

# Methodist Recorder

Issue 8461  
February 21, 2020  
£3.50

The world's leading Methodist newspaper • [www.methodistrecorder.co.uk](http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk)



**NEWS FROM  
AROUND THE  
CONNEXION**

Page 4



**JOINING  
THE HUMAN  
RACE**

Page 14



**AMAZON SYNOD  
AND CHRISTIAN  
DOCTRINE**

Page 24

## Homelessness: Church urged to be radical

A CALL for a radical, holistic approach to housing and homelessness from the Methodist Church, with the Church making some of its own properties available to address the crisis, has emerged from a meeting in Birmingham.

Organised by the Rev Dr Mike Long, who as minister of Notting Hill Methodist church works on housing issues in London, and the Rev Ian Rutherford, who as the city centre minister in Manchester works with other faith

by [STUART BELL](#)

groups, charities and the city council to address homelessness, it brought together practitioners from across the country.

### Themes

Two key themes emerged from the gathering: first the need for homelessness and good housing to be addressed together and sec-

ond for the Methodist Church to be far more pro-active in addressing the causes of the homelessness and housing crisis, rather than simply engaging in care for those most obviously affected – the men and women rough sleeping on the streets. In order to be most effective, it is considered that this response should include the use of Methodist premises,

many of which are no longer needed for the Church's mission and might otherwise be sold or retained purely for rental income.

Among the 25 people who attended were those involved in projects in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, York, Darlington and Hereford. Mr Rutherford told the **Methodist Recorder**, "One of the things that came out of the gathering was the need to have a slice of work that looks at rural homelessness and also coastal

homelessness as well. There are particular challenges in those areas."

The group was addressed by the homelessness adviser for the Government, John Kuhrt, who gave a presentation about where faith communities can be engaged in these areas. Dan Simpson, who is the Methodist research and development officer on the Archbishop of Canterbury's commission on housing, Church and community, updated the meeting on where the Church of England is heading in its response. "We need to be working alongside them in our localities," said Mr Rutherford. In Manchester, Methodism is working with the Roman Catholic and Anglican dioceses to look at their own housing stock.

### Forefront

A founding trustee of Citizens UK, the Rev Paul Regan, was also present at the gathering. That charity has been at the forefront of promoting community land trusts, campaigning politically for such an approach. Also attending was the team leader of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), which represents the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church on political and justice issues, Rachel Lampard.

Stressing the need for homelessness and good housing to be addressed together, Mr Rutherford pointed out how much of the problem is unseen: "There are many hidden aspects of homelessness. An upcoming project in Manchester will address family homelessness. There are many families in bed and breakfast ac-



Sleeping rough. Not all homelessness is so visible.

Turn to Page Two

Letters: Pages 6 & 7 • Pointers for Preachers: Page 10 • TV: Page 17 • Gazette: Pages 21, 22 & 23