

SOUTHEND AND LEIGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

Registered Charity No 1134248

Superintendent Minister – Rev Peter Moorhouse

Minutes of the 104th Circuit Meeting (CM) Held at Thundersley Methodist Church, Kennington Avenue, Thundersley on Monday 11th June 2018

Present: Revv Chapman, Hooks, Moon (part time) and Thomford, , Pastor Mayo, 5 Circuit Stewards, 4 Circuit Officers, 1 Rep to synod, 24 members representing 13 churches. (39 voting members.)

1. **Opening devotions** were led by the Rev Christopher Sandy.
2. Rev David Chapman, Chair Beds, Essex & Herts, introduced himself to the Circuit Meeting (CM) – advising he is acting Superintendent during the Rev Peter Moorhouse sabbatical.
3. **Apologies for absence** were received from 20 members. The register was completed.
4. **Welcomes, Greetings, Condolences etc:** CM welcomed Kristin Kilgour to her first CM. CM agreed to send a letter of condolence to Stan Rae following the death of his wife and to Michael and Kay Deedman following her illness.
5. **Minutes of the 103rd Meeting** having been circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.
6. **Matters arising** – None.
7. **Notice of items to come under AOB** – Epworth trip.
8. **Mission Updates**

8.1 Circuit Mission Initiatives

8.1.1 Circuit Mission Enabler. Report circulated prior to the meeting. Luke Dobson reminded CM that he will be circulating adverts for forthcoming events. He is also trying to establish if there is a preference for Circuit wide events or for events run at and for specific local churches – feedback welcome. He is available to run local events, visit housegroups and other groups to share and/or lead the various training and studies available. He will, with Rev Hannah Bucke and Keith Norman, be running again the “Chaplaincy Everywhere” course - on 21/22 September – this will be run as a mentoring programme to support people in their own context.

8.1.2 Healing Ministry – sessions continue on the 4th Wednesday of the month at Benfleet. A recent meeting had a slight change of format to include a praise and worship session, which was well received. CM members were asked to ensure that the circulated posters are displayed and sessions were regularly advertised.

8.1.3 Nightshelter Following the last CM Norman Hooks had met separately with the UMC folk and with Andrew Hyde and reps from the volunteer teams to discuss the issues around property usage and clearance. Shortly he will bring the parties together to discuss the needs and identify a plan to take the work forward. It remains the intention to be involved in the scheme for the coming season.

8.1.4 Bible Month – running through June – first sessions complete. Some issues with the Eventbrite booking which Chris Sandy has resolved.

8.2 Local Churches

8.2.1 Hadleigh – Working to establish events with the local Churches Together group – ran a Pentecost Parise Café which attracted 25 people - an encouraging start. It is hoped to host further events during the year.

8.2.2 Canvey – Canvey Churches United – held a walk of witness on Good Friday and a united service for Pentecost, hosted at Canvey church. At the church Rev Peter Perowne led a service involving Testimony and a Love Feast – some 95% gave testimony. 10th June was the Church Anniversary – service led by Rev Steve Wild – who encouraged all to hand out tiny crosses – which he provided – to help people think more about the cross and its meaning - a very encouraging time. The church runs Messy Church afternoons – attendance varies from 3 to 30 – but they will persist. They hold regular Saturday monthly outreach mornings – in one they were open to show the Royal Wedding. The church will shortly host a District Brownie rally.

8.2.3 Highlands – Had a well received Community Day, run by Julie Peake. They continue to work with Mencap Showstoppers. Encouraged by their progress in reaching the community.

8.2.4 Thorpe Bay – The church has developed and adopted an excellent Growth Plan. This has resulted in the beginning of Café church on the 1st Sunday of the month; a midweek service in the 3rd week of the month; a Memory Worship service (ably assisted by Wesley); a relaunch of their “Kids’ Club”; and the Youth Club (unchurched young people) taking an Alpha course with great enthusiasm.

8.2.5 Benfleet – the Allegro singers (who give concerts to raise money for local charities) have adopted the Benfleet church and now rehearse there. Their next concert will be raising funds for a room at Southend University Hospital for families of those receiving end of life care.

9. **Local Preachers’ (LPs) & Worship Leaders’ (WLs) Meeting** – Report circulated prior to the meeting. CM noted the contents of the report and approved the recommendation of the LP & WL Meeting to reinstate Jill Campbell as a Local Preacher.
10. **Matters Referred by Conference or District** - None – CM was reminded Conference meets at the end of June in Nottingham, needs our prayers and may well refer matters to us for future action.

11. **Reports from Circuit Offices and Committees**

11.1 **Circuit Stewards** – Report circulated prior to CM. The meeting:-

- Was reminded of arrangements for the Ordination of Rev Chris Sandy on 1st July in Newark.
- Noted that the application for a District grant to help fund the Circuit Mission Enabler had been successful.
- Approved the appointment of Tina Gowers as Circuit Steward from 1st September 2018 on the recommendation of the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT).
- Was notified that Margaret Chipandambira is candidating for Methodist ministry – the September CM will hear her testimony and be asked to vote on the matter.
- Received an update from Pam Smith on the May Prayer Relay – which had been encouraging – outputs were available from Pam Smith

11.2 **Circuit Treasurer** - Report and Accounts for the 9 months to May 2018 circulated prior to the meeting.

11.2.1 **Town Centre ministry** - The meeting expressed concern that the Connexional Grant application for the Town Centre ministry had not been successful – noting the impact on overall finances. It was understood there had been a significant number of applications so scrutiny had been strict. It is possible to re-apply and provide more detailed plans for the development and expansion of the work, eg to other “town centres” in the Circuit. The District will review their position on this work (which they do endorse) at their next meeting.

11.2.2 **Elm Road** CM noted that since last CM the position regarding options for future uses of the manse had changed and the approach had needed to be adjusted. CM noted and endorsed the direction of travel towards the sale. TMCP (Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes), as Custodian Trustees will make the final decision on which offer (sale price) to accept; as Managing Trustees the CM needs to proceed with its agreed approach. Patrick Smith was concerned CM did not have sufficient information on which to base a decision because:

- The first Quality Surveyor’s Report (QSR) had not been circulated to all members.
- The second QSR had similarly not been circulated.
- CM has not been advised of the value of a figure suggested by a local developer.

CM was advised that whilst it is essential for TMCP to view the QSRs and valuations it is not essential for all the Managing Trustees to see them, and indeed may infringe on elements which are “Commercial in Confidence” if figures were to reach the public domain. It was agreed that the QSRs should be circulated.

Patrick Smith had further concerns that:

- The Charity Commissioners could pursue trustees deemed to have made decisions without having adequate information.
- The sale was agreed originally to allow the purchase of a new manse and to fund additional staff – current valuations mean this will not necessarily be possible – so he felt the sale should be halted until a full, new proposal was tabled.

In response David Chapman advised that Charity Commissioners' action would be in relation to the Custodian Trustees (ie TMCP), not the Managing Trustees (ie CM). It was felt that whilst the valuation now being achieved would not allow the exact initial plan, receiving an original valuation at final point of sale could never be ensured, and that the sale process should proceed as outlined in the Treasurer's report.

It was agreed that the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) need to establish a financial strategy to move the mission forward in the light of current valuations. As Managing Trustees CM needs to determine whether to keep or sell; the safeguard being that it is the duty of the Custodian Trustees to determine which offer to accept.

CM agreed a proposal (proposer Keith Norman, seconded Roger Kingston) that "CM confirms its intention to sell the Elm Road manse as part of its strategy to progress ministry and mission". Motion carried (1 against).

11.2.3 **Finance** CM noted that a Connexional response is still awaited in relation to payment of Statutory Sick Pay for Rev Julia Monaghan. It also noted that the Circuit Administrator remains on long term sick leave (from 10th April until probably mid-July). Circuit Stewards are working to put further cover in place for her work.

CM noted the possibility of a need for perhaps a 5% increase in assessments and concerns were expressed as Treasurers have budgeted on the premise that assessments would remain at current levels for 2018/19 – this would need to feed into the planning of the financial strategy, which needs to be realistic and achievable. CM also needs to remember that for some people these changes impact their personal situations and there must be pastoral concern and support for them. CLT will endeavour to have a submission for the September CM.

The 10% increase in the required contribution to the Methodist Church Fund and the District Assessment were a matter of concern for some, suggesting the increase indicates a lack of central control on spending. CM was advised that there are formulae in place for both and central control over budgets is via Conference. The formulae are based in part on staffing levels within the circuits and are impacted by legislative demands of, eg Safeguarding activity and resourcing.

11.3 **Connexional Funds Treasurer** – no report due this meeting.

11.4 **Property** – report circulated prior to meeting – no questions or comments.

11.5 **Manses Co-ordinator** – Covered by Elm Road under Finance above. CM noted that in the Administrator's absence processes need to be in place to handle ongoing maintenance items.

11.6 **Mission with Youth Forum** – No report.

11.7 **Circuit Meeting Secretary** – Report circulated prior to meeting – CM reminded to submit outstanding GDPR consent forms and the Church Questionnaires for the Directory production.

12. **Safeguarding** Report circulated prior to the meeting. A full schedule of training sessions will be circulated shortly – events are planned at Thundersley (July), Benfleet (September), Belfairs (October) and another at Trinity (Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley having received training last year). The new DBS verification is working well and the overall Church's Policy has been amended - Rob Gray will bring a revised Circuit Policy to the September CM for approval. The District has made good progress in incident reporting and in reviewing Safeguarding Contracts (formerly "Covenants of Care") which need to be in place for people who are at risk in churches due to offending or other worrying behaviours – all these contracts are being reviewed in the light of the Conference decision to establish a national register of those subject to a contract.

Rob Gray agreed to circulate a list of who needs training – effectively any new appointees plus those trained five years ago who need refresher training. A question was raised regarding whether ecumenical contacts could attend the training – this is fine, but they need to ensure the training is appropriate for their denomination’s Safeguarding requirements.

A query was raised regarding ministers arranging pastoral visits and whether these should only be undertaken accompanied by the pastoral visitor – David Chapman advised ministers need to be mindful of potential risks, assess the situation and give a proportionate approach for their own and the individual’s protection. Common sense says proceed unless issues or problems are anticipated.

13. Local Churches’ Business

13.1 **Wesley** – Report circulated prior to meeting - CM approved the work required by the quinquennial to the roof and stone mullions – the £16K will be met from church funds.

13.2 **Chalkwell Park** – Report circulated prior to meeting – CM approved the work required to repair and replace some windows within the property – the £8K will be met from church funds.

14. Dates of Next Meetings - Tuesday 11th September at Belfairs, Wednesday 14th November 2018 at Highlands, Thursday 14th March 2019 at Wesley and Monday 10th June 2019 at Thundersley - all at 8pm (***Motions and written Reports to be with the Secretary at least three weeks before the Meetings, please***)

15. Other Business

CM was reminded that a trip to Epworth is planned for 8th September 2019 – a mini bus will be booked – only 11 have indicated an interest so far – CM members were asked to advertise the event in their churches using the posters provided.

16. There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer at 9.40pm.