

# **REPORTS TO SYNOD**

## **Thoughts from the Synod Secretary**

Please read the reports that follow. They give a good flavour of the activities and challenges within our District. We are grateful for all the work carried out by our District Officers and Committees and by those who support them.

**Susan Eldridge, Synod Secretary**

## **District Policy Committee (DPC) Report**

Since the last Synod, the District Policy Committee met twice by Zoom, in October and February, carrying out the business of the East Anglia District, reviewing the finances, approving sundry grants and receiving feedback from the recipients of grants and from District Groups where appropriate. This enables us to share the good things happening and being planned in the District.

We also met for an Away Day in November at St Ives Methodist Church. This was led by Deacon Eunice Attwood who helped us to explore further opportunities for mission.

Property Issues across the District were discussed. DPC agreed to Southwold Methodist Church closing. A Job description for the Role of Property Secretary has been produced to enable us to find a replacement for when Roger Pauley finishes in this role in August 2023.

The District Safeguarding Officer Jane Gay gave feedback on the recent Safeguarding Conference held at the Kings Centre in Norwich, where there were different themed groups such as Police, Probation and Survivors and excellent keynote speakers. It was agreed to appoint a part time Administrator to assist the Safeguarding Officer.

Alison Travis left her role as District Administrator at the end of December 2021 and we welcomed Danielle Gravestock into the role.

*Lay Employment* - in the period since September 2021 there has been a steady amount of employment activity, as churches and circuits get going again with projects that had been paused. There are a few different employed posts being developed through the District. It is hoped these will shortly be being advertised.

Our District Mission Enabler Yasmin Finch presented "Jubilee East Anglia" a District mission initiative to encourage as many Methodist Churches as possible across East Anglia to have a street party with their neighbours to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the bank holiday weekend Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> June – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. More details of this at Spring Synod.

Autumn Synod on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022 is at Downham Market Methodist Church and will be hosted by the West Norfolk Circuit.

Service Group Coordinator Lorna Burroughes presented a draft Church & Circuit Environmental and Eco Audit in response to the Methodist Conference of 2021 agreeing a target of becoming a net zero emissions Church by 2030.

*GDPR* - Marilyn Watsham our Data Protection Officer reported from attending the Data Champions Forum that new documentation will be sent out to all Ministers in due course for completion. It was noted that our District had a firm foundation to build on due to the hard work done last year.

**Chris Finbow, Assistant Synod Secretary and Secretary to DPC**

## **Sabbaticals report to Spring Synod 2022**

First of all, many thanks once again to Rev Heather Walker who handed this task on to me, and to the other members of the District sabbatical panel, David Ingham, Alyson Ellis and Rev Julian Pursehouse, who have helped steer me through these first few months.

The lockdowns imposed due to coronavirus have made it difficult for some ministers to achieve the things that they had hoped; but many have proved to be very ingenious and creative with their time, and should be thoroughly commended. Now that some semblance of normality is returning, ministers are able to be more adventurous in their plans, and it very exciting to look ahead with them towards what they are hoping to do. In many cases, I feel strongly tempted to beg a corner in their suitcase!

Although most circuits are very supportive of ministers going on sabbatical, sadly some circuit staff can be uninterested and even obstructive. It is very important for all congregations to understand that a sabbatical is not a holiday, which may be taken or not according to whim, but part of the discipline of being a minister. When appropriate, ministers should be encouraged to share the fruits of their sabbaticals with their congregations on their return, so that others can be enriched by their experiences.

**Rev Anne Bossingham**  
**Sabbaticals Officer**

## **District Lay Employment report for Spring Synod 2022**

Since the New Year, and more recently as concerns about the pandemic have lessened to a degree, there has been an uptake in recruitment of new employees. I have noticed churches and circuits struggle to obtain applications when advertising, reflecting a more challenging recruitment market than prior to the pandemic.

Redundancy remains a rare event amongst employees of churches and circuits in the District. Just a reminder, any church or circuit who are considering making an employee redundant must first obtain the consent of the District Lay Employment Committee.

A quick reminder that the Methodist Church is a Living Wage employer. This means it has committed that circuits and churches will pay the living wage of at least £9.90 an hour for all employees. This increase from the previous rate of £9.50 per hour must be applied by May 2022 at the latest.

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**

## ADMINISTRATION GROUP REPORT

### **Finance & Property**

1. The budget for 2022/23 has been sent to the Circuits. All District Accounts are provided in the District Treasurer's Report.
2. District accounts for Connexional year 2020/21 will all be presented to Synod for approval.
3. The District Property Consents Panel members are Roger Pauley (District Property Secretary), Rev Julian Pursehouse, Shaun Cushion, Paul Hornsby, Angus Campbell and Aileen Fox; *need to be appointed*

APPROVE: Accounts for 2020/21.

ADOPT: the Budget for 2022/23 & receive rest of the report.

4. A written report has been 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 the continuation of a District grant 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 Rev Dr Mike Wilson about either of these issues.
3. Since my last report there have been two new schemes receiving significant District grant funding, **Replanting (Central Norfolk 14/15) £28,694**, and provisionally **Families Worker (West Norfolk 14/20) £15,000**. At time of writing uncommitted capital in the DAF is £319,554. All District grants awarded by the Grants and Personnel Committee are subject to ratification by the District Policy Committee.
4. Proposed Administration Group Representatives to Synod for 2022/23: Mr Paul Hornsby and Mr Angus Campbell.

5. The District Grants Policy: Agreed 5<sup>th</sup> 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

**REV ANDREW KING** – Group Coordinator Administration

## Eastern Region Learning Network – Synod Report

As we start 2022, I am pleased to announce that we have a fully staffed Learning Network Regional Team. Jenna Thorne began work with us in late November last year and Stuart Watkin started at the beginning of January. This enables us to offer full alignment of LN staff with each district in the region ensuring that key relationships are developed across the whole region and more locally.

The roll-out of Connexion-wide learning and development opportunities continues to grow as we settle into our changed world with more online presence. We recognise that this may not be everyone's preference and we will do our best to accommodate in-person learning when required. However, we are already aware of the significant reduction in travel of our team members and participants with online working, and the associated cut in emissions from travel that will help us as a church meet the Conference commitment to becoming carbon net-zero by 2030.

As part of this commitment we are also looking at how to improve, as a team and as a church, our digital communications across the region. Jenna is already working within the LN regional team on this but is also available to work alongside circuits to help explore how digital communications can be further developed.

Stuart comes to us with a specific brief to look at how we continue to embed and strengthen our inclusion of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy into the life and work of our church. This journey will be easier for some than others but please do call on Stuart to help your circuit think more about how this strategy can take root and grow within your circuit and work in the community.

The 'New Places: New People' (NPNP) work in each of the five districts continues to develop and we are pleased to be involved in those conversations and plans for the various projects as they start to come to fruition. Linked to the NPNP work is the focus on the Church at the (economic) Margins. Do please get in touch with us if you have ideas about how the church may form small, relational communities among the economically marginalised section of our communities. We can offer opportunities, to link with others doing similar work, for sharing ideas and support with this work.

Working jointly with the Rural Mission and Ministry Officer, we will be hosting a webinar to look at rural Classes and micro-churches, and what being church might look like in a rural community, often without a traditional church building. Do join us for conversation on 29<sup>th</sup> March if you feel called to reimagine small rooted church in your local rural community. (<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAtf-GhpjosG9Hlebmqj4H09NdlADqvPPxP>)

Coming up in June is Bible Month with the focus this year '30 days with Isaiah'. We are very grateful to one of our own LN officers, Michael Wadsworth, for leading the planning for Bible Month. For those not yet familiar with Bible Month, it is:-

“an annual campaign that celebrates scripture by inviting the whole Methodist Connexion to *feast* on one particular book of the Bible together, which through a menu of carefully curated resources, training and learning opportunities, churches and circuits are encouraged to taste and see the goodness of an individual text; enjoying some of its unique flavours, considering its origins, appreciating its place alongside the rest of scripture, and savouring the unique contribution it might make to our faithful living and learning today.”

More information is available on the Methodist Church website.

Nigel has recently completed a number of resources to assist those exploring and valuing transformational leadership. These are informative and thought provoking, and are available from Nigel. (Contact details below.)

Do remember that as a Learning Network we are available to assist circuits and churches develop their ongoing future plans, support for W:L&P tutors and mentors, offer training to circuit stewards, and much more.

If you want to know more about any of the items above, or forthcoming learning opportunities, then please get in touch with any of us (contact details below)

Dave Friswell:	<a href="mailto:friswelld@methodistchurch.org.uk">friswelld@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>	07799 902570
Ann Howlett-Foster:	<a href="mailto:howlett-fostera@methodistchurch.org.uk">howlett-fostera@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>	07799 900481
Nigel Pimlott:	<a href="mailto:pimlottn@methodistchurch.org.uk">pimlottn@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>	07799 900468
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Stuart Watkin:	<a href="mailto:watkins@methodistchurch.org.uk">watkins@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>	07825 669586

**Dave Friswell**  
**Learning and Development Coordinator, Eastern Region**

## **REPORT ON GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)**

I attend the GDPR forum by ZOOM when it takes place. Last year the District did well in complying with the information needed for GDPR. Across the District, only 2 churches were unable to comply as compared to other Districts where there was a high level of non-compliance.

The paperwork for 2022 has been simplified and will be issued shortly and as soon as available I will send out to every Minister in the East Anglia District. There is a reminder on the paperwork that its completion is mandatory and is under a SO of the Methodist Church.

Full instructions will be circulated as soon as I have them. The first tranche of information needs to be with me by the end of May and the rest of the information by the end of August.

Again, as last year, I would be grateful for each Superintendent or nominee to coordinate this activity for their Circuit and respond to me.

The East Anglia District did well in 2021 and it would be good to have one hundred percent compliance this year.

**Marilyn Watsham**  
**Data Champion for the East Anglia District**

## **REPORT TO SYNOD FROM SIGN THE CROSS DEAF MINISTRY**

Our aims: *to give Deaf Christians the opportunity to be part of a regular worshipping community  
to develop connections with the wider Deaf Community for service and evangelism  
to raise awareness in the mainstream church*

If you watched Strictly Come Dancing, you would have seen the show's first Deaf contestant, Rose Ayling-Ellis. Not only did she win, but she used her role to raise awareness of what it means to be Deaf in today's society. She brought BSL into focus in a unique way. We hope and pray that this has also had a response in the church, where some congregations may be beginning to ask how they may offer to be inclusive of Deaf people.

By the very nature of Deafness, it is invisible, and therefore often Deaf people are overlooked by the Church. If we are to be an inclusive Church, we need to be aware and ready to source solutions that enable everyone to take part on an equal footing.

Our Deaf Church continues to meet in Norwich every month, and we have improved the use of technology so we can be hybrid, offering those at home an opportunity to join in via zoom. The Norwich Deaf church has also just begun meeting with Sprowston Methodist church for an interpreted service, and we hope this will be of benefit to both Deaf and hearing. We continue to have a link with St Peter Mancroft.

Groups also meet at Downham Market Methodist Church for an interpreted service and in Dereham for a Bible group. Being scattered around Norfolk, we must travel to meet, so monthly meetings and church works well.

I also attend Deaf café and clubs in the region where possible, to keep in touch with the grassroots Deaf community.

If any churches or circuits would like to know more about ministry among the Deaf community, please contact me.

**Rev Anne Richardson**

### **Learning and Caring Group Report for Spring Synod 2022**

So many of our activities seem to be curtailed still in these Covid-dogged times that it is especially good to be able to report on events which are moving and progressing, even if, like me, you would much rather meet in person than by Zoom.

I must first mention the District's new venture in forging a link with the West Harare District. I was delighted to be able to join in by Zoom and was only sorry that the link with Zimbabwe took some time to establish. I hope this did not detract from people's enjoyment of a significant occasion and, as ever, full marks to our World Church Action Team for making the connection with yet another part of our worldwide Methodist Church.

Discussions are ongoing about the possibility of employing someone to coordinate and further the work among children and young people in the District. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who has any views or opinions on the subject, perhaps a real face-to-face meeting of interested parties would help to share ideas, I wait to hear from you!

Our care of our probationer ministers still continues but we are beginning to work on a new regional basis involving four Districts, the care and nurture is still the same despite a different mode of working.

Likewise safeguarding is still in capable hands despite the difficulties of providing training online. I completed the advanced module with a final Zoom meeting and found the whole process more straightforward than I expected and also rewarding.

A couple of things from the regional Learning Network: firstly a webinar is being hosted on 29<sup>th</sup> March regarding church in a rural community and coming up in June is Bible Month with the focus this year "30 days with Isaiah". Details of these can be found on the Methodist Church website.

As always I look forward to hearing from anyone who wants further information or who wishes to express an opinion or give a view, that way I may feel that I am not working in a vacuum.

Take care of yourselves and my prayers and best wishes to you all.

**Richard Dean, Learning and Caring Group Coordinator**

### **Agricultural Chaplain's Comments** *(this also appears in Grapevine)*

A few weeks ago I was thinking about writing this article, and after a decent harvest, an exceptional Autumn for farmers to get ahead with the land work. Just enough rain to germinate the seeds and a mild winter. What could have been better?

That was the field work. Then came the problems with livestock. Not enough butchers to keep the abattoirs going, until the government decided to relax the licence for workers to come from Europe. This put the pig industry in the worst position I can remember. Pigs were being culled on the farm. Then in the poultry sector foul pest restriction, all poultry to be kept inside, and at the time of writing these are still in place.

Not good news for marketing 'free-range eggs'. We don't know for how much longer these restrictions will be in place. Feed prices offer a huge challenge, with wheat over £200 per tonne, Maize being grown for bio-fuel, so not available for feed. I'm afraid the British public will have to pay more for their food in the future to retain a sustainable food chain.

A reduction in the Farm Support Grants system has caused a few headaches. Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) seem to be setting guidelines for alternative cropping, more green, more trees and more houses being built on first and second class land. How can farming produce more from less and increase production and reduce imports?

This is not a good time with so many prices rising; artificial fertiliser, fuel prices going through the roof, incomes static and the government will want more in taxation to recover after the pandemic. Calls to the farming helpline are making demands on the volunteers. Mental health and finance are the most demanding requests, which are not easy to resolve. We must keep talking and praying that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Yes God is good, we often sing this so let's keep singing His praises and remember His promise, for seed time and harvest will not cease.

Blessings to All, **George W Frost, District Agricultural Chaplain**

## **District Property Secretary's Report**

### **1. ANNUAL PROPERTY RETURNS – CHALLENGE**

You failed ... you will recall I set a target for you for the last Connexional Year for 100% completion, you completed circa 90% - well done!! BUT can you make that 100% this year.

### **2. FIRST POINT OF CONTACT**

As you all are aware, TMCP Property Division continue to be under pressure with their every increasing workload. It would appear that many of the enquiries they receive could be dealt with locally. Accordingly, I am being encouraged to remind all personnel involved with property in the District, that your first point of contact is your DISTRICT PROPERTY SECRETARY for all Property Matters.

### **3. GOOD NEWS**

#### **a) Grants for Urgent Structural Repairs to Churches**

Listed and unlisted Christian places of worship needing urgent structural repairs can apply for grants of £10,000 - £50,000. Funding is also available for projects that introduce kitchen and accessible toilets to enable increased community use. Grants can cover up to 50% of project cost. The funding is available through the National Churches Trust's Cornerstone programme.

#### **b) Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme - 3 Year Extension**

Some very good news - following a recent announcement I am pleased to advise that the Government's Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has been extended for another three years until 31 March 2025 (this is the scheme that gives a grant to cover the cost of VAT on repairs etc. to listed places of worship).

Blessings to you all

**Roger Pauley**

## **Training Fund Update**

The District Training Fund has received four applications since the previous Synod. The applications vary from training in spiritual formation in the UK to attending a clergy seminar at Yad Vashem, Israel. 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 towards the costs of the training.

It has been a pleasure to administer this fund and appreciate the ongoing commitment to formation across our district ministers. A new administrator is required from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**Rev Alison Walker**

**District Training Fund Officer**



## **World Church Action Team, East Anglia District - Report to Spring Synod 2022**

### **Launch of Harare West Partnership**

This was held on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and was well attended with people from both Districts joining in person and via zoom. We are truly grateful to those who helped facilitate this event, particularly with regard to the technical side. In spite of the challenges of zooming across the globe, contact was made and maintained and it was a joy to share with our brothers and sisters in Harare West. A recording of the Launch can be accessed via a link on the District website:

[East Anglia Methodist District \(eangliamethodist.org.uk\)](http://eangliamethodist.org.uk)

The aim of the Partnership is to enliven our mission as we share together and for both partners to be mutually enriched. One way to do this is to link churches as well as groups such as women and young people's groups. Those who are interested in forming a link should contact either Sarah Friswell or Revd Mary Sachikonye and a link will be made.

Information about establishing a link which is mutually beneficial, can be found on the Global Relationships page of the Methodist Church website [Church Twinning \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

### **Global Relationships Sunday**

This can be held at any time of the year. There are plenty of resources available with videos, stories, pictures, prayers and reflections from the work of God around the world. Be inspired by our partners from around the world and be encouraged in the mission where you are.

### **World Mission Fund**

As Methodists, we believe in learning and caring as part of our discipleship and there are plenty of opportunities for us to support the Church whether that's in prayer, the giving of our time or the giving of our money. The World Mission Fund (WMF) supports projects and individuals around the world, and you are encouraged to support this work through your giving to the WMF.

### **Communications**

A reminder that Sarah Friswell is responsible for communications and sends out regular emails to circuit contacts. Check with Sarah to make sure your circuit is on the list.

### **Thank you**

Revd Bernard and Mrs Ruth Arnold have been loyal members of the World Church Action Team for many years and now feel it is time to step down. We have benefitted from their experience and wisdom and valued their friendship and fellowship. We wish them well as they continue to serve God in other ways.

### **World Church Action Team**

Interested in joining the team? Contact Donna Ely to see what is involved.

Deacon Donna Ely

Coordinator, World Church Action Team

## **Safeguarding Report for Synod Spring 2022**

There have been so many changes over the last few months, but some things never change:

### *Safeguarding is still everyone's responsibility*

Within our churches, we look to each other for fellowship and support; perhaps it's been "virtual" in recent months, but we are very conscious of how much we need each other. Safeguarding is about Creating Safer Spaces so everyone can be welcomed safely and have the opportunity to experience the transformational grace of God.

Please don't think Safeguarding is only about training; it's far more than that. Safeguarding is about people, about being aware of how we can keep ourselves safe and knowing what "a risk" looks like. Safeguarding is made up of myriads of everyday glances, at a door, at a picture, at a trailing cable, at a person's demeanour, at a text, at the hands of a child. Safeguarding is about caring for one another, making sure our churches are safe spaces for everyone, whatever their life's experiences have been, whatever their age.

It is so important that we all know that we have a responsibility to speak up. It might be something we see or hear or just feel isn't right; get in touch. It may be a small piece of a jigsaw which we have been trying to piece together with other agencies. There have been so many cases in the news recently which highlight the importance of people talking to each other and the tragic consequences of inaction.

If you are able, please take time to watch some of the recent webinars on the Methodist website which have covered different topics which are so relevant to our churches; Dementia, Domestic Abuse and Hearing the Voices of Survivors. They are a powerful and challenging resource.

Each month there is a new Safeguarding Newsletter distributed with information and events detailed on it. It is always available on the East Anglia District website and is emailed out as well. If you would like to be on the mailing list for this, please email me. The newsletter and website contain details of the online forums which anyone can sign up for. The Forum is a great opportunity to keep up to date, meet others with a safeguarding interest or role and get answers to those niggling questions!

**Jane Gay**  
**District Safeguarding Officer**

## **Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) Report**

The Autumn District Day went very well. We listened to the inspiring testimony of Zara, a bright, athletic young woman who, after a major accident, battled a brain injury which threatened to leave her paralysed. She explained how she was motivated to set up the charity "3 Million Steps" to support patients like her to recover. She also showed us how she had walked those 3 Million Steps herself to raise money. This is a wonderful charity which we are delighted to support as our project over the coming year.

We also had the opportunity for fun and fellowship - with cake, which is always positive, and I really enjoyed meeting sisters from different circuits.

Our next District Day will be on Thursday 12th May at St Ives and I am really looking forward to our speaker Mrs Sandra Goodwin. With the day being titled "Tutfers, tatties and watery facts of life," I am both intrigued and excited at the prospect of a really interesting day.

As Vice-President of East Anglia District MWiB, I have set myself the challenge of visiting every circuit and so far I have led worship at Ely, shared worship in Kings Lynn and am booked to preach in Diss and Leiston. Please let me know if you are interested in my sharing a MWiB service in your circuit.

Methodist Women in Britain is an amazing organisation which deserves to be a high priority in any and all circuits.

**Sue Groome**

PS) We are planning a MWiB Residential Conference on 4th-5th March 2023 at Belsey Bridge, speaker Mrs Carolyn Lawrence (former Vice President of Methodist Conference). More details will be available in the Autumn. *Susan Eldridge*