

New Places for New People

Starting
new
Christian
communities:
A practical
guide

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Welcome

The Methodist Church sees starting New Places for New People (NPNP) in every circuit as a vital part of responding to the gospel of God's love, revealed to us in Christ. Our aim is to see new people becoming disciples of Jesus and forming new Christian communities in rural, estate, urban, suburban and village contexts. In doing so, we believe we will see lives and communities transformed by the love of God.

As part of equipping districts, circuits and local churches to begin NPNP projects (including Church at the Margins projects), we have written a guide of resources. This practical guide contains a range of materials including a Methodist theological foundation of NPNPs and the core NPNP practices which we believe are crucial to developing an NPNP. We have written some short starter guides, brief introductions, and signposted resources that we believe will be helpful as your project begins.

Additional training resources, including via the NPNP Hubs, the Methodist Pioneering Pathways, the Church Planting Intensive course and focused webinars, will be available to support pioneers and pioneering teams as they embed the practices identified.

These resources are not intended to be exhaustive and will be developed as we learn from the NPNPs – please ensure you're using the latest version of this resource by downloading it directly from www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnp. Version numbers are given in the footer information at the bottom of each page.

We hope you find this resource useful, and welcome any feedback or questions you may have – our contact details are below. It is our joy and delight to be working alongside you, and we look forward to all God will do amongst us, as we continue our partnership in the gospel.

With every blessing,



Matt Finch

Pioneering and Planting Officer

finchm@methodistchurch.org.uk



Eunice Attwood

Church at the Margins Officer

attwoode@methodistchurch.org.uk

New Places for New People

New Places for New People (NPNP) are projects focused on forming new Christian communities for those not yet part of an existing church. NPNPs are the most effective means of connecting new people, new people groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community. In addition, NPNPs bring learning from experimental 'research and development', identify and strengthen emerging leaders, and help the whole Church reflect on and examine its calling.

NPNPs can be started anywhere, in diverse contexts. The Methodist Church has suggested the following contexts and people groups as priorities for NPNPs in the next five years:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins.

NPNP theological foundations

Beginning and ending with God: NPNPs are God's work. We are joining in with God's invitation to reconnect people to the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ: enabling us to live in right relationship to God, ourselves, others, and the whole of creation.

Incarnation is key: NPNPs involve being with and alongside others – discovering God together by sharing the reality of human life with its pain, struggles, and joys. Incarnational ministry is key to the work of NPNP. As in Jesus, God takes human flesh and enters our world, so we are called to be alongside, not distant, from the people and places we minister in.

Developing new Christian communities: We believe God is at work in God's world and is not dependent on the actions of the Church or individual Christians. An NPNP discovers and joins God's work in listening for, speaking of and living out the good news, beyond the existing boundaries of the Church. These new communities of people sharing good news will gather together to worship, learn, serve God, and be connected to the wider Methodist Connexion.

Nurturing new Christians: An NPNP project is for new people in new places, is rooted in our response to God's love, and aims for all people to know and experience the love of God. The gospel is for every time, every place, and every person. God's people are called for a purpose: "to love and praise God so that the world may believe." (*Methodist Conference Report, Ministry in the Methodist Church*, para 2.3, p.375)

Open to transformation: At the heart of NPNP is an invitation into a transforming relationship with God and a willingness to be shaped, challenged, and transformed in our encounters with others. The mission of God revealed in Jesus offers us love, forgiveness and new life – all of which will be transformational.



NPNPs are the most effective means of connecting new people, new people groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community.



NPNP core values

Be pioneering: NPNP projects affirm and enable people from diverse backgrounds and ages who are called by God to see new opportunities and respond to God's Spirit at work outside of the existing Church. Furthermore, NPNP projects enable these people to connect and form new gospel communities amongst unaffiliated people – with creativity, imagination, innovation, and sustained commitment.

Develop a 'mixed ecology': We value a diverse range of missional approaches which will produce a variety of new Christian communities among unaffiliated people. These include church plants, pioneering communities of faith, fresh expressions, missional communities, and other new faith communities in rural, estate, urban, inner city, suburban, and village contexts.

Be committed to risk-taking mission: NPNP is the work of the whole Methodist Church, and we are committed to experimenting and taking risks in mission. In a healthy culture of learning and reflection, evaluation will be valued as part of the journey of a fruitful NPNP project.

Ensure contextual relevance: New Christian communities will arise out of careful listening and will always remain connected to the wider community and aware of its needs.

Nurture discipleship in gathered community: Though an individual chooses to become a disciple, faith is nurtured in community with others. NPNP will celebrate emerging patterns of worship and contextually relevant discipleship that resonate with new people.



Though an individual chooses to become a disciple, faith is nurtured in community with others.



Church at the Margins

Alongside building on the New Places for New People (NPNP) beliefs and core values, Church at the Margins (CaM) projects will also be centred in and focused on the following themes, vision and values.

The vision for Church at the Margins is to build new Christian communities amongst economically marginalised people in new places.

Definition of Church at the Margins

Church: A gathered community of people being transformed by the gospel, learning to be like Jesus, and making disciples of Christ.

At: People *at* the margins, *on* the margins, *of* the margins – not *to* or *for* the margins. We are not taking God to the margins; God is present with and in all people, in all circumstances, and waits to be discovered. Our task is to listen, recognise and be transformed by God at the margins.

Margins/marginalisation: People can be marginalised in many, often interconnected, ways. These may be related to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, mental ill health, physical impairment or illness, and poverty. The marginalisation caused by economic poverty can have a devastating impact on the lives of individuals and their communities. We will focus on people who are *economically impoverished or vulnerable to economic poverty* due to their circumstances (eg insecure housing, lack of access to employment, or health issues), and therefore experience marginalisation.

We recognise the inadequacy of language around margins/marginalisation/poverty, including that a community of people may not 'own' this language for themselves. Local contexts will need to reflect carefully on the most helpful language within their communities. We acknowledge that throughout this and other documents, the word 'we' is used repeatedly, which immediately places others as 'them' and not 'us' – this is just one example of inadequate language.



God's character reveals a God of justice and an emphasis on our need to care for the vulnerable, the stranger and those who are impoverished.



Church at the Margins theological foundations

God's preferential option for the poor: The Bible contains stories of marginalisation, poverty and powerlessness – a demonstration of the sinfulness of humankind and the need, in every age, to be attentive to the processes which discriminate and marginalise. God's character – what God does, and how God is discovered – reveals a God of justice and an emphasis on our need to care for the vulnerable, the stranger, and those who are impoverished.

The good news of Jesus Christ: The multiple systems which marginalise others are challenged by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ sees the extraordinary worth of those who experience poverty. His example was to restore those who were 'unclean' and share bread with those described as 'outcasts'. Church at the Margins is focused on people who are economically poor experiencing and revealing God – recognising that without the presence of 'the poor', the Church will not see the whole of God's vision for humankind. We hold that to abandon the poor is to abandon the central theme of the liberating, life-giving message of the gospel for us all.

Evangelism and social justice: Evangelism and social justice are inseparable aspects of our Christian discipleship. The good news of the gospel reveals “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10). Every aspect of our lives – our beliefs, ideas, practices and relationships – are transformed by the gospel. Love is at the intersection of evangelism and social justice. “The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love” (Psalm 33:5), “And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice” (Psalm 50:6).

Interdependence: God created us to be interdependent: with God, others, the created (non-human) world, and within ourselves (physical, emotional, and spiritual). We recognise our shared brokenness and our capacity and need to receive from one another – in particular from people who are economically vulnerable or marginalised whose wisdom and gifts we can fail to recognise.

Inclusion: We believe everyone belongs to God. Each person is created in the image of God and therefore has an intrinsic worth, value and dignity. Therefore, whenever we ‘other’ people because of their economic circumstances, we distort the image of God in them and ourselves. We recognise the gifts of all people and the sinful structures of systemic injustice which lead to exclusion.

Church at the Margins core values

Seek justice: We believe God loves all people. God is at work, and can be discovered among people who are economically vulnerable or marginalised. We recognise the devastating impact of poverty on people’s lives, especially children, and are committed to a vision of God’s justice for all people. We are committed to listening to, amplifying, and being changed by the voices of those who experience injustice and marginalisation. Working collaboratively, we will seek opportunities to enable those voices to be heard by those with power to instigate change and transformation.

Prioritise the lived experience of people at the economic margins: We believe people with lived experience are the experts in their contexts and are essential partners in co-designing, co-creating, co-delivering and co-leading any project. We are committed to the orientation that, ‘nothing about us, without us, is for us.’¹

Share power: We will share power and recognise the dynamics and potential misuse of power, including acknowledging the privileged position of cultural outsiders and the dominant patterns of white, middle class, and male culture. We are committed to a long-term and sustained presence in economically marginalised and vulnerable communities.

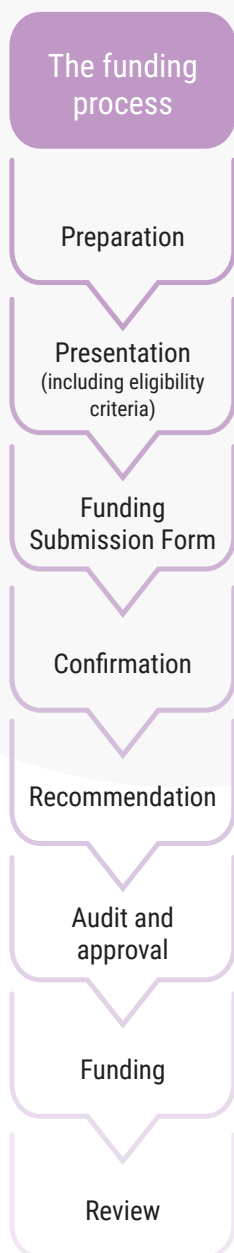
Celebrate inclusion and participation: We will celebrate and value the inclusion and participation of all. We believe everyone in a community has something to offer. Gifts are waiting to be discovered in all communities. We will resist focusing on service-provider models of community engagement based on the rich doing something for the poor. We recognise our need for the gifts of those at the economic margins, and believe the whole Church needs to receive these gifts in order to be fully transformed by the gospel of Christ.

Enable leadership communities: We will nurture, enable, and develop local leadership within people already present and invested in their local context. We recognise a variety of leadership styles but will resist models of ‘heroic leader/rescuer’ leadership.

¹ The source of this quote is debatable. Its origins were in Central European politics before it was adopted by disability rights movements. It has become the motto of the Poverty Truth Network.

Accessing New Places for New People Funding for District-led Projects

Every district has been allocated £140,000 for one or more district-led New Places for New People (NPNP) projects. This should be match-funded or match-resourced (for more information on match-resourcing, contact the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) at bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk). Across the Connexion, at least 60 per cent of NPNP funding should be used for Church at the Margins projects. For circuit-led funding processes, see page 73.



Preparation

The district, together with the Evangelism and Growth team, will begin (in the September of its self-selected 'tranche' year) a year-long journey of support, prayer, and discernment in order to design and prepare for one or more district-led New Places for New People projects. This will involve building the District NPNP Team (see page 11), discerning where to locate the project(s) (see page 14), and undertaking some experimentation and testing of ideas.

There is £10,000 available for every district for experimentation and testing work, which will be released when it is needed (as agreed by the District Chair and Evangelism and Growth team members).

Presentation

In order to claim funding for your district-led project, the District NPNP Team should give a presentation and complete the Funding Submission Form found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnpp. The purpose of this is two-fold: to tell the story of the project to all of those who have an interest, and to evidence how the eligibility criteria agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee (see Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter) have been met.

The District NPNP Team will select three or four key influencers/leaders within the district, who are not part of the District NPNP Team but who have the skill and vision to lead or inspire future circuit projects. These people should then form a 'panel' with Evangelism and Growth team members and the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution). This panel will hear the presentation, ask questions, and offer feedback to ensure the project is the best it can be.

The presentation should address the questions in Appendix 2 of this Chapter.

Funding Submission Form

The Funding Submission Form found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnpn should be completed, and then signed by the District Chair, before being submitted to the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) on or before:

- **1 August** (in time for the October meeting of the Mission Committee – see 'Audit and approval' below)
- **1 March** (in time for the May meeting of the Mission Committee – see 'Audit and approval' below).

Confirmation

The Funding Submission Form and presentation will be reviewed by the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) to confirm that the NPNP meets the eligibility criteria. If the Project Officer feels the project has not met the eligibility criteria, they can ask for more preparation work to be undertaken. For minor work, they may choose not to reconvene the panel or receive a second set of submission paperwork, but to receive assurance that the work has been undertaken via another means (eg via email). For major work, the panel should be reconvened and a second set of submission paperwork undertaken.

Recommendation

When the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) is satisfied that the NPNP meets the eligibility criteria, they will recommend the project to the Mission Committee for funding.

Audit and approval

The Mission Committee, at either their October or May meeting, will audit and approve the recommendations. This audit will be an overview, not a detailed examination – the Mission Committee will be encouraged to ask searching questions to promote accountability, but not to review extensive paperwork. The Mission Committee may ask for further work to be done in any of the previous stages, and can withhold funding until that work has been completed. The Mission Committee may also decide not to fund a given project, in which case clear and thorough feedback will be provided to all parties on why that decision was taken. There is no process to appeal the decisions of the Mission Committee. For Connexional Year 2021/2022, the Strategy and Resources Committee will audit and approve, as the Mission Committee is still in its shadow year.

Funding

When the Mission Committee approves a project, the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) will liaise with colleagues in the Finance and Resources Team to release funds within four weeks.

Review

All funded projects will be expected to engage with the review process outlined in chapter 12.



There is £10,000 available for every district for experimentation and testing work, which will be released when it is needed.



Appendix 1

Eligibility Criteria for Funded District-led Projects

Funds will be awarded to districts that meet the following criteria. The district will have:

- a mission plan/policy that is unambiguous about the need to start new Christian communities
- prior experience of planting churches, innovation in existing churches or starting fresh expressions, or of work with marginalised communities
- a good manager/overseer/coaching culture
- agreement and support from District Policy Committee (DPC) and District Missioner
- a clear strategy for sharing learning with superintendents, and for organising them and collaborating with them to ensure other NPNP projects are pioneered in the district.

Funds will be awarded to projects that meet the following criteria. The project will:

- focus on one of the five areas of opportunity, unless there is very good reason not to. These are:
 - new towns or new housing developments
 - student/young adult/university
 - families with children
 - replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
 - Church at the Margins.
- be a new community, not a relaunch of an established church or existing project
- be focused on intentional evangelism and discipleship, leading to significant numbers of new people exploring faith and becoming disciples
- have carried out substantial contextual discernment about community needs and local church/circuit resources surrounding the project, and there must be evidence of this
- have plans in place for how the project will inspire other circuits/churches to start New Places for New People, and there must be evidence of this. The project must provide a replicable model for others to use
- have a clear gospel vision, including evidence of listening to God, prayer, and a foundational vision
- have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy; equality and inclusion of all people must be demonstrated as a project core value
- follow safeguarding best practice, as defined by the Conference. A conversation with the District Safeguarding Officer is required to advise on a safeguarding risk assessment and policy
- have DPC and senior district leaders' ownership, accountability, and endorsement

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(Cont'd)

- have clear and robust leadership appropriate to the context. Roles and responsibilities of different parties must be clearly outlined. This will include:
 - a post for a pioneer/planter/project leader (hereafter called 'pioneer'). The pioneer must join the Methodist Pioneering Pathway (MPP)
 - a named, local Learning Network Officer who specialises in New Places for New People
 - a regional gathering of pioneers (facilitated by Connexional Team staff).
 - a coach, assigned to the pioneer via the MPP
 - a named line manager/management committee for the pioneer.
- have a fully-costed budget
- have a risk assessment for the project, including plans for mitigating substantial risks
- have continuity plans in place where needed, to ensure the stability of a project (eg planning for a change in the local superintendent, or for working with existing congregations)
- have clear and realistic outcomes or fruit that emphasise missional culture change. Some will be local and/or district contextual outcomes; some will be connexion-wide, cross-context outcomes. The project plan must evidence a clear link between planned activities and outcomes. The activities planned must be realistic, based on available resources and capacity
- have a biannual review process to enable the project to remain agile and responsive
- have accessed the training and support from the Methodist Pioneer Pathway
- for Church at the Margins projects – people with 'lived experience' from the community must have been involved in the design and development of the project and its aims.

Questions:

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) at bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk

Appendix 2

NPNP Presentation Questions

You should aim to answer the following questions in your funding submission presentation.

Vision and values

1. **Set the scene:** Why do you want to begin a New Place for New People (NPNP) and what are the key stories which inspired you? Who are you aiming at and what is the purpose? How does this resonate with your community?
2. **Prayer:** How has this vision emerged from prayer and listening to God? How are you praying for your project? How will the district support this project in prayer?
3. **Vision:** Describe the vision for the project, what will it look like in a few years' time?
4. **Values:** What are the core values that will shape your project? How will they support and enable the vision for the project?

Preparation phase

1. **Preparation:** What have you done to prepare for the NPNP? Who are the stakeholders? How will they be involved and interested in your progress? How has the voice of people with lived experience been included, this will be particularly significant for Church at the Margins projects.
2. **Launch:** How do you plan to get started and when? How are you publicising this?

Delivery

1. **Making it happen:** In a nutshell, how are you going to achieve your vision? How will you know if your vision is being realised? How will you measure 'fruitfulness'? How will you communicate the emerging stories?
2. **Pioneering Team:** Who is currently part of the pioneering team and why? Who else do you hope to recruit? How will the team change, grow and expand over time? How are you developing a leadership community?
3. **Impact:** How will you connect with new people? How will people move from being an interested seeker to a follower of Jesus? How will people become trained leaders?
4. **Wider culture change:** How will this project influence others in your district to begin an NPNP, including those in very different contexts? How will the project be accountable to the wider church? How will the wider church be accountable to supporting the project?
5. **First 100 days:** What are the absolute priorities that set the tone and feel of the project? What challenges do you anticipate in this period and how will you overcome them?
6. **First two years:** What are you prioritising over the first two years? What are you launching and when? What challenges do you anticipate in this period and how will you overcome them?

7. **First five years:** What are your mid-term expectations? What are your big picture hopes? How do your reflections on the fruitfulness markers (see page 43) relate to the vision for the project? When will you seed/plan for another NPNP? What challenges do you anticipate in this period and how will you overcome them?
8. **Budget:** A simple table of income (including sources) and expenditure (only headings needed, eg staffing, start-up items) for the first three years. What other resources (not just money) will support your project (eg people, places, networks, assets, property)?
9. **Safeguarding:** Outline the safeguarding risk assessment and policy you have developed in consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO). How will you review and evaluate your safeguarding policies and practices?
10. **Help required:** What do you need help with now or in the future? Are there questions for the panel or issues you would appreciate input on?

Questions:

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) at bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk

The District New Places for New People Team

The District New Places for New People (NPNP) Team (or teams) will have the following three functions and will be accountable to the District Synod/District Policy Committee for their work. Depending on context, a district may decide to form one team to fulfil all of these functions, or to divide the work between two or more teams, or to create working parties from one team for specific tasks – different models will work for different contexts. However, for ease of reference, we will refer to the 'District NPNP Team' throughout this resource.

The functions of the District NPNP Team are to:

1. initiate the district-led project(s) by discerning a context, vision and focus for the project, playing a role in submission for funding (see page 5), and leading on any necessary recruitment
2. create a culture of pioneering within the district that inspires every circuit to start an NPNP. In particular to:
 - a. act as advocates for the values of the Methodist Church in relation to pioneering and planting (see page 2 for more info), showing a preferential bias for Church at the Margins projects
 - b. encourage and equip circuits and local churches to launch NPNPs
 - c. shape, guide and champion the NPNP movement across the district
 - d. embed NPNP/CaM as a top priority in the district mission plan/strategy
 - e. model best practice in discernment, prayer and decision-making for pioneering teams to emulate.
3. oversee and manage the funding of circuit-led or local-church-led NPNPs.

District NPNP Team members

It is important to form this team out of prayer and conversations with people who may feel called to be a part of it. Some suggested members of the District NPNP Team are:

The District Chair: The Chair's role is both to support the contexts where projects are beginning and to enable the circuits and local churches to imagine what is possible in their communities, as the district places NPNP at the centre of its mission strategy.

District Mission Enabler (or equivalent): The Enabler's voice will be key to identifying the places where there is capacity to begin a fruitful project. Their expertise and connection to the District Missioners' Community is a rich resource. If the district does not have an Enabler, consider involving someone, lay or ordained, who is a recognised leader and is passionate about mission.

Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathways regional lead: The local Learning Network Officer brings knowledge of the pioneer community in the region. They can also advocate and share the district's NPNP vision with the pioneer community as it develops, and invite pioneers to integrate their work into that vision.

A Planter or Pioneer: This is someone with first-hand experience of beginning an NPNP. Their role will be to ensure the vision is grounded, practical, and realistic. Involving them in shaping the vision helps to avoid unnecessary pitfalls and builds in best practice early on. This is unlikely to be the same pioneer who will later lead the district-led NPNP.

Person with financial experience: This is someone with experience in budgeting, accounting and/or financial planning who is not afraid to talk about money as a gift. Their skills will be needed both in the short-term to begin a project and in the long-term strategic use of resources.

Key influencers and advocates: These are people with knowledge of district structures and the ability to navigate, influence, and work with those structures to support NPNPs. They are people who can advocate for the importance of NPNPs in the life and future of the Church.

A person who will model deep, trusting faith: This person needs to always remind the team, in the midst of shaping the vision, that it is God's work not ours, be that when it is easy or hard. They will remind everyone to keep praying in the busyness of planning, and to listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings.

An organiser: It is so easy to dream and imagine, but every team needs someone who will keep the project on track, collate information and establish the next steps.

Ways of working

Remember that the team can work in varied ways, beyond video calls or formal meeting-rooms. Think about where you could gather to inspire creativity, eg in coffee shops, on a walk, by prayer-walking the streets of potential projects, or by discussing ideas over a meal together.

Strategic planning

A crucial role of the District NPNP Team is to strategically oversee the visioning and funding process for circuits to begin an NPNP as part of every circuit's mission plan. The readiness to access funding will vary across circuits so the District NPNP Team will need to monitor not just the NPNP projects beginning but all the emerging opportunities. This will require the following:

- In consultation with the Superintendents and Circuit Leadership Teams, analyse the readiness of circuits to begin an NPNP. Invite them to decide the timescale of when they might begin the process.
- Support, encourage and enable the emerging vision for the NPNP circuit project. For example, vision days, prayer, training on how to begin, and their place in the circuit mission plan.
- Map a five-year strategic plan that details when circuits are likely to begin a project and share this with every Circuit Leadership Team.
- Set some realistic goals for the number of projects that will begin.



It is God's work not ours, be that when it is easy or hard... keep praying in the busyness of planning, and listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings.



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(Cont'd)

- Keep a database of projects, their progress, readiness to plant again, and how they might encourage the NPNP movement across the district.
- Regularly communicate with circuits, reminding them of their place in the strategic plan and the requirements for accessing funding.

For more information on setting up funding processes for circuit-led NPNPs, see page 73.

How to Discern Where to Locate a Project

Discerning where to locate a project is a key responsibility of the District New Places for New People (NPNP) Team (see page 11 for more). This chapter will guide you through that discernment. This process can also be adapted for and used by circuits and local churches discerning where to locate a project in their neighbourhood.

In order to discern where to locate your district-led NPNP project, you'll need to:

1. Consider your district context.
2. Listen to the community in the prospective location(s), to God and to each other.
3. Learn about and meet local people.

Throughout all this, you'll need to keep returning to these important questions:

- Why do you feel God leading you to choose this project over others? Who are you orienting toward? What is God saying to you through the established and evidenced need?
- In one sentence, can you describe your vision for what you are doing? What will it look like in a few years' time? What are the core values of your project?
- How do you see it changing missional culture in every circuit across the district?

1. Consider your district context

The district-led NPNP projects are all about encouraging a change in missional culture so that every circuit makes beginning an NPNP a core priority in their mission plan. It is important to consider the project's wider influence and the potential shared learning for other circuits, ie, are there similar contexts elsewhere in the district which can model their project on this one?

2. Listen to the community, to God, and to each other

All NPNP projects begin with listening. The purpose of listening to the community, to God, and to each other is to discern the voice of God as you look for the signs of where to locate the NPNP project.

Listening to the community

Listening to a community is hard and challenging, but also an opportunity to get to know people and form new and creative relationships. It is from this initial deep listening that a clear vision for a new Christian community relevant to your unique context will emerge.



It is from this initial deep listening that a clear vision for a new Christian community relevant to your unique context will emerge.



It is important to be methodical about listening, as this avoids overlooking key community areas and provides a structure for team members. Using the following method, or a similar one, will help to map your community and will be an early important team-building exercise:

- Give each person a sheet of flipchart paper or some sticky notes to write down as many people, groups, and places they can think of in the location you are considering. Take 15-20 minutes for this exercise.
- Give each person five minutes to share their list and observations.
- Take a large map of the area you are focusing on. Together, study and reflect on how your lists correspond with the geography, centres for community gathering, and other significant features and people. Discuss what important questions you need to ask of the whole area and the specific contexts you have listed.
- Divide up the lists and take responsibility to listen to them, prioritising the places the team has little collective knowledge of.

Find out more about good listening practices on page 56.

Listening to God

In the busyness and enthusiasm of starting something, it is easy to forget to pause and listen to where God might be leading. At every stage of the discerning process, it is important to set aside time for prayer (see page 40 for more).

- Open every meeting in prayer, whether it is in a coffee shop, church, or living room.
- Make time for quiet reflection and silence – perhaps allow space for this on your meeting agenda.
- Give opportunities for people to share a testimony of when God has spoken to them during their times of listening to the community.
- Regularly ask what others think God might be saying.
- Whenever people share what they sense God is saying or doing, recognise that, affirm their perception, and give thanks for it before debating whether the idea is good or moving on to other business. This will nurture an environment in which team members feel able to share when they sense God is revealing something.
- Develop a rhythm of prayer outside of meetings. It does not need to be long. Choose a regular day or time when the team commit to five minutes of stillness to listen for what God is saying. You could each open that time using Samuel's words, 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening' (1 Samuel 3:10).
- Make sure the team is supported in prayer by others. Could you ask ten faithful people to pray for your project, or organise a weekly prayer meeting just to support this project?

Listening to each other

Listening together as a team will bring different perspectives and understandings of the community. Placing collaboration at the heart of your project will build relationships within the team and enable each person to feel valued. Here are some helpful ideas:

- **Communicate between meetings.** There will be plenty of information to gather, so sharing the listening you have done in between meetings will mean the time shared together can be focused on discerning what God is saying. You could do this by email or group chats, a closed Facebook group, or shared drive.
- **Let everyone speak.** Be disciplined, give each person uninterrupted time in the meeting to share. Remember some people may need encouragement to share their insights.
- **Celebrate different ways of thinking.** Be open to sharing information in different ways: encourage the use of pictures and metaphors, music and objects.
- **Encourage questioning.** Ask open and searching questions eg Where are we seeing signs of God at work? Why should the project be here? Why not? What would we contribute? What more do we need to know, or do, to help our discernment?

3. Learn about and meet local people

Consider the factors which have shaped community identity in this context: the impact of its history, geography, cultural, and religious influences. What kinds of healthcare and education are available? How healthy is the local economy? Review neighbourhood statistics and data about the area and local population from the Office for National Statistics or the local council. This can help you identify groups of people who may need an NPNP and who may not be visible in the places you usually frequent.

As you're doing this research, go out and meet the community. It is essential to move beyond facts and figures to conversations and relationships with real people to hear what they care about. You could invite a key community leader for lunch, sit in the local park and see who you encounter, walk 'off the beaten track' to explore the neighbourhood, or attend a community event. If you are not from the local area, then do this in company with someone from one of the local churches, so that local relationships are being built.

You will also need to meet the local churches, ministers, leaders, and congregations to assess their level of support for this work. Involve them in conversations and discernment as much as possible, whilst ensuring that their expectations are managed (if you are considering a few different places, ensure everyone is aware of that, so that the locations not selected are not disappointed).

Consider who, of those you have met during this discernment process, could lead a potential project and what key relationships they have in the local community (see below).



It is essential to move beyond facts and figures to conversations and relationships with real people to hear what they care about.



Potential leaders that already have some or all of the following people in their networks will enable a strong start to any New Place for New People.		
Local business leaders	Housing Associations	Parents of children associated with the sending church
Police	Conservation groups	
GP surgeries	Landlords	
Those working in health and social care	Sports clubs	Local politicians
	Citizens Advice	Farmers and farm workers
Market stall holders	Voluntary organisation leaders	People working with the recovery community
The town clerk		
Café and restaurant owners	Artists	Librarians
	Care home managers	Local charities
Foodbank volunteers	Debt Counselling services	Teachers and headteachers

Experiment, test, and learn

It is better to test ideas at an early stage, in several places, to see if your listening, hunches, and discernment resonate with a real community rather than just in theory. And remember, it is okay to make mistakes, change ideas, or explore elsewhere. No project is complete or perfect.

Take your time

It is easy to feel the pressure to decide quickly in the midst of funding timelines and talk of strategy. Taking time to reflect is not an excuse to leave everything to the last minute, but a willingness to allow curiosity to develop, the important voices to be heard, and subtle dynamics of a context to be discovered.

Further resources

A good resource to locate yourself in the thinking and practice of starting a new place is, *How to Pioneer (even if you haven't a clue)* by David Male. It is not a weighty theological tome, rather a helpful introduction for those at the start of a pioneer journey or wanting to better support a project.

Case Studies of New Places for New People

All across the Connexion, there are people beginning New Places for New People (NPNP). Here are a few case studies that illustrate the wide variety of leaders and contexts that can birth an NPNP. We have chosen these stories as they illustrate the five contexts and people groups that the Methodist Church is currently prioritising: new towns or new housing developments; student/young adult/university; families with children; replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church; and Church at the Margins.

Example: New town

Overstone New Town, Northamptonshire

Melvina is employed full-time as a Pioneer Community Chaplain, but has only been in post eight months at the time of writing. Her story illustrates the importance of meeting people one-to-one and connecting with the community through prayer. The Pioneer Community Chaplain post demonstrates how effective joint working and funding between circuit, district, and Connexion can be.

Melvina started pioneering in November 2020, and even with lockdown has begun to connect with the first residents and build relationships with site developers. Her low-key Christian presence is helping to shape this fledgling community. As she begins to shape the NPNP, Melvina has focused on collaboration, prayer, and presence.

The blessing of collaboration has been seen through ecumenical relationships (sharing resources and jointly taking part in community activities), the continued support of the superintendents and local Methodist Churches, and of course working closely with the developers on site.

Prayer has been at the heart of the project from the start, including regular prayer walks around the outskirts of the site and the weekly online prayer meetings for the community. As Mel walked, she met someone who explained that she had been asking God to show her how to be involved in the new community. This person is now part of the early community starting to form in Overstone.

Being an active presence has meant many hours of knocking on doors to simply say hello and meet new residents, though Melvina has sometimes been greeted with a smile and other times with suspicion. As lockdown restrictions were eased, the team hosted a Big Lunch where the community gathered for a picnic on the green to get to know each other. The developer provided cupcakes and bunting, and shelter from the rain in their sales room!

Melvina is honest enough to acknowledge that she's not sure what form the sharing and growing of faith will take in a new community, but the intention to discover is at the centre of this project from the start. She shares, "It has been so far, and will continue to be, a journey of prayer, listening to the Holy Spirit and acting on what we hear: befriending and listening to the community, in order to find ways to respond to their needs."

“

It has been so far, and will continue to be, a journey of prayer, listening to the Holy Spirit and acting on what we hear...

”

Example: Student/young adult/university

Starting Point, Bath

Karen is a local university chaplain, who is working with her husband Phil (a presbyter and local hospital chaplain) and James (a worship pastor at a local Anglican church) to create a New Place for students and young adults. Their story shows that perseverance is needed in the face of setbacks, and that digital engagement can be just as effective at reaching new people, and just as valued by those people, as 'real life' engagement.

Starting Point is a community that holds on to the essentials so that people will meet Jesus through the gospel, conversation, and prayer. At the heart of this new community, emerging from Karen's chaplaincy to the student community, is being real, being rooted, and being relevant.

Karen shares, "We'd thought about doing something like Starting Point for quite a while but one day, talking about it with our friend in a coffee shop, he said 'why don't you just ask this coffee shop right now if we could meet here? It would be perfect.'

"We prayed that this might be a way to help us discern our next steps and when I spoke to the manager I was overwhelmed by his welcome. Not only could we meet there, but we could meet there for free on a Sunday evening while he was restocking the shelves. In fact, he'd really like our company.

"That was the green light we needed. We invited some students that we knew to join us and began to make plans ahead of the new semester with the idea of launching our new community during university welcome weeks."

Shortly afterwards, Starting Point was disappointingly 'uninvited' from the coffee shop. "But we had moved forward enough in our hearts and our thinking to just look again and ask everywhere we could think of," explains Karen.

"So even though the venue has changed (including moving online due to the Covid-19 pandemic), Starting Point has grown in its identity. What was a friendly, open group has turned into a community that is willing to go the extra mile to show that they care for one another. Perhaps this is just because our relationships have had a chance to deepen or maybe the pandemic has forced us closer, but we have seen numerous examples of care, including fundraising, meal-sharing, dog-sitting, and gift-giving."

Of those who are part of Starting Point, one person said "Starting Point is important to me and it's a group where everyone is important. It's my church."

Another said "I'm surprised how well I got to know people over screen – even people I've never met, and I'm surprised how good the sharing is – even though I'm usually daunted by group discussions."

Another said "This has surpassed my expectations of what church could be."

“

This has surpassed my expectations of what church could be.

”

Example: Families with children

Horrabridge Love Your Neighbour, Devon

Ali is a part-time pioneer, whose story demonstrates the importance of deep and careful listening to the needs of the community.

When Ali started pioneering in the community where she was once a teacher, and is currently still a parent, at the local primary school, she noticed a mixed view of the church. And so, her first task was to watch and listen to the community in order to understand it better. In this time of reflection, she noticed the need for parent support, so gathered a small group of parents and local Christians to provide just that. From this moment, relationships were made, more parent courses run, leading to Alpha courses and small home groups and a platform from which pioneering has grown, changed and evolved.

A key moment for those involved in the project was when, after a time away for prayer and reflection, the realisation dawned that they no longer felt the need to fix people or make them believe, but to meet them where they were at, love them, and nurture them through the love of God. BLESS is now their core value, which stands for **Be** with them, **Listen** to them, **Eat** with them, **Serve** them, **Share** our story with them.

Now, three years on, wonderful relationships have been made with nearly all the community groups. Ali and the team are invited to chat on the local radio, lead Table Talk at the local pub, run youth outreach, and host community parties. A particular favourite with the community is the cupcake nominations where people who need to know they are loved, receive a cupcake on their doorstep with a simple message based on Ephesians 3:16 telling them that they are loved for no reason other than being who they are.

Praying, listening and building relationships has enabled Covid to be a turning point for the project, where the team has been a catalyst for support and community. When restrictions have allowed, they have set up a pop-up community café in the back of a pub. Lives are being changed through welcoming people into a safe and loving space, with flasks of hot drinks, homemade cakes, and free gifts on each table. Before the café opens, the team run a short time of reflection, which has been established for those who want to gather to share and pray without the churchy language. To encourage well-being further, they partner with two 'people of peace' (people who share their values and have a passion for the community) to run sessions to connect with a simple time of stillness spent in the pub garden.

The fruitfulness of BLESS is beginning to be seen: beginning with the moment the first new person joined the online worship. This was followed by others who felt they could reach out to Love Your Neighbour to know more of the love of God expressed in those who have served the Horrabridge community.

“

Lives are being changed through welcoming people into a safe and loving space, with flasks of hot drinks, homemade cakes, and free gifts on each table.

”

Example: Replanting in an existing place

The Well, Darlington

Morvyn and Graham are a lay worker and a local preacher respectively. Morvyn spends some of her working hours helping to lead The Well, alongside Graham and other church members who volunteer their time. This story illustrates the importance of prayerful discernment in launching an NPNP.

The church family at Pierremont were very excited to gain funding for some very necessary and long overdue refurbishment of their building. However, it soon became very clear that God was asking them to do something different.

The community were very conscious that God was speaking to them about being 'called', a theme their small groups had been exploring. Together they were hearing about moving, trusting, and how, when Jesus called some fishers of people, he told them to cast their nets in another direction. So, they paused and prayed and waited on God. They discerned God was asking them to take a huge step of faith and leave their building and instead replant a new church in a building about a mile further north, where the congregation had ceased to meet three years earlier.

The Pierremont congregation were already using part of the car park at this new site to extend their community garden project and so they began by opening a little coffee shop and charity shop there too. On the last Sunday in September 2019, they had their final service, a Harvest festival, in their lovely old building and on the first Sunday in October the replant, called The Well, began in the new building.

The Well is a new church plant, committed to intergenerational worship and serving the local community. Sunday worship begins at 10.30am and from 10am there is breakfast available. Worship is very family focused, but there is something for everyone in every service. Worship leaders lead singing at the start of the service, and through the time together there is prayer, interactive storytelling, a short sermon and then time to respond in various ways, creatively, in discussion and reflectively.

During the week, The Well serves the community with its café, charity shop, and The Pantry, a cupboard with fresh garden produce, groceries and other family essentials from which anyone who needs them is welcome to help themselves. During holiday times they run Make Lunch which aims to tackle holiday hunger among families who rely heavily on their children having school meals during term time, but also simply feeds anyone who needs it.

“

On the last Sunday in September 2019, they had their final service in their lovely old building and on the first Sunday in October the replant, called The Well, began...

”

Example: Church at the Margins

The Gathering and Sunday Supper @ Bridgeway, Nottinghamshire

Dave and Pat are members of the same church who volunteer their time as pioneers. They have demonstrated how serving the needs of the community and being unafraid to test ideas leads to deep relationships in Christian community.

Dave has been involved in developing local ministry around the subject of food for several years, beginning with a foodbank and community café, which developed into Sunday Supper. Pat shares how the vision for Sunday Supper began...

“A few Christians were meeting every Sunday evening at my house for a shared meal, chat, worship, and prayers. I would open the door and welcome whoever arrived, and somehow, we always had enough food, and folk would stay to pray and sing. We used the Youth Alpha materials which prompted good discussion and we prayed for our friends and neighbours. A summer barbeque attracted fourteen people, who we had prayed for over the years.”

Dave and Pat decided to move Sunday Supper to the church building, as it allowed more people to join in. On the first Sunday, eighteen people came together to share a hot meal. Numbers grew to between 40 and 50 people as word spread. Many were living with food insecurity and many appreciated the opportunity to be part of a new community. From the beginning, it was decided that this was church, and they would say grace and share a Jesus story in between courses.

“Before Christmas 2018, one of the guests asked if we could sing carols, and of course we agreed,” explains Pat. “A full Christmas meal was served and we sang carols. We assumed, after Christmas, that this Christian input would come to an end, but the community asked for it to continue. So began The Gathering – a short interactive service before the meal is served, which has been shaped by the (formerly) unchurched individuals who have joined in. Attendees are often invited to light candles or write prayers on post-it notes and fix them to the frontal cross. Most of the guests keenly engage with these rituals. We then have Sunday Supper and eat and chat together over the food, getting to know each other by name and listening to each other’s stories. Working amongst the chaotic lifestyles of those who are materially poor can be incredibly challenging, but also joyous!”

“Sadly, the pandemic meant we had to close the doors temporarily. However, our understanding of the food insecurity situation left the volunteers keen to continue cooking and so Sunday Supper became Sunday Takeaway!”

“

I would open the door and welcome whoever arrived, and somehow, we always had enough food, and folk would stay to pray and sing.

”

Pioneer Job Description

Recruiting the right pioneer for your project is crucial to its success. There is a diversity of gifts, core skills and orientations in the pioneering community, which means that not every pioneer project is right for every pioneer. When writing your job description, it is important to identify the focus of the role and the skills of the person you are seeking to appoint.

Here are some pointers on the best ways to shape these important documents to find the right person who can enable the project to grow and flourish:

- Be focused, not general. Let the job description flow from the project vision you have shaped.
- Enthusiastically share the vision of the project so that potential applicants will respond to your passion.
- Be clear about the key areas of work that are vital for a potential pioneer to know about (eg forming a new Christian community, leadership, team development, community engagement).
- Resist the temptation to just download a template or copy a document you have seen elsewhere; it won't express the uniqueness of your project.
- Be realistic about expectations. It is easy to list everything you think might be a part of the role, but this could de-prioritise important aspects or cause the role to become too demanding in the time available.
- In your description, demonstrate the collaborative nature of the work and the team that the pioneer will be a part of.
- Appeal to pioneers from diverse backgrounds and educational experience, and with lived experience of the context in which the project is based.

What kind of pioneer are you seeking?

The Methodist Church believes that pioneers will have the following ten characteristics expressed in their ministry. As you shape the person specification for your project, decide which four or five characteristics are the most important to identify in the pioneer you appoint. What characteristics are held within the team already? Base your job description and person specification around what you choose so that you can give the best opportunity for potential applicants to understand the role.

A self-starter: In a variety of settings, be it church, community, artistic or business, a pioneer is motivated to initiate a new project from very little or nothing.

A visionary: Pioneers are gifted to imagine how Christian community might be for new people and will envision others to work towards its creation.

A team-builder: An effective pioneer builds teams of people around a vision to enable it to become reality. By enabling others to discern their gifts, a pioneer gives a project a sustainable future beyond their unique gifts.

Connected to others: Creative connections to their community, to God and to individuals is the passion of pioneers. Being connected will always be a significant place of inspiration and energy. Forming friendships with those beyond the existing church comes very easily.

Called to the edge: Though committed to the Church, pioneers often find themselves called to and happiest at the edge. The borderland between church and community is a creative space for new ideas to emerge.

A natural evangelist: At ease speaking about their faith sensitively in every situation, a pioneer is always open to sharing the gospel in relevant ways.

Committed to diversity: Being called to the edge a pioneer notices those who are missing or excluded from Christian communities. A pioneer will plant new Christian communities that seek diversity and inclusion of all.

Risk-taking and mistake-making: Though not seeking to fail, a pioneer has a willingness to risk failure in the pursuit of finding out where God is leading. They see dealing with failure as an essential part of development and progress.

Responsive to changing contexts: A pioneer is able to pivot quickly to changes around them and turn them into fruitful opportunities for faith to be shared or for moments of growth for the new community.

Desiring faith community: Essential to pioneers is the desire to form new Christian communities where people can become followers of Jesus for the first time.

Finding a pioneer with the gifts and skills for your New Place for New People (NPNP)

We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church: some will work in traditional contexts, others in contexts beyond the fringes of existing churches. To help identify a pioneer's natural leanings and relationship to the wider Church, the Church Mission Society has designed the Pioneer Spectrum.¹ It is a tool to help reflect on different pioneering contexts and the pioneers who work within them.

The spectrum identifies four different types of pioneers, recognising that each type is naturally inclined to work towards a different outcome. Therefore, the type of pioneer you seek to reach will depend on the vision and aims of your project.

- **Church replicators** are those who will identify a new community and seek to reproduce a church model the same as the church context they have come from.
- **Pioneer innovators** are leaders who, with their teams, venture beyond the edges of the church's structures to create faithful expressions of Christian community among people of a new context. Their innovations, which initially disturb the inherited church, in some cases become welcomed by the broader church in time.
- **Pioneer adaptors** have the creative gift to adapt innovative ideas developed elsewhere into their own contexts. Pioneer adaptors are also skilled in adapting the existing Church's rituals and rhythms to new environments.
- **Pioneer activists** are those whose gift and vocation is to shape places in order to align a community, network or industry with the values of the kingdom. These pioneers see themselves as missionaries, but without the express intention of planting a church.

A funded NPNP project requires a pioneer with the desire to begin a new Christian community which will build disciples (**within the church planting section of the pioneer spectrum**). A pioneer committed purely to community activism/social enterprise with no plan for disciple-making is not the right fit for an NPNP.

We suggest that all members of the interview panel and District NPNP Team take time to look at the diagram below and watch the video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwwAc5sTr5M&t=1s) to understand the type of pioneer you aim to recruit through your job description. As part of the recruitment process, it may be helpful to ask those shortlisted to use the Pioneer Spectrum cards to discern their pioneer calling in relation to the project www.churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards

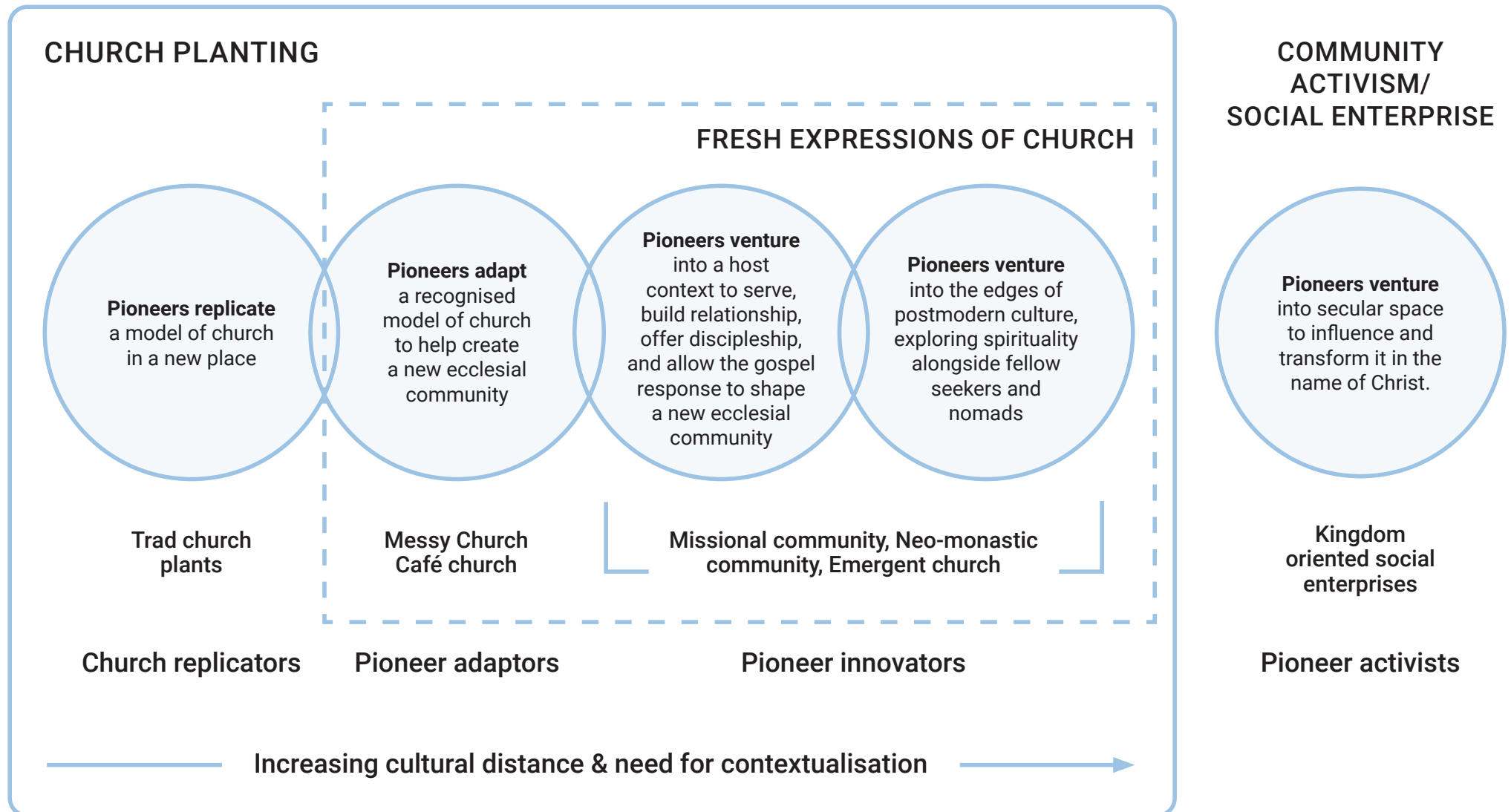


We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church.



¹ We are grateful to Tina Hodgett and Paul Bradbury for producing this resource and to the Church Mission Society for making it available free of charge <https://pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org/pioneer-spectrum>

Pioneer Spectrum



How to Manage a Pioneer

Good management and oversight of a pioneer (lay or ordained) is essential for the success of the pioneer and the project. Clarifying how this will be done, and by whom, will be an important decision for the District New Places for New People (NPNP) Team to make before the project commences.

Whatever form of management/accountability process is decided upon, feedback from Methodist and ecumenical practitioners in pioneering supports the sustained and consistent presence of a good, single line manager for the pioneer in order for the project to succeed.

For all lay employees, please consult the lay employment advisory pack:
www.methodist.org.uk/layemployment

Oversight options

See below for information on the people and groups who may feed in to the management and oversight of a pioneer and project.

Single line manager: Essential

Who: Someone who understands the work, has a passion for mission, enjoys new initiatives, and has the capacity and skills to manage and support the pioneer.

Role: To ensure the work is carried out, to support and challenge, to set goals and targets, to conduct regular meetings (at least monthly) and the annual appraisal.

Benefits to the pioneer

- Consistency.
- Simple communication.
- Focused attention.
- Builds a sustained relationship.
- Clarity of 'who to go to'.
- Allows for quick and efficient decision-making.

Coach: Essential

Who: A coach will be matched with the pioneer via the Methodist Pioneering Pathways – you don't need to recruit them.

Role: To ask great questions, listen well, and help the pioneer determine the steps they should take in order to see the dreams God has given them become a reality. Coaches should not be part of line management structures, but we recommend they communicate with those involved in line management. (They will, of course, need the pioneer's permission in order to communicate and share information with the line manager). For more information, see: www.methodist.org.uk/coaching



The sustained and consistent presence of a good, single line manager for the pioneer is essential for the project to succeed.



Supervisor: Essential for ordained pioneers

Who: All ordained Methodist ministers will have structured supervision, coordinated by the Connexional Director of Supervision. For more information, see: www.methodist.org.uk/supervision

Role: Good supervision helps the supervisee pay attention to the detail of their practice within God's justice and love and in relation to ethical and healthy ways of working. Supervisors should not be part of line management structures.

Management/Steering group: As appropriate for context

Who: People with a range of expertise including mission/financial/communication/leadership and culture change (ideally a maximum of six people).

Role: To oversee and manage the project to meet its key aims and objectives by receiving reports from the pioneering team and regularly meeting the pioneer and line manager. Responsible for decision-making on key issues and giving overall guidance.

Pros:

- Provides key guidance and support for the project.
- Enables decision-making.
- Provides a wide knowledge base and expertise to navigate challenges.
- Enables understanding and ownership of the project.
- Allows for shared tasks and development.

Cons:

- Possible internal conflict over the purpose and aims of the project.
 - Multiple meetings could result in a lack of clear purpose and difficulty in decision-making.
 - Could become steered by 'dominant'/senior voices.
 - If this group also forms the line management of the project they could struggle to communicate quickly on a day-to-day basis given the size of the group.
-

Reference group/Stakeholder forum: As appropriate for context

Who: People with specific knowledge and expertise, including people who attend the project eg members of other voluntary groups, agencies and ecumenical partners.

Role: Acts as a 'think tank' to discuss the issues arising from different perspectives.

Pros:

- People with 'lived' experience are included.
- Knowledge shared from a range of different aspects of the project.
- Collaborative thinking and communication.
- Shared discussion and reflection.
- Power is disseminated by the presence of multiple voices and perspectives.
- People included from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience.

Cons:

- Careful attention will be needed to ensure diversity within these groups including people from different backgrounds/education etc.
- Multiple perspectives can disable decision-making in the absence of effective leadership and healthy approaches to diverse opinions and conflict.
- Potential for competing priorities.
- Constrained by the people available.

There may also be other local or pre-existing groups who you wish to involve in the management and oversight of the pioneer and project, such as a local circuit leadership team.

Key questions for the District NPNP Team

Having reviewed the range of oversight options (above), the District NPNP Team must decide how to oversee/manage the pioneer. The following questions may help discernment.

- **Which people and groups do we want to involve in management/oversight of the pioneer and project?**

- **What is the chain of accountability for this project?**

One example would be: the pioneer is accountable to their line manager, who is accountable to the management group, who are accountable to the District NPNP Team, which is led by the District Chair. The stakeholder forum and the pioneer's coach can feed in their reflections, but are not part of the chain of accountability.

- **How will the pioneer regularly share updates and report learnings?**

For example, the pioneer could produce a monthly report on their activities (one-to-ones, new pioneering team members, strategic formation, etc) for the management group. They might also produce a quarterly update about strategy and learnings for the District NPNP Team and wider community. How might the pioneer offer missional learnings to the greater circuit and district leadership for them to engage in their own contexts?

- **Where and how will decisions be made?**
This might be in different places and with different people, depending on the subject matter.
- **Who needs to be involved in review and evaluation?**
(see page 42 for information on review processes).
- **How will the voices of people engaging the project 'on the ground' be included in the management structure?**

Line management responsibilities

- Induct the new pioneer (see 'How to Induct a New Pioneer', page 31).
- Support, direct and challenge the pioneer to perform their best, holding them accountable for delivery of work to a high standard.
- Encourage the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims of the project.
- Offer feedback on individual performance and project progress via fortnightly or monthly meetings and an annual formal appraisal. (We recommend a minimum of fortnightly one-hour meetings for the first three months and monthly one-hour meetings thereafter.)
- Ensure and enable good communications and collaborative working between all the various individuals, groups and networks involved in the project.
- Act as a 'sounding board' to the pioneer.
- Oversee HR-related functions (such as flexible working arrangements, TOIL, annual leave, sick leave, complaints and discipline processes, etc) as necessary (processes will vary by region – the District NPNP Team will need to clarify responsibilities).

A vocational one to one conversation will be offered to all applicants who are not accepted onto the pathway to support their future discernment.



Encourage the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims of the project.



Further resources

If line management training is required, please contact:
Rachel McCallam, Learning Network
Coordinator for the Yorkshire
Plus region, via mccallamr@methodistchurch.org.uk

How to Induct a New Pioneer

Experience shows that an important factor in the flourishing of pioneers and pioneering projects is good working relationships with the wider church community and its key leadership. A significant moment in shaping this early on is the induction of the pioneer.

A positive induction period will establish healthy working practices from the start. This is important in every setting, but especially in pioneer appointments which, by their nature, can sit uneasily with existing church structures. Having clear patterns in place for everyone will underpin work and support ministry when creative tensions arise.

The following considerations are essential in a well-run induction:

- An environment of welcome is created that will encourage the building of trusting and supportive relationships.
- Important information about the context of the project and working practices is shared.
- All relevant paperwork is understood and completed.
- Aims of the role and expectations of outcomes are clearly explained, agreed and documented.
- Good lines of communication between key stakeholders are detailed and established.
- The new pioneer is regularly given space to ask questions and express any concerns they may have.



Having clear patterns in place for everyone will underpin work and support ministry when creative tensions arise.



Before the start date

Regular communication before the appointed pioneer starts in the role is an opportunity to get to know one another, and enable any questions to be answered and issues to be resolved. It is wise to appoint one person, usually the line manager, to be the point of contact. This is a time to prepare both administratively and spiritually. In this period of communication the following checklist may help:

Task	Mark when complete
Reassure the pioneer there are people praying for them.	
Invite the pioneer to ask any questions they have about the project.	
Share with the pioneer any developments that are significant in the life of the project and circuit.	
Arrange for the setup of IT equipment and a mobile phone if required.	
Clarify any contract queries and complete the required signatures.	
Ask the pioneer to share any additional needs or requirements they may have in order to be supported in their role.	
Gather any official details required before the pioneer begins, eg bank details and DBS check.	
Send the pioneer an information pack about the local community and circuit.	
Connect the pioneer with the Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathway regional lead and encourage an early application to join.	
Arrange Safeguarding Training Module if required.	
Check any key commitments taking place in the next year, so they can be factored in to project planning.	

At the start

Good communication before the pioneer starts means many questions will already have been addressed and paperwork completed. It is disorientating for anyone to begin a new role, and these early days are the time to put the new pioneer at ease. Do not assume knowledge; rather share what may seem to you the most obvious pieces of information. Repetition of details such as expectations, roles, day-to-day working practices, and the names of colleagues is a good thing.

First day

The first day is an opportunity to welcome a new colleague well. We recommend:

- keeping it spiritual. Hold the day in prayer and keep sharing the story of the project, affirming that they are part of its unfurling
- being clear about the day’s timetable, including when they can have a break away from others
- introducing the wider team, both employed and lay, preferably including food in some way
- giving plenty of time to gather informally. The day is more than information sharing.

Below is a recommended checklist for the first day and induction programme:

Task	Mark when complete
At the start of the first day hold a brief welcome meeting. Pray for and talk through what has been arranged for the first day and week.	
Introduce pioneer to colleagues from the local context and wider circuit over coffee or lunch.	
Provide induction programme.	
Working context and equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a tour of the relevant office/building and/or local community. • Allocate keys and complete relevant keyholder forms. • Set up IT equipment and mobile phone. • Provide log-ins to IT systems, social media and website. 	

Task	Mark when complete
<p>Explain your circuit team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on the team structure. • Ask each person to speak about their individual roles and responsibilities. • Explain the regular patterns of meeting as a team and the expectations of their participation. • Share the key contact details and directories as appropriate. • Explain the project support/oversight group. 	
<p>Conditions of employment and HR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss/complete any outstanding paperwork. • Talk over the standard of work expected. • Outline hours of work, breaks and flexibility. • Confirm annual leave (entitlement and how to book). • Explain accident reporting procedure. • Outline confidentiality. • Give an overview of policies and where they are located (ie probationary period, PDR, data protection, flexible working, leave). • Explain sickness absence policy – what to do if sick, who to notify and when. Self-certification/fit notes and return to work interviews. • Outline TOIL/Flexi arrangements (including timesheets). • Give details of district lay employment events. • Explain the probation procedure and clarify duties and responsibilities. • Set first objectives and review dates, including regular one-to-ones and any supervision that will be required. 	

Task	Mark when complete
<p>Support and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the project management and oversight mechanism. • Discuss their application to the Methodist Pioneering Pathways. • Explain any pastoral supervision or coaching programme. • Explore any further development opportunities such as training relevant to their context. 	
<p>Clear guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the next week's work and the next steps to orientate themselves. • Share the key stakeholders to set up one-to-ones with. • Diarise the next month of one-to-ones with the pioneer's line manager. • Pray for the pioneer at the end of the day. 	

The following weeks

During the next week and subsequent month, continue to support the pioneer as they orientate themselves in the role. It is particularly important that:

- one-to-ones with key stakeholders are made a priority
- there is space for the pioneer to share any emerging questions
- the pioneer is invited to bring fresh perspective to the evolving project and that their input is valued
- networking with the wider community beyond the church community is encouraged
- reassurance is given that mistakes will be made, and it is okay to ask again how something works.

Below is a recommended checklist for the first few weeks in the role:

Task	Mark when complete
Introduce the staff member to key people and explain who does what.	
Standard work practices/policies and culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meetings. • Calendars and diaries. • How to claim work and travel expenses. • Telephone/Computer/Out of office procedure. • Explain any key documents relevant to the project and its vision. 	
Job requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the main duties and responsibilities. • Explain the performance standards. • Discuss the responsibilities and broad expectations of the role. • Discuss initial tasks/projects, and any immediate or urgent activities. • Ensure any key dates are in the diary. • Outline any relevant details of budgets. • Outline the relevant induction courses for completion over the first three months. • Provide an overview of training (including mandatory) and development needs for the role, and the plan to meet them. 	

Well-being

It is right that an induction of a pioneer includes significant information about working patterns, administration, and role expectations. However, there must be appropriate time given to the importance you as an employer place on their well-being.

Take time to reflect with the pioneer about the things that help them not just stay well but also flourish. The discussion should cover some of the following:

- Establishing a regular pattern of days off.
- Accessing spiritual direction and developing healthy spiritual practices.
- Seeking to understand the times, places and ways the pioneer works best.
- Highlighting the need to take time away from the project.
- Encouraging the nurturing and sustaining of support networks beyond the ministry context – with a home church, wider family, and friends.
- Affirming the importance of pursuing interests and passions that bring life.



Take time to reflect with the pioneer about the things that help them not just stay well but also flourish.



Methodist Pioneering Pathways

The growing number of pioneers in the Church is supported by the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP). We encourage every pioneer involved in a Methodist New Place for New People (NPNP) to become a member of the MPP in order to access its resources and join the network of support. Pioneers in funded district NPNP projects will be expected to join.

The MPP offers support in the following ways:

Connecting: At the heart of MPP is the community of pioneers – diverse in outlook, background, and context; a mix of lay and ordained; all deeply committed to forming new places that connect new people to the transforming love of God.

The connection to pioneers across the Connexion comes through monthly 'Third Thursday' online gatherings along with regional communities of practice facilitated by the Learning Network. Both of these places are an opportunity to share stories and wisdom. An annual retreat is also offered as a time to be together and deepen an understanding of the pioneer call.

Calling: The MPP is there to support those initially discerning a call to become a pioneer and to help them in those first steps. It supports experienced pioneers to deepen their call and develop their leadership potential within their district and the connexional pioneering picture.

Equipping: Pioneering, like every call, needs to be nurtured through reflective practice and learning. Every pioneer on the MPP attends the Pioneer Ministry Short Course. In subsequent years there is opportunity to apply for funding of other learning and training relevant to their planting context. This could be further study, such as a short course, or practical training to upskill and be better equipped.

For those in funded or district-led NPNPs, the Church Planting Intensive is a required course designed to give additional support and training to enable the projects to have the best opportunity to be fruitful and influence wider cultural change.

There is also opportunity for ongoing learning within the MPP via a monthly webinar. Different to the informal style of Third Thursdays, this session, hosted by the Evangelism and Growth team, gathers the MPP community for an in-depth webinar with a key pioneer/planter, thinker, writer, or practitioner – providing an opportunity to engage with those shaping the national and global pioneer movement.

Planting: The MPP offers support to put good practices in place which will give the best opportunity for fruitfulness. Areas include models of good accountability, systems for evaluating fruitfulness, planning for long-term sustainability, and fostering good relationships with the wider Methodist Church.

Coaching: Most fruitful new ecclesial communities have a culture of coaching their leaders. The MPP pairs every pioneer in an active project with a coach who will help them develop personally as well as progress the project they are leading.



At the heart of MPP is the community of pioneers – diverse in outlook, background, and context; all deeply committed to forming new places that connect new people to the transforming love of God.



How to apply

Apply to join Methodist Pioneering Pathways

There are people to help and support you as you explore where God is calling you. The application process has the following stages.

1. Speak to someone local you trust about it.

Share your sense of call with a minister or church leader.

2. Let the Learning Network know.

If it feels right to keep discerning after the local conversation, contact your Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathways Point Person.

3. A discernment conversation with the Learning Network.

Your Point Person will make time to talk more with you about your call.

4. Formal Application

If it seems right to do so after your two conversations, fill in an application form and ask for the references you need. These are then sent to the Evangelism and Growth Team to be assessed.

5. Welcome to Methodist Pioneering Pathways

You will receive confirmation that you have been accepted. Your Learning Network Point Person will tell you how to become a part of what is happening in your region and you will hear updates from the Evangelism and Growth Team about opportunities for training and gathering with other pioneers.

A vocational one-to-one conversation will be offered to all applicants who are not accepted onto the pathway to support their future discernment.

Further resources

Need help discerning whether you are called to pioneering? Looking for guidance on applying to MPP? Go to www.methodist.org.uk/mpp

Praying for your New Place for New People/ Church at the Margins project

It is essential for your New Place for New People (NPNP)/Church at the Margins (CaM) project to be rooted, sustained, and grown in prayer. As we listen to God together, we discern God's will and purpose for God's people. The theologian Simone Weil wrote, "Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer".¹ Being attentive to God together centres us in God and enables us to discover our vision, values and purpose.

The pioneering team should:

- build prayer into the cycle and rhythm of all meetings
- agree how and who will communicate prayer requests to others eg via email/WhatsApp
- include an opportunity for people to share their concerns for prayer as individuals and for the project as a whole
- regularly pray for who could be invited to join in
- introduce different forms of prayer eg Lectio Divina, music, art, writing, prayer walking, silence
- invite people in the pioneering team and across the larger Church and world to be intercessors for the NPNP/CaM.

The District could:

- encourage praying for NPNP in the district/circuits/churches as part of the natural cycle of meetings
- direct the Synod to include praying for the project alongside inviting other people to share from their circuits/churches where they see God at work in new ways
- ask the District Leadership team to regularly pray for the pioneering team and email them to let them know they are doing this
- ask each circuit meeting/local church to encourage people to pray for the district project and ask God to show them what 'new places and new people' they might be guided towards
- form a prayer network of people who would like to pray specifically for the project.

¹ Simone Weil, *An Anthology* (London, Penguin, 2005).

Topics for prayer

- The pioneer and pioneering team.
- Potential people who might engage.
- The management group/line manager.
- Practical issues: funding/buildings, etc.

As well as these areas, the pioneering team could share regular updates from the project for prayer (both the joys and the struggles). Include in your prayer times for the project, a regular invitation for people to reflect on how God might be speaking to you/them about NPNP.

Ways of praying

- Find a rhythm of praying for the project: daily, weekly?
- Be artistic and creative: use art, music, etc.
- Form a prayer network of people.
- Initiate a prayer vigil/walk.

Further resources

For more resources on prayer, visit the Methodist Way of Life webpages, particularly the commitment to prayer and being a "...blessing within and beyond God's Church for the transformation of the world":

www.methodist.org.uk/media/16918/mwol-commitment-card-220420.pdf

How to Begin Pioneering and Recognise Fruitfulness

Whether you are 'starting from scratch' to form a New Place for New People (NPNP) and are unsure how to begin, or starting with an existing group or project and want to be more intentional in your pioneering, this chapter is an essential read. It will guide you through your first year, teach you the core practices of pioneering, and enable you to recognise, celebrate and increase the fruitfulness of your work.

Often in the Bible, we read of 'fruitfulness'. In Genesis, God blesses humanity and says, "Be fruitful and increase in number" (Genesis 1:28). We want to build fruitful NPNPs, and so we need to understand the hallmarks of a fruitful Christian community, and what core practices will lead to this fruit. The 'fruitfulness markers' and core practices presented in this chapter are the result of consultations with ministers, lay people and pioneers across the Connexion, and are rooted in tried-and-tested best practice that works in all contexts.

We've linked our review process to these markers of fruitfulness, to ensure that we're recognising, celebrating, and building on the things that are essential to the flourishing of Christian communities. We recommend that all NPNPs follow this review process, and this is a conditional requirement for funded NPNPs.

Beginning to pioneer

In the first year of a project, it is vital to:

1. clarify your vision
2. connect with new people
3. build a team and begin gathering together.

For this reason, we recommend focusing on the first three fruitfulness markers and core practices (see below). These are the essentials that will lay strong foundations for future work on the other markers of fruitfulness.

Ways of measuring fruitfulness

In reviewing NPNPs, we want to encourage a breadth and depth of reflection, which is why our review questions encompass three different ways of measuring fruitfulness.

Firstly, we want to consider what can be measured, ie the aspects of community life which are quantifiable, such as number of people contacted, adherence to safeguarding policy, and community service offered. These quantifiable aspects are known as 'hard metrics'.

Secondly, we want to consider experience and characteristics, ie things which are qualitative, such as emerging themes and patterns, how inclusive the community

is, and where we have seen signs of God. These qualitative aspects are known as 'soft metrics'.

Thirdly, we want to gather the emerging stories of community life, which offer rich and varied insights. These stories are sometimes known as 'testimony'. Remember that not all stories have to have a 'happy ending' – God is present in all of life, and we can learn much from stories of conflict and difficulty (for more on conflict and transformation, see page 62).

Fruitfulness markers, core practices and review questions

There are nine fruitfulness markers and each has associated core practices that support them. We have also included review questions that can help you recognise, celebrate, and increase your fruitfulness.

1. Vision

Fruitfulness marker: A focused vision of who the New Place for New People is seeking to reach and the context in which a new ecclesial community will emerge.

Core practice: Clarifying and communicating the vision of the project.

The District NPNP Team (see page 11) will help you discern a location and a vision for your NPNP (see page 14 for more on discernment). Summarise the vision in one sentence and plan how you will communicate this vision with other people as the project is initiated and developed (see page 66 for more on storytelling). Use 'non-churchy' language that makes sense to different people, for example:

- **Jazz Community Church:** Improvising Life, Following Jesus.
- **Coffee Shop Sunday:** Meeting God in ordinary places.
- **Starting Point:** We're a community that holds on to the essentials so that people will meet Jesus through the gospel, conversation, and prayer.
- **Inclusive Gathering Birmingham:** We're a church committed to pursuing God's radical inclusion.

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** What context are we focusing on? Who and how many people are we reaching? How will we communicate our vision to others?
- **Soft metrics:** Is our vision clear and focused? Are we communicating our vision effectively to others?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they clarified, understood, shaped, or communicated the vision for our NPNP? What is that story, and where is God in it?

2. Contextually relevant

Fruitfulness marker: Any new ecclesial community will arise out of careful listening and will always remain connected to the wider community and aware of its needs.

Core practice: Connecting with new people and building the pioneering team.

Finding the first six to eight people to join the pioneering team (see page 11) is one of the key priorities of the six to twelve months prior to the launch of the new community. Pioneering alongside others not only increases your capacity, but also sets a pattern for diverse leadership, creates a culture of invitation, and ensures the NPNP is firmly rooted in the local community. Building the team will flow from connecting with the wider community, one-to-one meetings, and clear planning.

Create a rhythm of regularly connecting with new people in the wider community, using the suggestions on page 59. In connecting with new people, ensure you are intentionally listening to other people's stories (see page 56 for more on listening) and looking to invite people to one-to-one meetings.

Establish a pattern of weekly one-to-one meetings to build relationships with new people (see page 52 for guidance on one-to-ones). For employed full-time pioneers, between eight and ten one-to-one conversations should be scheduled every week. For employed part-time pioneers, this should be four to five conversations. Invite the interested people from your one-to-ones to gather informally (eg at a coffee shop) to begin to create community. Encourage those attending to invite others, in order to create an invitational culture from the beginning. At the end of every week, pray over the names of the people you've had one-to-ones with during the week and consider who might be invited to join the pioneering team. No doubt, some people will decline the invitation, but don't let that discourage you from inviting people to join in.

Stronger together

The pioneering team members can each independently connect with the wider community and undertake one-to-ones, but you should also aim to practice evangelism as a group, which will build trust and friendship. Group evangelism will also raise the profile of your NPNP, drawing more people in. Regular group evangelism will forge deeper bonds with the wider community and you will learn more about the community's character and needs. Think about how you can easily be recognised as a team (eg lanyards, badges, matching T-shirts). Practising evangelism together will help build the team's confidence – soon you will be seen as a natural and integral part of the neighbourhood. Group evangelism ideas include:

- Host a listening event (see page 57).
- Do a litter-pick or offer bag packing at a store.
- Take a stall at a market, fête or fair (you could do a bring-and-buy, a swap shop, a tea stand, give away balloons with messages on, offer an 'everything is free' stall, or anything else that plays to the team's strengths).
- Celebrate the festivals of the Christian year publicly (eg carol singing at Christmas, giving out pancakes or donuts on Shrove Tuesday, offering ashing on Ash Wednesday, organising an Easter egg hunt in a local park, collecting for a food bank at Harvest).

- Attend a big public event as a group (eg a Pride parade, bonfire night or carnival).
- Sponsor a concert series, host an exhibition, or have an open-mic poetry or music night.

See www.methodist.org.uk/evangelismlibrary for more ideas.

Plan it out

Make a plan for how you will connect with new people, undertake one-to-ones, gather a community and invite people to join the pioneering team. Set clear goals related to these for each month (you may want to attend three different community events each month, or have three people in the pioneering team by month five for example). Ensure you are systematically recording information related to your goals, such as which community events you have attended, the number of one-to-ones you have done, contact details for people who have expressed an interest, etc.

Further training and support on connecting with new people, conducting one-to-ones, and planning is offered through the Methodist Pioneering Pathway (see page 38).

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** How many people have we contacted? How many one-to-one meetings have we done? Who are we listening to? What community activities have we joined in with? In what ways have we served our community? What networks and partnerships have we established?
- **Soft metrics:** What themes and patterns are we noticing about the wider community from our listening? How will this listening influence our NPNP?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about connecting with the wider community, a powerful one-to-one meeting, or inviting someone to join in? What is that story, and where is God in it?

3. Gathered community

Fruitfulness marker: There will be moments of gathering the many individuals connected to the pioneer. From these gatherings, new patterns of worship will emerge that resonate with new people, and events will take place that build bridges to the wider community.

Core practice: Establishing regular patterns of meeting together as a pioneering team to develop the NPNP community.

In the first year the pioneering team should meet regularly (at least fortnightly) and activities should include:

- Reflecting on the vision and core values (use the NPNP theological underpinning and core values). What values will root your community?
- Building relationships by praying/reflecting on the Bible together.
- Sharing one another's passions and gifts.
- Identifying who has the potential to lead particular aspects of the work eg prayer, hospitality.

- Reflecting on how you develop a culture of invitation to expand beyond the pioneering team (how will you gather people and where, eg informal group coffee meetings, joining in with an activity together or planning an activity to which others can be invited?)
- Discerning how the pioneering team can continue to develop. For example, the pioneering team could meet with the pioneer's coach or a critical friend every quarter.
- Having honest, transparent conversations about financial generosity, long-term funding, and sustainability plans (see 'Financial sustainability' page 69), as well as budgeting for the project. This should involve inviting and making personal commitments to support the project by giving time, money, or talents (see page 69 for more on financial sustainability).
- Discerning what other teams are needed. Depending on the model, the pioneering team could be capped at 12-15 (or another smaller number) or could simply grow as large as possible in the first year in order to build a sense of momentum. As you grow, multiple 'working' teams may need to be set up depending on the nature of the project: greeting/welcoming/follow-up/discipleship, evangelism, finance, hospitality, etc.
- Identifying what will need to be in place before you launch the new community.
- Engaging with the review process – the pioneering team should be involved with the review process (see more below).

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** Have we identified people to join the pioneering team? Have we established a rhythm of meeting as a pioneering team? Have we secured our core values? What events and activities have we held? How are we exploring faith together? Are we effectively safeguarding one another? Do we have a basic budget and have we made personal commitments (giving time, money, talents) to support the mission?
- **Soft metrics:** Are we discovering the gifts, skills and needs of our community? Is our rhythm of meeting enabling us to become a community? Do our core values shape our life together? What has gone well? What have we learnt? When we meet are we celebrating, learning, and exploring faith effectively? How diverse and inclusive are we as a community? Are we developing healthy patterns of relating? Are we managing conflict in a healthy way?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about joining the pioneering team, helping shape patterns of worship, or an event that built bridges with the wider community? What is that story, and where is God in it?

4. New people

Fruitfulness marker: There will be new people making a profession of faith through baptism, confirmation, and membership.

Core practice: Nurturing testimony and faith development. For more on nurturing testimony, visit www.thestoryproject.org.uk

All This for You is a short book, available from Methodist Publishing, which unpacks the meaning of baptism using vivid images and thoughtful text. It is easy to read for those not familiar with church vocabulary and it provides the opportunity to reflect deeply on the lasting significance of the sacrament.

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** How many previously unaffiliated people are attending? How many people regard the NPNP as their faith community? How are we encouraging testimony and story-sharing? How many people are exploring faith? Are we explaining the journey of faith to baptism? Do people know how to connect through membership?
- **Soft metrics:** Are we developing an invitational culture? Where have we seen signs of God at work? Are we encouraging people to speak about their faith journey?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about baptism or new membership? What is that story, and where is God in it?

5. Deepening discipleship

Fruitfulness marker: There will be creative ways for those new people finding faith to move beyond profession, into lives shaped by following Jesus.

Core practice: Developing discipleship pathways. For more on creating discipleship pathways, see www.methodist.org.uk/travellingtogether

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** How are we introducing new people to faith? Have we established discipleship pathways? How many people are in small groups? How are we exploring the Bible together? How are we encouraging and practising prayer?
- **Soft metrics:** Are we open to the questions of others? Is our discipleship programme effective in enabling people to explore and deepen their faith? Are new people experiencing God? Is our faith in God impacting our lives? How are we practising our faith as a community?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about changes in their life due to their new faith, or about joining a small group, or about deepening/exploring/living their faith? What is that story, and where is God in it?

6. Social justice

Fruitfulness marker: Communities contributing to the transformation of society by offering loving acts of justice and service, and challenging injustice.

Core practice: Challenging and responding to injustice by listening to, amplifying and being changed by people experiencing injustice and marginalisation (both locally and globally). Offering acts of loving service within the local and global community.

For more on engaging with issues of justice and peace, see www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/social-and-climate-justice

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** What acts of service have we offered to our wider community? What injustices are present amongst us and the wider community? What other partners and networks are challenging injustice that we could/should join in with? What kinds of transformation are we seeking?
- **Soft metrics:** Are we challenging injustice effectively within our community and the wider community – what's changed? Who are we listening to and being challenged and transformed by?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have served or been served by others, or how they have seen transformation in the community from loving acts, or where we have worked for justice? What is that story, and where is God in it?

7. Connection to the wider Church

Fruitfulness marker: There will be a clear relationship of mutual accountability with the wider Methodist Church, and the project will inspire other churches and circuits in the district to start their own New Places for New People projects.

Core practice: Accountable to the wider church and contributing to the development of NPNPs in the district.

For more on connecting with the wider church, speak to your District NPNP Team, your District Chair or your Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathway regional lead.

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** How are we connected and accountable to the district/circuit? How do we plan to communicate the vision and learning from our community to inspire other people?
- **Soft metrics:** Do we feel connected and supported by the structures in place? If not, what do we need? What could we offer to the Wider Church?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have worked with the wider Methodist Church, or inspired/supported other NPNPs? What is that story, and where is God in it?

8. Long-term sustainability

Fruitfulness marker: The project will seek long-term financial sustainability by nurturing a culture of financial giving and/or entrepreneurship, and long-term sustainability of leadership by growing a base of volunteers and new leaders from beyond the initial planting team.

Core practice: Growing the leadership community and encouraging a culture of giving.

For more on financial sustainability, see page 69.

For more on building the pioneering team, see page 55.

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** How many people are volunteering their gifts, finances, energy? How are we developing a culture of giving? Do we recognise what resources we need for long-term sustainability?
- **Soft metrics:** Are we enabling people to offer their gifts and skills?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have contributed their time, money or skills to the NPNP, or how they have grown as a leader? What is that story, and where is God in it?

9. Replant or second plant

Fruitfulness marker: The project will seek to form an emerging idea of the next new ecclesial community that could be planted from this project or inspired by it.

Core practice: Actively discerning where to locate the next NPNP and praying about it regularly.

For more on discerning where to locate a new project, see page 14.

For more on praying for your NPNP, see page 40.

Review questions:

- **Hard metrics:** Are other people interested in what we are doing? Are we capturing our learning, and communicating this to other people?
- **Soft metrics:** Do we welcome the questions and observations of others? Are we communicating in ways that inspire other people to start an NPNP? Is the time right to extend our community to begin another?
- **Story:** Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they feel called to start another NPNP, or where they see the need for another NPNP? What is that story, and where is God in it?

The review process

The review process we recommend all NPNTs follow, and which funded NPNTs are expected to follow, is two-fold:

1. A review meeting every six months to review work and set specific goals based on the fruitfulness markers above.
2. An annual submission of responses to the review questions (see above).

Review meeting

Every six months a meeting should be scheduled to review, evaluate, and set specific goals for the NPNT based on the fruitfulness markers. The fruitfulness markers and associated questions should guide your meeting. This meeting could involve people from the District NPNT Team, the pioneering team, the management/steering group, the reference group/stakeholder forum, and/or the NPNT itself, depending on the current context of the NPNT. Enabling an atmosphere of prayer and openness will be important to support these conversations.

For the first review meeting (six months after the start of the project), we recommend the following agenda:

1. Welcome and prayers.
2. Discussion: Have we established the three core practices (clarify your vision, connect with new people, build a team and begin gathering together)?
3. Reflect on the review questions associated with the first three fruitfulness markers. Opportunity to respond to these questions in a variety of ways (eg open discussion, votes, writing comments on a flipchart, giving each person 30 seconds to respond).
4. A time of prayer/worship/silence for reflection.
5. Set clear priorities for the next six months. Remember: when it comes to priorities, less is more. The fewer priorities you have, the more progress you will be able to make.
6. Closing prayers.

For the second review meeting (12 months after the start of the project), we recommend the following agenda:

1. Welcome and prayers.
2. Discussion: Have we established/are we building on the three core practices?
3. Time to reflect on the review questions associated with the first three fruitfulness markers. Opportunity to respond to these questions in a variety of ways (eg open discussion, votes, writing comments on a flipchart, giving each person 30 seconds to respond).
4. Reflect on the additional core practices you need to develop the fruitfulness markers of deepening discipleship, new people, social justice, and connection to the wider church.
5. A time of prayer/worship/silence for reflection.
6. Set clear priorities for the next six months.
7. Closing prayers.

For subsequent review meetings, we recommend the following:

1. Widen your conversations to reflect on all the fruitfulness markers, using the review questions. Though the project may be focusing on one area (eg social justice or discipleship), healthy NPNPs will be 'well-rounded' and bear some fruit in all areas.
2. Always set clear priorities and goals for the next six months.
3. In year three, begin to focus on long-term sustainability.
4. In year four, begin to focus on replanting or second planting.

Annual submission

Responses to the review questions above will be gathered annually. This will enable the learning from local NPNP communities to be shared, and to develop and build the movement across the Connexion, with the aim of seeing an NPNP emerge in every circuit. Responses should be sent to the Project Officer, who will collate and analyse the information from across the Connexion and share trends and learning. For further details on how responses should be submitted contact the Project Officer on bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk

One-to-One Meetings as a Pioneer

We spend a lot of our time in 'what' conversations: we exchange pleasantries, talk about the weather, discuss our activities, seek or provide advice, etc. The one-to-one meeting may start here but quickly aims to go deeper than these normal patterns. It's not a commercial for our new project, an interview, or a pastoral counselling session. The one-to-one conversation is an opportunity to listen, build trust, and learn what the other person values.

What is a one-to-one meeting?

The one-to-one meeting is a short (30-45 minute), memorable, in-person conversation between two people to uncover, explore, and share the stories, core values, and motivating interests of each conversation partner. The goal of a one-to-one is to figure out the 'why' of the person you are talking to by inviting them to tell you – a significant piece of building a connection and a relationship.

One-to-ones are essential in ensuring your NPNP is contextually relevant, and in connecting with new people and building the pioneering team (see page 55).

Before the one-to-one

- 1) **Make a list of everyone you know in your city, town, village, or whatever the ministry context is.**

That's right: why not start with everyone? Put everyone you know on your list. These will be the people you reach out to first. If the idea of that list is simply too overwhelming, make a list of the leaders of important organisations in your community – schools, voluntary organisations, businesses, cultural groups, etc.

- 2) **Choose ten of these people and email (or phone) them to ask for a meeting.**

Invite a range of people. Explain who you are and your connection, clarify what you're inviting them to and why, and ask them to respond if they're available. Some of them will immediately respond: some of them won't. You could follow up on an email invitation a week later. Schedule the meeting and the meeting location. A public space such as a coffee shop could be an ideal place to meet.

During the one-to-one

- 3) **At the beginning of the meeting, thank the person for their time.**

Restate who you are and your context, and be clear that you will stick to the time set aside.

- 4) **Then move into the main part of the meeting: the conversation itself.**

Don't default to the previously mentioned conversational patterns that this relational meeting is not. Your goal is for the conversation to be memorable – for it to stand out from the hundreds of other conversations that happen in a week. So ask good questions, and follow up with more good questions



A public space such as a coffee shop could be an ideal place to meet.



that invite people to consider the 'why' of the answers they just gave. Share meaningfully too about your own commitments. At first, navigating the balance of deep listening, probing questioning, follow-up, and story sharing will feel clunky. But don't worry. The more relational meetings you do, the more natural they will become to your practice of ministry.

Here are some potential starter questions:

- Tell me the story of how you became a _____. Biography is the best place to start but push hard on the particulars; don't let it stay superficial.
- What does that mean for your life now?
- What's the main thing you're up to in your organisation?
- Who are your s/heroes?
- You seem angry/passionate/deeply committed to that. Where did that come from?
- What are you going to do about that anger/passion/conviction?
- If money were no object, what would you do?
- What's next for you?

Go for a probing question that risks troubling the easy, polite information exchange that we're used to. For example, 'What do you value about this community?' Ask big questions that have focus and spark. Don't forget, during the conversation you should find natural places to speak about your story, interests, and values. The one-to-one is not an interview.

Ending the one-to-one

5) **Five minutes before the end of the meeting, move to finish meaningfully.**

Resist the temptation to stay at the table for a long time. Finishing the meeting at the time agreed and on a high note increases the likelihood that you'll meet again in the future.

- Ask your conversation partner if they have any last questions for you.
- This is essential: ask your conversation partner if they know anyone else that you should be talking to. Ask the question and then be quiet and wait. More often than not, they'll suggest a couple of people. Then ask if they'd be willing to e-connect you with them. This is how you get more one-to-ones for the future.
- If you sense that there is some potential for future connection with your conversation partner, mention how interesting the meeting has been and then ask if you could follow up in a couple of months for another conversation.

After the one-to-one

6) **Record your conversation partner's basic information.**

Use whatever technology works for you to keep track of contacts. Follow the guidance on good practice in recording at www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/pastoral-care/confidentiality-guidelines

7) **Follow up with an email the next day.**

Thank your conversation partner, reiterate how helpful/enjoyable the conversation was, and ask whether anyone else has come to mind that you should reach out to. If they haven't yet e-connected you with the people they mentioned at the end of the one-to-one, ask them to do that.

8) **As you're doing one-to-ones regularly, figure out how to scan and organise the increasing 'data' you're getting from the meetings.**

This will help you to order to discern next steps for current and future projects.

9) **Repeat.**

Keep reaching out with more invitations for more one-to-ones. You should never run out of people to talk with.

What is a Pioneering Team?

A key element of the pioneer's work will be to gather, build and sustain a pioneering team. Teams do not just happen: they are created and built. They take time to grow and need to be nurtured to continue developing. Several key thinkers in pioneer ministry believe it is time to think less about individual pioneers and more about pioneering teams¹.

The role of the pioneering team (which includes the pioneer) is to do the core project work of pioneering the New Place for New People (NPNP). Remember that the pioneering team doesn't need to do everything – the District NPNP Team and/or management group should support you in clarifying the aims and core vision of the project, and other groups at a district or circuit level may be able to help with particular functions, eg communication, finance.

Building the pioneering team is one of the first tasks for the pioneer. The pioneer should establish a regular pattern of meeting people one-to-one (read more about one-to-ones on page 52) and then discern (using the characteristics below) who might be invited to form part of the pioneering team. When six to eight people have been identified, the team can begin meeting regularly and engaging in activities (see page 11). The continued good leadership of the pioneering team is a crucial part of the pioneer's ongoing work.

The pioneering team should include people who:

- are on a spiritual journey and want to invite others to explore
- are committed to and share a passion for the mission, vision, and values of the project (competing understandings of the mission will disable the project)
- have lived experience of the context (essential for Church at the Margins projects, to enable the project to be co-designed and co-delivered at every stage)
- are from diverse backgrounds and ages
- enjoy working collaboratively
- value authenticity and are willing to be vulnerable
- are people-orientated and willing to serve others
- can engage and respond to conflict healthily and creatively
- are innovative, creative, curious, and willing to take risks
- are orientated to the future.

¹ Mike Moynagh and Andy Freeman, *How Should We Start?* (Fresh Expressions Share Booklet, 2011).

How to Listen

Listening is a vital skill and a core practice in forming relationships as the New Place for New People (NPNP) develops. As you listen, always be clear and honest about who you are as an NPNP and share how and why listening is an important and consistent part of your practice. From the beginning, plan how you will listen to the wider community as a regular part of your activities (see page 59 for more on connecting with the wider community).

We listen to...

- value one another
- hear different voices and opinions
- learn about others
- hear their hopes, dreams, fears, and challenges
- hear what concerns people have
- hear what people are proud of
- form and develop relationships
- break down perceived stereotypes and barriers between people.

Where to listen:

- in the places people meet and gather: leisure centres, cafés, coffee shops, school gates, parks, community spaces, social media groups, community online forums, local interest gatherings, public noticeboards, etc
- while joining in with a community activity
- while volunteering for a charity or a foodbank
- while hosting an event (why not host an event where the sole purpose is to listen to those gathered, eg to discuss an issue of concern? Or host an event on behalf of a local group or club).

Examples of what good listening could look like

- Some pioneering team members visit a local school and listen to the headteacher. This leads to offering a free pop-up café outside the school, as parents wait to collect their children. Relationships are built and this leads to parents sharing their concerns and hopes for their local community.
- Each person in the pioneering team invites a small group of unaffiliated friends to a pub, café, etc to ask questions about their hopes for the community. The pioneering team members then write down what they have heard and share the combined observations with the rest of the pioneering team.
- The pioneering team commits to community litter picking every Saturday and to gathering afterwards in a local café to listen and ask questions (see examples

below). From the connections made, they invite the whole community to an event later in the month where the pioneering team share the key things they've heard from the community and ask the community what they might all do together to respond.

Listening to a community group by hosting an event

Be clear and honest about who you are and why you are hosting the event. Identify a shared concern or issue arising from the community/context and try to keep people focused on that without going off-topic.

Depending on the context, and how formal the event is, it might be helpful to set some guidance around listening well to each other, such as:

- Agreeing to be open to different opinions.
- Agreeing that only one person will speak at a time.
- Agreeing that everyone will participate.

After setting guidance, the three key elements for successful listening are: participation, positive questioning, and reflection.

1. Think about participation:

- How easy is it for people to contribute? (When listening to a group of people, provide several ways for people to respond, eg flipcharts, graffiti walls, smiley charts).
- How diverse are the people gathered?
- How will you notice who has not contributed?
- Recognise who holds the power in a conversation due to their position, relationships, experience, knowledge, or access to resources.
- Remember to be attentive to quieter voices.

2. Ask positive questions, such as:

- What do you enjoy about living here?
- What are you proud of?
- What is needed?
- What would help the well-being of the community?

3. Reflect on what you are hearing from your community:

- Build into your core leadership team meetings a space to share what you are hearing and noticing in your community.
- What patterns are emerging?
- What are you learning?
- What might God be saying to you?

How to listen well

- Be attentive to the words used.
- Notice the volume and tone of the words.
- Try to recognise and suspend your own assumptions and judgements.
- Notice the emotions expressed by the person speaking.
- When someone pauses and is silent, avoid rushing to fill the space.
- Notice the body language; is the person relaxed or apprehensive?
- What remains unspoken and seems to be unmentionable (the elephant in the room)?
- Notice when something upsets you, or surprises you, and focus on listening rather than your own response.
- Listen with the aim of understanding the other person.
- Use 'I' language when responding to someone.
- Honour confidentiality.
- Ask open-ended questions.

Signs you may not be listening well

- You are busy thinking of your response.
- You recognise yourself thinking, 'that's good, that's bad'.
- Fidgeting, tapping your fingers, glancing at your watch.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Thinking about something else (your next meal!)
- You constantly feel the urge to interrupt.
- You bring the conversation back to you!
- You don't ask any questions.
- You quickly become defensive and want to speak.
- Your body language is closed and defensive.
- You forget the name of the person you are talking to.



*Listen with the aim
of understanding the
other person.*



Connecting with the Wider Community

The pioneering team needs to become a community itself. The New Place for New People (NPNP) will form out of real relationships that will transform both your team and those they encounter. As a pioneering team you will work incredibly hard together: planning meetings, designing publicity, running social media, putting out chairs, running events, and tidying up afterwards. It is important that a team has a purpose and a life beyond the hard work.

Make sure you have times together where you can know more of each other's story, discover passions and dislikes, laugh and cry together. It is this healthy community that new people from the wider community will want to be part of.

Exploring faith and God together will also be a vital part of growing together as a team. Try to use approaches which enable everyone to get involved, eg share stories together; ask one another 'where have we seen signs of God this week?'; practice Lectio Divina; share a Bible story and encourage people to imagine themselves as a character in the story; share a favourite piece of music or a poem and reflect on what it means to you; use art and creativity to connect with God. Read more about developing the prayer life of the pioneering team on page 40.

The pioneering team needs to connect with the wider community

It can be tempting, in the early stages of pioneering, to invest all your time in building the pioneering team, assuming that 'wider outreach can come later'. However, the small steps of testing ideas and connecting with your community are essential in the early stages of your project as you develop your practices and rhythm of meeting, and cement a culture of being outward-looking, welcoming, evangelistic people.

We suggest exploring the following five ways of connecting with the wider community: serving, joining, listening, praying, and sharing testimony.

Serving your community

Serving your wider community without expecting anything in return will build trusting relationships for the long-term future and possible future partnerships. You could try:

- **Volunteering.** There are likely to be projects that need your help and time. Is there something like a timebank, night-shelter, foodbank, or befrienders group you could join?
- **Launching an imaginative project.** Could you begin a movement for good focused on an issue? Organise a litter pick, build a community garden, renovate a local play park...

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Ask one another, 'where have we seen signs of God this week?'

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- **Heading up a national initiative.** As you understand your community more, is there a creative national campaign you could highlight? The Big Lunch, Mental Health Awareness week or Climate Action...
- **Doing something lovely.** What could you do to brighten up someone's day – a blessing stone, craftivism, free cream teas or gifts at the bus stop?

Joining wider community group activities

If you want to get to know new people unaffiliated to the church, you need to meet them. And if you want new people to join your new community then they need to feel they know you. Consider joining a community or group that you are interested in or have a passion for, perhaps sport, allotments, reading, or local history. Regularly attend networking events, which are great places to connect.

Attend the things people care about – key community gatherings such as market days or a community festival, or meetings about key community changes or specific issues such as the local authority planning meetings or strategic developments.

Listening to your community

Listening to your community will strengthen relationships and enable you to better serve others. To learn more about listening to your community, see page 56.

Praying in the community

Being physically present in the community that is the subject of your prayers will bring fresh perspective and insight, compared to praying in a church or meeting room.

Take time as a team and as an individual to pray in the streets, paths and fields of your community – either while walking or moving through the area, or while at rest. This could include asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you go (“Speak Lord, your servants are listening”) or you might ask God to help you notice beauty, signs of creativity, hope, or a sense of connection. You may wish to pause and pray in places you feel drawn towards.

You could be focused in one place over a long period, divide up the streets of the community amongst the team, or ask God to lead you to the right place as you start each time. It is quite probable that there will not always be deep revelations while praying in the community, but it is the faithful commitment to pray for those you seek to begin a new community amongst that is important.



Take time as a team and as an individual to pray in the streets, paths and fields of your community.



Sharing testimony

As you get known in your community, and people encounter your love and service, there will be times when people want to know why you are doing it. It is at this point that, in a gentle way, testimony can be sensitively shared. It is not about a polished presentation, but a natural account of how God is working in, moving in, and changing your life. It takes practice to confidently share your testimony, so it is important that, as a team, you work on helping each other do this in a safe environment.

Digital presence, communication and evangelism

Every NPNP must take digital presence and communication seriously. It is now a part of everyone's life and a big part of how we experience the world. You can serve, join, pray, and share testimony in the digital world, as well as 'in real life'. Join online community Facebook groups and follow key people on social media. Answer questions and share recommendations. Begin a low-key social presence for the project that can tell the unfolding story of the new community as it emerges. Remember to take plenty of pictures of events and people (who are happy to be photographed) to populate your online content so that people get a visual sense of who and what you are as community.

Further resources

For more advice on digital evangelism, visit:

[www.methodist.org.uk/
digitalevangelism](http://www.methodist.org.uk/digitalevangelism)

Positive Working Together and Managing Conflict

In human relationships, conflict is to be expected, especially when people are experiencing change. The space to differ honestly in an atmosphere of grace and acceptance is the mark of a healthy community. Conflict becomes destructive when it is hidden, unresolved, or responded to in a way that distances people from one another and produces damaging behaviour.

Experience shows that there have been tensions between pioneer projects and the wider Church. This is to be expected, for one of the gifts of New People for New Places (NPNP) is that they can challenge assumptions about the way Christian community is expressed. Throughout the history of the Church, when new people have encountered the gospel, there have been tensions between what was established and what was emerging. It is in these moments that wise people have enabled the honest sharing of different perspectives for the good of the whole Church. A helpful Methodist Church resource is *Living with contradictory convictions* (see 'Further resources').

Ready for conflict

As you begin your NPNP project, it is important that you are ready for the conflict that is likely to arise and that you find patterns of handling it positively. This will enable difference to be a place of creativity that brings about growth and deepening of relationships: a moment that helps an NPNP be understood and integrated in the life of the wider church context. Here are some helpful procedures to put in place:

- Normalise practices that help greater numbers of people share in community conversations. Encourage people to speak up, and support those who find it more challenging to speak. Sometimes this requires not speaking so that others have a chance to share.
- In situations where someone raises a conflict, be ready to listen to what the person wishes to share. To be heard is sometimes all someone needs.
- Do not look for immediate solutions or fixes. It is better to gather information and enable conversation that will bring people together.
- Try to facilitate different people to work together in their tension rather than keep them apart.
- Enable mutual accountability: where both a project and the wider church understand the importance of what is required of them and what is required of others to support them.
- Enable consistently good communication between key wider church leaders and the pioneering team. This is vital in preventing tensions from escalating. A small reflection shared early on in a healthy flow of communication means an issue won't become bigger than it needs to.



As you begin your NPNP project, it is important that you are ready for the conflict that is likely to arise and that you find patterns of handling it positively.



- Acknowledge differences and affirm the value of people's perspectives to create a place where honest questions can be asked and answered.

Positive working together

Dealing well with conflict is not easy and many feel overwhelmed by the prospect. However, the skills can be learnt, and the Methodist Church is committed to empowering leaders in this area. The *Positive Working Together* resources provide information and training to equip leaders in every context of the Methodist Church.

One session that is particularly important is 'Growing through Change and Conflict'. It focuses on exploring your 'conflict style' (how you respond in difficult or tense situations), how conflict can escalate in a church context, and what tools and techniques can be used to de-escalate conflict.

Further resources

Living with contradictory convictions:

www.methodist.org.uk/conferencereports2006

Downloads and information on training events:

www.methodist.org.uk/positiveworkingtogether

or contact your local Learning Network team.

Safeguarding

New Places for New People (NPNP) projects and communities will be varied in their approach and contexts. The principles and practices of the Methodist Church safeguarding policy must be followed at all times.

1. All NPNPs should consult and follow the Methodist Church safeguarding policies and procedure guidance (see table below).
2. The NPNP safeguarding policy should be written in consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer and reviewed annually.

The safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance of the Methodist Church have been created in order to:

Promote	Prevent	Protect
Promote the well-being of children, young people and adults through a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding, within clearly assigned roles.	Prevent harm through best practice in work with children, young people and adults and the creation of a culture of informed vigilance.	Protect through responding effectively when safeguarding concerns arise.

Questions to ask yourself

The following list is not exhaustive and is intended as a starting point for your work on safeguarding in your context.

- Which trustee body holds responsibility for this NPNP in terms of safeguarding, eg district/circuit meeting/church council?
- Who is the designated safeguarding lead for the NPNP?
- What roles in the NPNP require a DBS check?
- Which roles need to complete Foundation/Advanced Safeguarding training?
- What risk assessments for gatherings/activities are required (eg children and young people, gatherings/meetings, health and safety)?
- What policies and procedures are needed for digital communication?
- Are you aware of the impact of abuse, and good practice in responding well to survivors of abuse?
- Do people know how to respond to a safeguarding complaint, and the process for making a referral if necessary?
- Are you aware of the process for managing someone with a safeguarding contract if needed?
- How will you meet the criteria for data protection and GDPR (including use of photography and video recordings)?
- How will you enable the NPNP safeguarding policy to be easily accessible to all participants?

Further resources

Methodist Church safeguarding policies and procedure guidance, as well as templates of Methodist Church safeguarding policies, are available at: www.methodist.org.uk/safeguardingpolicy/

Owning and Sharing the Story

“The difference between data and story is this: Data lists what happened; story expresses how and why it happened.”¹

People love to tell and hear stories because they help us reflect on our place in the world, to identify with the characters, and ask questions of where we find meaning in what unfolds. And at the heart of the Christian faith is the story of God’s love and redemption that invites all people to respond. That story is told in the Bible and in the living people whose faith we encounter.

Telling the story of a New Places for New People (NPNP) brings life and character to the important work of reflecting, learning and evaluating. Good storytelling builds bridges with others, raises awareness of the NPNP, encourages others to join in or offer support, affirms those who have worked for the project, and is a wide-reaching and powerful way of sharing good news and inspiring others to start an NPNP too.

Here are some helpful pointers on how to tell a good story...

1. Start with God and with people

The story of God’s interaction with humankind is discovered in the Bible in the form of poems, history, codes of law, and parables. The gospels provide many perspectives on the stories of Jesus’ life, which reveals the good news of God’s love for all. The love of God is also revealed in the story-filled world of the human community, including within the story of your NPNP community. As you reflect on your context, what stories of God and people are emerging?

- God guiding the pioneer and pioneering team.
- The new people who have joined your community and encountered the grace of God.
- The people from the local community who have supported you as part of their discipleship.
- The people who have prayed, supported and advocated for the project out of their deep faith and love.

2. Tell stories of transformed relationships

Each NPNP has a unique story that adds depth and colour to the emerging picture of NPNPs in the Methodist Church. These stories will be diverse and varied, reflecting the different communities and the people they serve. We celebrate the way each community will look wonderfully different, while the same desire for new people to be transformed by an encounter with the love of God is central in all. As you narrate the story of your NPNP community we encourage you to tell the story through the lens of relationships...

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We celebrate the way each community will look wonderfully different, while the same desire for new people to be transformed by an encounter with the love of God is central in all.

”

¹ Robert McKee, *Storynomics: Story-Driven Marketing in the Post-Advertising World* (Hachette, USA, 2018), p xix

- **With God:** How has the NPNP enabled someone to become more aware of their relationship with the one who loves them, and to begin an active journey of faith?
- **With ourselves:** How has a person begun to understand themselves as precious and started to take seriously their human flourishing?
- **With community:** In what ways has an encounter with God enabled an individual to have better and more life-giving relationships with others, both locally and globally?
- **With creation:** How has the community learnt to live gratefully for the wonder of creation and been compelled to be good stewards of it?

3. Tell stories of key moments and turning points

Captivating stories are full of ups and down, jeopardy and triumphs, challenges faced and overcome, and characters facing adversity in pursuit of their goal. We invite you to highlight key moments for the NPNP which signified a breakthrough, an affirmation of a tough choice, or the point at which the vision began to be realised. Here are some examples:

- The one-to-one conversation that opened the door to a series of new opportunities.
- The first community event when lots of people you had built relationships with attended.
- The way a simple rhythm of prayer established in the team.
- The moment the first new person joined your gathering.

Consider what it was about that turning point that was so significant. Why did it mean so much? What happened as a result?

4. Tell stories with integrity

Honest storytelling

It is important to tell the story of how things have gone well, but it is often the mistakes and the things that did not quite work that will encourage others more. A fruitful community has as many stories of trying and failing, of complicated relationships and events that missed the mark, as it does of things running to plan.

The honest sharing of these moments of struggle, frustration, and feeling overwhelmed will enable the beauty of what has started to shine more brightly. A story that makes everything seem easy is more likely to make people feel that they cannot do it. A story of ordinary people trusting, failing, and trying again will inspire more people to begin something new.

Whose story is it to tell?

There can be a temptation to tell someone's story on their behalf and though this may be with the best intentions, because of our biases, this can distort the truth and also take from the person whose story it is. As your NPNP community engages new people, think of creative ways you can enable them to articulate their story of why the community is important and how faith has become a part of their life. Some good questions to ask:



A fruitful community has as many stories of trying and failing, of complicated relationships and events that missed the mark, as it does of things running to plan.



- Who does this story belong to?
- Why do we want to tell this story?
- Are we manipulating this story in any way?
- Are our stories from a diverse range of sources?
- Do we only tell positive stories?
- What can we learn from sharing stories of things not going as we had planned or hoped?

Telling the story safely

In every community people need to be protected. As the story of your community is told, these simple guidelines need to be followed.

- Permission needs to be sought to use someone else's story.
- Only use the details you have permission to share. In most cases it is wise to only use first names, and sometimes you may be required to use a pseudonym.
- If a child is telling their story, permission needs to be given by their parent or guardian.
- When images are used, you must get written consent from the featured people (and parents/guardians of featured children). See 'Further resources' below.
- When telling stories via social media, ensure you're following best practice. See 'Further resources' below.

It's not just words!

A well-written story is important, but remember it is easier than ever to take a picture, record a film, or create a piece of music or prose. It takes planning and effort to regularly collect different media content but the benefit is a creative resource to draw on to share your NPNP story, populate online media and reflect on your journey with God as a community.

Further resources

A helpful guide to telling your story can be found on the Story Project website: www.thestoryproject.org.uk/resources/how-to-build-a-culture-of-lay-testimony-in-your-church

For consent forms for images: www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/forms

Social media guidance: www.methodist.org.uk/socialmediaguidelines

Financial Sustainability

The first month of a pioneering project might include a variety of important activities: hosting a meal for early stakeholders and supporters to talk about the new project, printing a survey to give out as you knock on doors to meet your neighbours, designing an art engagement project for the school assembly, hiring a hall and organising food and music for your first community party, and of course, buying cups of coffee for as many new people as possible – to listen to their stories and share yours.

All of these relational commitments are absolutely crucial and also extremely fun! And though they are quite diverse, they all have at least one thing in common: **they all cost money.**

If you sit down with twenty people a month for coffee and conversation, the annual coffee bill could be significant – and you're only getting started! We recognise that each context will be different, but all will need to be attentive to financial resourcing.

There is a temptation in pioneering and planting projects to let money be the last thing you worry about, the last action item in the pioneering team to-do list. We rationalise and convince ourselves: 'If we get the vision right, if we just focus on meeting people, if we have the most beautiful website or most profound statement of welcome, we won't need to worry about money. It'll all work itself out.'

Of course, this is not true. One of the most common mistakes made by pioneering projects (and existing churches, too) is not talking honestly, candidly, and positively about money from the beginning. Unbelievably creative pioneering community projects close all the time – not because they weren't making a difference in people's lives, nor because they weren't clear about their reason for existence, but because they ran out of money.

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If you sit down with twenty people a month for coffee and conversation, the annual coffee bill could be significant.

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Small conversations early on

Discussing finance from the beginning of the NPNP is important as a regular aspect of the community's development and growth. Talking to individuals and the whole community regularly and in small ways avoids a conversation about it in a crisis situation.

Having a clear understanding and set of related actions for how your project will steward finances is not only good business practice, it is foundationally linked to your mission, your discipleship, and your theology. Good financial practice is linked to our understanding of who God is, who we are in relation to God, and what the ultimate promise and purpose of life are.

Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). This is not an obscure verse; in fact, how we steward money – including our possessions, economic practice, material and financial generosity – is a major theme in Scripture, right up there with love. We believe the two are connected.

So, from the very beginning of your project, discuss prayerfully and confidently how financial generosity will be integrated publicly and clearly into your discipleship pathways and measures of fruitfulness. Instead of speaking of giving in general terms ("we will all give in different ways, and that's fine"), be explicit that financial generosity is part of discipleship – we offer our prayers, our presence, our financial gifts, our service, and our witness. For increasingly committed disciples, it's not pick-and-choose.

Church at the Margins

NPNPs in economically marginalised communities will need to be sensitive to the potential limitations of financial resources in their communities. It will be important to encourage financial giving appropriate to the resources available. Considering the costs of activities will be an important aspect of community life to ensure they are accessible to everyone, and no one is excluded due to the cost of an event or activity.

An attitude of gratitude

As your pioneering team begins to take shape, a helpful way to begin the discussion about money is to reflect on the seed missional funding the new project has received from the district or circuit. This money is an investment to help you get started, but it's not a transaction. It's a gift, a sign of the abundance of God who is the source of everything good, and also a sharing in the faithfulness of those who have come before us – forebears whose financial sacrifices over the centuries mean that there is something now to provide for new things, new missional experiments. At the beginning, praise God for this generosity, help the pioneering team to practise gratitude, and reflect on what honouring and stewarding this gift might mean for your new community as you begin to establish discipleship rhythms. How might this generosity beget more generosity? How is financial generosity part of your mission and ministry? How is it connected to helping the kingdom of God come about? What is your understanding of fundraising and stewardship, and how will you practise that? How can you begin to take responsibility for your financial life in ways that expect sustainability but more than that, in ways that expect you to fund new things in the future?



Good financial practice is linked to our understanding of who God is, who we are in relation to God, and what the ultimate promise and purpose of life are.



Who can help?

Your pioneering team will need to learn to think and communicate clearly about finances in a way that people respond to. It is important to have, as part of your team, someone who can hold the day-to-day finances in perspective and help forecast the finance required for the future as the NPNP grows in reach and ministry.

Practising giving and stewardship

Consider the following in creating a culture of giving and responsible stewardship:

How are you, as a leader in this community, modelling the spiritual discipline of giving? Could you practise tithing or move towards it? What does increasing faithfulness in financial generosity look like? Share testimony about the practise of giving and how your own commitment has been both a challenge and a gift. Never ask people to make a commitment that you're not willing to make yourself.

How will you discuss finances in pioneering team meetings (and meetings with your line manager, coach, management/steering group)? How will financial matters be incorporated into your mission plan/strategy?

How will you build a budget for your NPNP? How will you share it with others, so they can understand the finances? Your District Treasurer will be able to offer support in this.

How will you manage the day-to-day finances of the project? You may need to open a current account. Your District Treasurer will be able to offer support in this.

How will finances be part of discipleship pathways? How can people learn about, practise, and share the joys and challenges of giving? Consider using a resource such as *Holy Habits* (www.holyhabits.org.uk), which includes a chapter on 'Sharing Resources'.

How are you helping the project understand its ongoing financial development in relation to the initial Connexional funding? How are you stewarding the community's finances in a way that will make it possible for you to fund other projects in the future?

Possible revenue streams

Funding can come from many places; consider the following:

- Ask community members to make prayerful, reflective, regular financial contributions to the project as part of their discipleship.
- Make it easy to give. Carrying cash is becoming less and less common, so innovative ways such as contactless payments, text codes and online giving are popular ways to encourage one-off payments.
- Grow a supporter network. Explore creative conversations with people who are interested but not a part of the community. Perhaps local Christians or other churches who want to support your vision.
- 'Tent-making ministry' is slowly emerging as a way for NPNP leaders to fund their role. Leaders have paid employment of some other kind outside of the Church. They are not paid to lead the NPNP but instead volunteer their time for this. Are there skills and business opportunities that key leaders could develop?

- Becoming entrepreneurial is a way of developing an income stream for the NPNP. Could it be a product or service you sell? A shop or café? Is there a space in premises you own that could be rented?
- Applying for grants is a potential, if at times complicated, funding stream. There are Christian grant-giving organisations and other community-based funders who may support elements of your community's life. However, it is better to develop a culture of giving rather than depend on a culture of grant applications.

Further resources

Methodist Insurance guidance on fundraising:

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/church-fundraising

Helping church plants explore how to become financially sustainable:

www.stewardship.org.uk/church-planting-pathway

How to Set Up Funding Processes for Circuit-led NPNGs

A District will need to have launched one or more district-led New Places for New People (NPNG) projects before it can fund any circuit- or local-church-led NPNGs. For ease of reference, throughout this chapter we will refer to circuits only (to save writing out 'circuit or local church' every time), but please remember that the following could all apply to NPNGs started by a local church too.

Once a District has launched a district-led NPNG, it can begin to fund circuit-led NPNGs. The funding process for circuit-led NPNGs will mirror the funding process for district-led NPNGs (see page 5). The only difference will be a change of roles:

1. The District NPNG Team (see page 11) will guide and accompany Circuit NPNG Teams* in their preparation work, fulfilling the same role of partner/advisor that Evangelism and Growth staff occupy in the funding process for district-led projects.
2. Circuit NPNG Teams will initiate the circuit-led projects by discerning a context, vision and focus for the project; playing a role in submission for funding (see below); and leading on any necessary recruitment (ie a similar role to that played by the District NPNG Team in the funding process for district-led projects).

* The 'Circuit NPNG Team' referenced here and elsewhere in this chapter could be any group of people committed to pioneering an NPNG. It may involve lay volunteers, paid lay workers, presbyters, and/or deacons. Though it may not always include the Superintendent, the group should have the support of the Superintendent for their project.

Funding process set-up

The District NPNG Team will work with Evangelism and Growth staff to develop a vision for NPNG in their district, which will include:

- prioritising starting a new Christian community in every circuit, by making it an integrated part of the district's mission plan/strategy
- encouraging and equipping circuits and local churches to launch NPNGs
- sharing learning and best practice on pioneering with circuits and local churches
- exploring how the district will support an ongoing, long-term commitment to starting new Christian communities in circuits across the district in a variety of contexts, including Church at the Margins
- creating a policy and process to ensure the equitable allocation of funds to eligible projects (including what will happen if there are more eligible projects than there is funding available).

The District NPNG Team will then share this vision at Synod (or similar gatherings of circuit leadership teams) to inspire circuits and encourage them to apply for funding.

How circuits access funding

As the funding process for circuit-led NPNPs mirrors the funding process for district-led NPNPs, it includes the same seven steps: preparation, presentation, completing the Funding Submission Form, confirmation, recommendation, audit and approval, and funding.

Every district has been allocated funding for circuit-led NPNPs. The amount allocated is different from district to district, based on the District Advance Fund (DAF) formula. Funding will need to be accessed by districts through this new process by the end of 2025/2026. All circuit-led NPNP projects should be match-funded or match-resourced (for more information on match-resourcing, contact the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) at bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk Across the Connexion, at least 60 per cent of funding should be used for Church at the Margins projects).

Preparation

The Circuit NPNP Team, in company with the District NPNP Team, will begin (at any time) a journey of support, prayer, and discernment in order to design and prepare for their circuit-led NPNP project. We recommend the circuit NPNP team meet with the District NPNP Team at least three times during this time of preparation. This may involve building a Circuit NPNP Team, discerning where to locate the project (see page 14), and undertaking some experimentation and testing of ideas.

Presentation

In order to claim this funding, the District NPNP Team should produce a presentation and complete the Funding Submission Form (found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnpn). The purpose of this is two-fold: to tell the story of the project to all of those who have an interest, and to evidence how the eligibility criteria agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee (found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnpn) have been met.

The District NPNP Team will select three to four key influencers/leaders within the district (eg people with the potential skill and vision to lead or inspire future circuit projects) to form a 'panel' with one or more of their own team members. The panel will hear the project vision, ask questions, and offer feedback to help the project be as good as possible. The presentation should focus on the questions and headings found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnpn

If the panel consider the project has not met the eligibility criteria, they can ask for more preparation work to be undertaken. For minor work, they may choose not to reconvene the panel, but to receive assurance that the work has been undertaken via another means (eg via email). For major work, the panel should reconvene and receive a second presentation.

Funding Submission Form

Once completed, the Funding Submission Form (found at www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnpn) should be countersigned by the District Chair, and then submitted to the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) on or before:

- **1 August** (in time for the October meeting of the Mission Committee – see page 75)
- **1 March** (in time for the May meeting of the Mission Committee – see page 75)

Confirmation

The Funding Submission Form will be reviewed by the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) to confirm that the NPNP meets the eligibility criteria. If the Project Officer considers the project has not met the eligibility criteria, they can ask for more preparation work to be undertaken. For minor work, they may choose not to reconvene the panel or receive a second set of submission paperwork, but to receive assurance that the work has been undertaken via another means (eg via email). For major work, the panel should be reconvened and a second set of submission paperwork should be undertaken.

Recommendation

When the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) is satisfied the NPNP meets the eligibility criteria, they will recommend the project to the Mission Committee for funding.

Audit and approval

The Mission Committee, at either their October or May meeting, will audit and approve the recommendations. This audit will be an overview, not a detailed examination – the Mission Committee will be encouraged to ask searching questions to promote accountability, but not to review extensive paperwork. The Mission Committee can ask for further work to be done in any of the previous stages, and can withhold funding until that work has been completed. The Mission Committee can also decide not to fund a given project, in which case clear and thorough feedback will be provided to all parties on why that decision was taken. There is no process to appeal the decisions of the Mission Committee.

For Connexional Year 2021/2022, the Strategy and Resources Committee will audit and approve, as the Mission Committee has not yet been set up.

Funding

When the Mission Committee approves a project, the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution) will liaise with colleagues in the Finance and Resources Team to release funds within four weeks.

Questions:

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Project Officer (Funding Allocation and Distribution at bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk or visit www.methodist.org.uk/fundingnnp).