussing on quality control of delivery and some trainer training. Gill holds more of a youth work brief alongside her other work and is responsible for keeping connections with 3Generate and the district ambassadors.

Nigel is growing his role across the whole region relating to Pioneers, New Places for New People, evangelism and growth. He has established a community of practice for those engaged in digital church planting and is coaching and supporting a growing number of individuals who are already pioneering or are exploring that journey.

Michael and John also hold similar portfolios covering the areas of W: L&P, tutor and mentor support, Bible Month and Methodist Way of Life development. Michael is also the team's go-to person for IT systems and is making great strides in developing our event booking and communication processes. John is also taking a lead on building stronger relationships with Chaplains across the whole region.

I am now spending more time on managing the team and coordinating the greater breadth of work across the region.

The online space that has swept into our work has given us, like so many others, great opportunities to offer new things. Two such things are the 'Bite-sized' sessions that we have been running for a few months now. These take a single topic and offer training and an opportunity to explore the subject. These have already included such themes as 'How to say No - without causing offence!', 'Effective Chairing of Meetings', 'Giving & Receiving Feedback' and 'Websites – vision, purpose and user experience of your church website'.

Alongside the Bite-sized session we have also introduced an 'Open Space' on the third Thursday of each month. This is a space for anyone to share in a focussed theme for about an hour. December was a short retreat for Advent, January looked forward to what we are hoping to do in 2021, and the one in March was entitled 'Give it up for Lent' - being a time to share thoughts, ideas and practices together. Please do join in future sessions yourselves and encourage others to sign up too.

Although it is still a great unknown as to when lockdowns will eventually end, we are already starting to prepare for working alongside churches and circuits as buildings re-open and in-person contact with local communities can start again. We are very happy to help circuits explore new vision as they look to grow all that has been good from an online presence, through to new mission possibilities in changed communities.

Dave Friswell
Learning and Development Coordinator, Eastern Region

East Anglia District World Church Action Team – Synod Report

As this is being written, the World Church Action Team are in the final planning stages for the **Global Encounter** Event which will be held on Saturday 20 March from 10am to 12noon via Zoom.

We realised such an event was possible via Zoom and so, in partnership with Global Relationships, the event became reality. As you read this, we hope many of you will have experienced **Global Encounter** and been inspired by the event.

For your interest, the event included:

- **Part of the worldwide church** – East Anglia District updates including the possibility of a partnership with the Harare West District in Zimbabwe. An update on MWiB project Bees, Beds & Blessings - support of the project in Jamaica.
- **First-hand experience of the Church in an overseas context** Q & A with Deacon Angleena Keizer, Mission Partner in Jerusalem.
- **Transforming the world through God's love** Covid -19 – updates on Covid work around the world with Andy Dye, Global Relationships. This link will allow you to donate the cost of a vaccine to support people on low incomes in other countries so they can have access to the vaccine.
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/donatethecostofyourvaccine>
- **COP26 global campaign** The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from 1st to 12th November 2021. Mollie Pugmire, who is one of the COP26 global campaign team, shared about the work of this global team.
- **Junior Mission for All. "Learn, pray and serve with the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ."** We were led in a creative activity for learning to practice compassion for and with all creation. See link.
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18388/turning-over-a-new-leaf-challenge.pdf>
- **Partners in mission** Q & A with Revds Rachel and Sylvester Deigh, mission partners in training at Wesley House.
- **Sharing in God's mission with partners around the world** Q&A's with Andy Dye about opportunities and ways of engaging with our partners around the world.

We anticipate recording the event, so if you were unable to attend, please contact Sarah Friswell who will be able to provide information about how to access the recording.

Deacon Donna Ely, Co-ordinator WCAT

Learning and Caring Group Synod Report

Having no actual “real” Synod but a virtual one to report to seems as strange now as it did when we were first in lockdown and I still miss it.

However, work is continuing on more than one front. Dave Friswell (of Learning Network) and I, along with other interested parties with expertise to share, are still investigating how we can best connect with young people and support work amongst them, looking particularly at forms of digital/virtual engagement. Many of you may have experienced Zoom services as your only means of connection with your churches and vital though physical gathering is, the virtual aspect needs to be addressed, especially with the younger generation who have grown up with the various forms of virtual meeting. We are currently working alongside a group looking at similar involvement for the whole church.

This upward learning curve still leaves me breathless at times just as lockdown has meant learning to cope with daily restrictions; I do hold you all in my prayers even though I cannot know you all individually. I look forward to meeting many friends again in person even if it is a brief snatched conversation across the Synod bookstall table! Being able to care seems to me somehow more difficult when we cannot greet someone in person in the way we did, which seems so long ago now.

I should add that the World Church Action Team are still active, I am grateful as ever for the “bigger picture” of the work of the Methodist Church which they bring us and am particularly looking forward to the Global Encounter Zoom on March 20th.

Also that our Probationers’ Oversight Committee is doing its caring work and will continue to do so although arrangements for this work may have a wider compass in the future.

Finally, for all of us who find learning to cope and caring difficult in the present Covid-19 climate (and we will need to be careful for some time to come), some words of encouragement from Saint Paul: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer” (Romans 12:12 (NRSV)).

Richard Dean, Learning and Caring Group Coordinator

REPORT TO SYNOD FROM SIGN THE CROSS DEAF MINISTRY

Due to the two lockdowns, there is nothing new to report. We have maintained our online presence and regular use of zoom, and I am really pleased how those who have been joining in regularly have developed strong relationships across the region.

Since our last report to Synod, we have met regularly for Morning Prayer every Tuesday and Thursday, and held our regular monthly services on the first Saturday of the month, with a Bible group every 2 weeks. In March, we welcomed District members into our zoom service, as we joined the District Day of Prayer.

Downham Market Methodist Church is resuming in person worship, so the Deaf group will be joining in a monthly service with a BSL interpreter, starting from the end of March. The Norwich Deaf Church will hopefully resume in person worship from the first Saturday of April.

Rev Anne Richardson

Agricultural Chaplain's Comments – March 2021

Day of prayer, children back to school, Brexit delivered (more on that later) and more rain forecast.

I can't remember a year when there have been so many challenges and I suppose it has been the same for everyone. Apart from two services at chapel in October and a vaccination I have been nowhere. I thank God for the technology which is available so at least we can make contact and exchange views. I wonder what will happen when we are allowed to meet for worship in our buildings again. Some might say do we need to return and maintain our buildings when those on zoom have been so active and stimulated by the online worship?

From a farming angle it has been yet another wet Autumn, even more than the previous Autumn. Drilling was done with fertiliser spreaders rather than conventional drills, and I must say that some crops are looking quite well. Sugar beet is being harvested in March, in appalling conditions. Thank goodness the factories understood the conditions, and they need the beet anyway so are keeping some factories open. It will be interesting to see if the land, especially the heavy land, will be dry enough for spring drilling.

We all know that 'Brexit' was rushed through at the last minute, and the outcome is not really satisfactory, especially for the fishermen, who had hoped for a larger share of the fishing rights, and certainly more protection of our borders. The pig industry is struggling with exports to Europe being cut back. Germany, that used to buy a lot of pork from us have created other markets, hence a lot of pork without a market. At least Morrison's have promised to obtain all British commodities, including meat. So perhaps there could be some good news for farmers. Please encourage your colleagues and friends to buy food with the little Red Tractor logo on.

Any cereal grower without livestock has had a better year, with prices for feed wheat around the £200.00 but yields were down because of the dry spring last year. With the contrasts in the weather in this country I thank God for his promise in Genesis, that summer and winter, seed time and harvest shall not cease, with the rainbow to emphasize that.

Looking back over the last 12 months I can appreciate that we all need a time to reflect and although we have had difficulties keeping in contact with some farmers, the support organisations RABI, FCN (farm community network) and YANA (You are not alone) have all responded with support during these difficult times. Mental health and finance have been very challenging issues to deal with. Prayer is a great healer, but it doesn't put money in the bank.

From October to January 13th, my wife Muriel was in hospital and I know a lot of you were aware of that and I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the prayers and support during those times. With the pandemic rife this was an additional concern, but thank God, although showing a positive test result, she had no other symptoms.

May we keep praying and listening to God's calling.

George W Frost, District Agricultural Chaplain

(This article will also appear in Grapevine)

3Generate report

3Generate 365 is a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting, to enable them to listen to God, find out what God is saying, explore their own faith and feel confident to begin sharing their faith with others. 3Generate 365 will explore topics of prayer, being one body in Christ, prophecy and covenant.



8-23 year olds will be encouraged to take part in different ways through activities with groups, using the 3Gen App, attending the 'Tune In' events and sharing their thoughts and their views for the future with their District Ambassadors who are supporting 3Gen 365 locally.

The 3Generate App offers a lot of resources such as different prayers and advice on returning to school, and it also offers a daily prayer. You can also create a journal entry to express and note down your journey with God and explain how your relationship with God has developed. There are also sections to have your say on things and when the time comes, help the rest of the young people vote for who they want to be the next Youth President and the representatives for different jobs.

An event run as part of 3Generate is called Fridays@5.17, this is an opportunity for all children and young people across Britain to come together, stop what they are doing and pray at the same time. This can be individually or as a group. This also gives young people time to come together and listen to what God is saying to them.

During the coming weeks District Ambassadors will be in contact with groups and young people to find out about the types of things they get up to and discover more about their journey with God. There will also be opportunities for young people to join in with discussions on what they think their future should look like.

For more information on 3Gen and the app, always check the website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/3generate-365/>

Ben Orton, 3Gen District Ambassador

(This article will also appear in Grapevine)

District Property Secretary's Report

This time I thought I would take the opportunity to give you a reminder about Residential Tenancy which many of you are involved with.

1. Managing the tenancy

Whether or not you have appointed an agent to look after the property, as Managing Trustees and Charity Trustees, it is still your responsibility to check that the issues set out in the **Residential Tenancy (During) Focus note** are dealt with.

This focus note provides guidance on the Managing Trustees' statutory responsibilities in respect of: protecting the tenancy deposit; ensuring that gas checks are carried out at least every 12 months; electrical appliance inspections (every 5 years); smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms (you should already have installed these and made sure that checks were carried out at the start of the tenancy); and general maintenance. You also need to ensure that Quinquennial Inspections are carried out every 5 years as required by Standing Orders and that the property is generally in a safe condition and free from health hazards. Please note that the Managing Trustees are responsible for the structure and exterior of the property, sinks, baths, toilets and other sanitary fittings, including pipes and drains, heating and hot water installations, all gas appliances, pipes, flues and ventilation and electrical wiring. The Local Authority can carry out checks and request that you carry out works if they have concerns.

2. Address for service

Please bear in mind that it is a legal requirement to provide the tenant with an address in England or Wales for service and notices. If the service address stated in the tenancy agreement changes for any reason please remember to notify the tenant.

3. Ending the tenancy

Please make a note of the date on which the fixed term ends and contact the Tenant well in advance of this date to agree what will happen at the end of the fixed term. You need to give yourselves sufficient time to decide whether or not you want to continue letting the property after the end of the term. If you do decide to grant a new tenancy then you will need time to agree terms with the current tenant and ensure that the Charity law and Methodist law, policy and best practice requirements have been fulfilled (including consent if required).

Please remember that if you want the tenant to continue to live at the property, and they agree, you must ensure that a new tenancy agreement is entered into rather than allowing the existing tenancy to run beyond the fixed term.

If you want to end the tenancy at the end of the fixed term then please speak to your agent or solicitor who will be able to advise you on serving notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and ensure that the notice requirements are dealt with correctly. Please refer to the **Residential Tenancy (Ending) Focus Note** for guidance in relation to ending tenancies during or after the fixed term.

4. Finally

You can enter the property only after serving the tenant with at least 24 hours' notice (except in an emergency) and you or your agent are advised to retain a set of keys to the property.

May God Bless you all

Roger Pauley

District Evangelism Co-ordinator's Report

It has been a challenging year for all of us and the focus on evangelism has been no exception to this. So much of evangelism is about relationships, yet we can't sit close enough together to have meaningful conversations. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention, however, so evangelism this year has had to take other forms.

Since taking up this role in September 2020, our biggest collective piece of work has been the January Light initiative, led by our District Mission Enabler, Dr Yasmin Finch, which grew beyond our expectations into a regional initiative, involving East Anglia, Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. Many Circuits / churches and even people's own homes were lit up throughout the month with window displays and posters, as well as postcards through letterboxes spreading the love and a whole raft of online media, such as zoom services, encouraging video clips and signposting for anyone who needed help or advice.

In places January Light morphed into February love, as people discovered the joy of showing loving kindness to others, through small gifts and cards. This continued with the distributing of flowers and plants for Mothering Sunday – spreading love seems to have become the new kind of doorstep evangelism.

Across the District, many churches and Circuits have been experimenting with social media and Zoom services, as well as services by post, which have attracted some who would not normally feel comfortable walking through the doors of a traditional church building, as well as enabling those who are housebound to engage with church life in a more meaningful way than they have been able to do for years.

Many have suggested that church life will never be the same again. In some ways this might not be such a bad thing. This has sparked conversations across the District about investing for the future (and the now) regarding social media interaction – the possibilities and the challenges. There may be more to say about this at our next time of meeting.

Sharing stories and ideas about what has worked in your area can be just the encouragement someone else needs to give something a go that they have been thinking about. Please do get in touch with your own stories of evangelism initiatives and with God's help, soon we'll all be gossiping the Gospel!

Rev'd Sharon Thraves

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) Report - March 2021

As with many other Church activities, MWIB has had to curtail so much during the pandemic but much is 'bubbling' under the surface and we are making plans to have a big 'in house' District Day at Lowestoft on Saturday October 9th. We hope to make this an exciting celebration as we come together again having missed two District Days. We intend to welcome Sue Groome (from Lowestoft) as our long-awaited Vice President and we will also launch our new Charity—so we have lots to look forward to as we get together again.

Our Jamaican partnership 'Bees, beds and blessings' has resulted in well over £10,000 being sent and money is still coming in until the end of March. It has been an excellent effort and has helped to develop those initiatives in Jamaica for which our fellow Methodists there are very grateful. We hope to maintain interest, friendship and prayer for them all.

This year is the 10th Anniversary of MWIB. Our celebrations have been somewhat restricted but we intend to do something to mark the occasion before 2021 is over.

Our Connexional residential Swanwick conference is to be held 'on line' this year so we hope that more will be able to join that. We will also have a new Connexional President in June when Ruth Parrott is inducted at Methodist Conference.

We have just produced another Newsletter which will be available to all by Easter and we hope will keep us all connected and excited about future plans.

Ruth Arnold (Past President)