

Connexional Team Update

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Action Required	To Note

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To provide the Council with an update of work undertaken in the Connexional Team since the Council last met in January 2019.
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1. On 14 February 2019 the line managers of the Connexional Team attended the annual 'Line Managers Training Day'. The day consisted of input from a number of Superintendents (by video) sharing their reflections on the work of a circuit Superintendent and their perceptions of the support offered to them by the Team, input from the President of the Conference and the Secretary of the Conference, and a range of workshops covering skill based issues. It was, again, a very useful day and we are looking to continue to expand the provision offered to Line Managers to assist them in their work.

The Conference Office

2. Memorial M3 to the 2018 Conference requested that the Property Development Committee (PDC) include community land trust developments as part of the Church's strategic approach to using church land for affordable homes throughout the Connexion where there is need. In response, the PDC has been considering how the Methodist Church might be able to work in partnership with existing trusts or establish its own community land trust.
3. The connexional property strategy was adopted in October 2018. Work is now underway to map the Church's property and land portfolio, from which we can then assess future development opportunities. This will be combined with existing "intelligence" from various sources including information on the access database, on line consent system, our property tracker and general information from our visits and approaches from Churches, Circuits or Districts.
4. The intention is then to develop a list of strategic development opportunities across the Connexion in the short, medium and long term; which we can then explore in further detail with the local churches and the PDC. Affordable housing will be a key consideration for future development projects. The quantum, exact location and delivery vehicles (including community land trusts) will be informed from the mapping exercise above.
5. As the work has been incorporated into the PDC's strategic planning, the work in response to this memorial is now considered to be completed.

Mission and Advocacy

6. The former Publishing and Communications team has been restructured, as from 1 February the Publishing staff joined the Engagement team. We welcomed Jillian Moody to the Communications team as Interim Director on 19 February for an initial period of three months.

7. The aim of this separation of the functions is to give focus to the communications strategy, with the expectation of establishing a more proactive approach. There will be a review of the publishing programme and production processes.
8. Since January, the Publishing team have produced the usual wide range of reports, newsletters and magazines, and materials.
9. Working closely with Lambeth Palace and publishers, CPO, a new booklet of nine daily reflections for the 2019 Thy Kingdom Come initiative has been developed, authored by the President-Designate, the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson titled, I hear you differently! Alongside this, the Revd Hilary Cooke was commissioned to write the first of a suite of resources to help churches develop worship around themes emerging from Thy Kingdom Come, and for other times of prayer in the Church, which would be useful especially for Local Arrangements. This is available on the Methodist Church website.
10. Engagement and World Church Relationships colleagues are developing resources to offer a mission education 'roadshow' to the districts, with a promotional presentation offered to synods. The first new-look edition of Rainbow, the JMA magazine, was distributed in February. In response to our survey of JMA secretaries, the magazine will in future be supported by an e-newsletter highlighting additional mission education resources online. This edition focuses on refugees and includes content from All We Can and 3Generate. An enhanced JMA collectors' commissioning service will be available in May. This will provide the same commissioning liturgy as previously, but this will be supported by a range of resources and stories, including video, to help worship leaders create a much more interactive service that involves the young people.
11. A review of grants processes has been completed by the consultancy group, Ethicore. They have offered suggestions for streamlining our grant-making structures and processes, including increased use of online solutions, and suggested a model of how to incorporate and use effectively the work led by Dr Daleep S Mukarji. Assuming the 'outcomes' (for the objectives of *Our Calling*) proposed by the review group are adopted by the Methodist Council (see paper MC/19/36), both pieces of work will be considered by the Connexional Grants Committee in order to propose an implementation plan.
12. The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) launched the Living Lent campaign on Ash Wednesday. Work on the hostile environment has continued, with a series running during December and January looking at what a "welcoming environment" might look like. Policy, political and media work has continued around Universal Credit, and the recent changes were described as "so welcome and so inadequate". JPIT's first in-house poet, Lucy Berry, has produced poetry on remembrance, asylum and poverty to aid reflection and challenge – this can be found on the JPIT Poetry Hub - www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/whats-new/poetry/
13. The World Church Relationships (WCR) work with All We Can (AWC) is increasing with two joint projects currently underway in Sierra Leone and North India, and the secondment of Maurice Adams is enabling further projects to be developed. The team reorganisation has been completed with new colleagues based at Methodist Church House and as two new Partnership Coordinators based in Europe (Germany) and the Pacific (Papua New Guinea). The Revd Conrad Hicks starts as Director of Global Relationships in April.

Discipleship and Evangelism

Evangelism and Growth

14. Inductions for two of the three new officers on the Evangelism and Growth team have started as of 1 March, with the third officer beginning in early April. A full team of 10 people across the Connexion will now be working hard, in concert with Connexional Team, regional, and district leaders, to progress the emerging Evangelism and Growth strategy.
15. The Director of Evangelism and Growth is on target to complete 50 on-the-road consultations by the end of April, and is now moving the strategic intent document into a draft paper of core strategic streams. The content of this will be shared in “in-process” workshop form this summer at the Conference, next autumn with various committees, in October with a connexional Consultation and Celebration of Evangelism and Growth in London. It will then be developed into a strategic plan in late 2019 for official approval in 2020. A taster video about the (re)start of this focus was launched in early March, in time for Presbyteral and Representative Spring Synods.
16. The Methodist Way of Life (MWOL) design team will begin its work in March. The Design Team will reflect, study, develop, and write a deeply integrative piece of work that, much more than a membership programme or small groups curriculum, is a whole-life discipleship pathway.

Learning Network

17. The newly configured Regional Learning and Development Forums are working well with some further work being undertaken in some regions to help embed the new approach. The Director of Regional Learning and Development has attended a number of the forums already this year and is planned to attend others through the rest of the year. Further guidance on the way in which the aligned officers will work within the regions has been shared with the District Chairs at their January meeting and this has also been shared with members of the Learning Network.
18. Work on resourcing the trainers for delivery of *Creating Safer Space* Foundation, Advanced and Refresher Modules continues to recognise the different approaches Districts and regions are taking. This is a challenging, ongoing piece of work with the numbers of people that require initial training (with the inclusion of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders) and the programme that will be required for ongoing training of those who have been trained every four years.

Children, Youth and Family

19. *The Well Learning Hub* was launched in early 2019. This YouTube channel contains videos about a range of topics that may be useful for those involved in children, youth and family ministry. Current videos cover topics such as spirituality in gaming, intergenerational worship and digital wellbeing. The videos are designed for an individual or a team of people to watch at a time that suits them, for personal and professional development. Some of the videos also have accompanying resource sheets to download. Over the coming months we aim to add more videos to develop this learning platform. The Well Learning Hub can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXPIDROQNca6xl_2WpoNuOQ
20. To encourage Young Adults (18-30 year olds) in discerning their vocation, there will be Rise and Shine Leadership and Vocational event in July, and the launch of a Young Preachers event

facilitated by the Children, Youth and Families Team, a group of Local Preachers, and Cliff College.

21. Significant work around the *Year of Testimony* has led to the development of a video-based testimony and storytelling initiative from the Evangelism and Growth team, to be launched in August 2019. This work is a next step from the *FaithStories* prototype that was tested in 2017/18.
22. The Manifestos for 3Generate 2018 have been made available to every minister with a letter from the Youth President. Supporting resources for churches to engage in the Manifestos are online on the Methodist Website. We will be developing a 3Generate Manifesto animation resource video for the Conference.
23. The *ONE Programme* equips, empowers, and encourages young people in their discipleship, vocation and leadership, and features three streams: *One Participant*, *One Encounter* and *One Opportunity*:
 - *One Participant* – our 2018/2019 cohort of eleven young people are over half way into their year, and we are in the process of selecting projects for 2019/2020 participants across the Connexion. There is a varied selection of projects including *LifePlay Learning*, which seeks to increase youth engagement through various creative and performing arts projects, and *The Ark Project* in Bristol, which is a multifaceted project across the entire Bristol and South Gloucestershire circuit, working with churches and communities on outreach and mission.
 - *One Encounter* – we have two exciting trips planned for 18-26 year olds to South India, partnering with World Church Relationships, and Ibiza, partnering with 24/7 Ibiza.
 - *One Opportunity* (3hr/week circuit/district or regional scheme) – currently taking place in three locations, with a fourth starting for 2019/2020.
24. The Methodist Intern Programme for 2018/2019 features placements at the following host organisations:
 - Action for Children – two intern placements
 - Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome
 - House of Lords
 - House of Commons
 - All We Can
 - Universities UK
 - St. George's House Windsor
 - Central Finance Board – two intern placements

We are currently recruiting placement hosts for 2019/2020, aiming for twelve hosts and twelve placements.

HR and Development

25. HR and Development are in the process of re-establishing themselves following a period of change due to colleagues leaving the team, resulting in almost 50% of the team joining us in the last 8 months.
26. The team continues to play a key role in managing the Home Office Sponsorship Licence, working closely with colleagues in the Conference Office to enable the Church to bring in Ministers from overseas to serve the Methodist Church in Britain. The team continue to take on increasing responsibility, working with the immigration adviser to ensure that the Church is fulfilling its responsibility and meeting the Home Office Sponsorship Licence requirements.

27. Working with colleagues in the World Church Relationships team and the relevant circuits and districts, this Sponsorship Licence enabled the church to support the Global Mission Fellows programme. The level of work involved behind the scenes was significant for HR & Development and other colleagues that were involved in enabling this to successfully be achieved this connexional year.

Finance and Resources

28. Matthew Tattersall joined us in February as Director of Finance and Resources.
29. The key focus for the Finance Team in the last quarter has been finalising the Connexional Central Services Budget for the three years commencing 2019/20. This has been scrutinised by the Senior Management Group of the Team, the Finance Subcommittee and the Strategy and Resources Committee and is reported elsewhere in the Council Agenda.
30. Performance of the Payroll function has continued to improve and they are exceeding the expected standard for accuracy (99.87% achieved against a 99% target). Maintaining performance is a key priority, particularly as we go through a period of change with our interim Payroll Manager leaving and a new permanent appointment being made.
31. The Connexional Team received malicious emails in February resulting in unauthorised disclosure of information affecting 80 people. In response to this, IT has applied 2-factor authentication where sensitive information is being processed; anti-spam systems have been upgraded; alerts and monitoring tools have improved; a systems security audit is underway; and training and guidance has been provided to staff. The affected individuals were notified in writing and the incident was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO have subsequently concluded their investigation and they will be taking no further action.
32. As always the Council is invited to engage with the Team on any areas it has concerns about through the Connexional Secretary at any time.

*****RESOLUTION**

- 30/1. The Council notes the update from the Connexional Team.**