

Toward a 2020 Vision

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Introduction

by the Revd Bruce Thompson Chair of the Lincolnshire Methodist District

'You....will realize the Vision (not the idle wish) of your heart, be it base or beautiful, or a mixture of both, for you will always gravitate toward that which you, secretly, most love. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your own thoughts; you will receive that which you earn; no more, no less. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your Vision, your Ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration.'

James Allen 'As a Man Thinketh' (quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All Ministers & Other Servants, Upper Room 1983)

Allen's book was written in 1902 so we may not choose to put it in those exact terms today but there remains a sense in which we will, by the grace of God, bring into being that which is at the forefront of our mind.

Over the past two years I have travelled across the District preaching in more than half the churches and chapels as well as attending a variety of meetings, breakfasts, fellowships and social events. It became clear early on that the District needed to formulate its vision, one that would carry us through this decade. So I met with a small number of key persons to bounce ideas and consider how we might go about achieving that District Vision.

At the 2012 Spring Synod I shared what I called my View of the District which I merely intended to be a catalyst for conversation, discussion and reflection. On that occasion I offered a framework for what may yet form part of a possible vision of and for the District. The importance of Identity, Cooperation and Engagement were the headings for that framework; I could have used the terms Connexionalism, Ecumenism and Mission but what I hoped to achieve was a broader understanding of those areas than had become the norm for so many.

I received much support and encouragement in the following weeks.

By the 2012 September Synod my view had developed, thanks to further conversations, into Toward a 2020 Vision. Still using the three terms that were acting as a framework for future consultation we considered 'Toward a Clearer Identity', 'Toward Greater Cooperation' and 'Toward More Meaningful Engagement;' added to that were two further areas 'Lay Formation' and 'Ministerial Formation'. Five District Officers were charged with the task of engaging in consultations across the District one to each of the areas of consideration and consider what the priorities were for the District and whether they were feasible. The officers were invited to report back by the September 2013 Synod.

We are now at that stage when we must consider their findings. The work undertaken has been immense and we owe our appreciation to Martin Amery, Jane Bingham, Liz Childs, Lorna Valentine and Sue Wilkins.

The Circuit Stewards' Forum has asked for a meeting of all CLTs which will be a significant occasion as we consider the findings of this year-long consultation. This will take place on 12 October at Louth Methodist Church 10 till 3.

Returning to the quote from James Allen we might consider his belief that the Vision can be realized. We will fall, remain or rise depending upon our willingness to face the facts and our commitment to embrace necessary change. Of course this should not be anything new for us if we consider it to be taking upon ourselves afresh the Covenant to which we are called to dedicate ourselves each year as Methodists.

May God bless you in the perusal of this comprehensive document. Hopefully a subsequent document following the CLT Forum will be more targeted and form the basis of our future strategy as a District.

Identity

Summary

Prepared by Lorna Valentine, District Development Enabler. July 2013

Change District Title & Logo to 'Lincolnshire Methodist District', give website guidance on logo

These are in process and will be completed by August 2013

Coordinate signs, posters and notice boards

We have had good feedback so far, but also some reluctance to use materials without feedback as to why. This will need people to drive this in the future and request in DDE report to synod has not yet received response.

District Day

These need to be carefully considered in the future as first, staff previously responsible for organising will not be in post and second the cancellation of this year's event and subsequent good attendance of a more local ad-hoc event means we need to seriously consider whether District is the appropriate level for gathering people and what the purpose and aims of gathering folk at District or more local level might be. Also need to consider what folk need/want and why they might be prepared to gather. It will be key in moving forward to look closely not only at our identity as District, but at the issues of who we are identifying with in that capacity, in what ways we are seeking to do that and how best we resource it.

Youth Team are also looking at issues of Engagement and Identity following difficulties with attendance at some district events

Circuit identity

Circuits have been encouraged to look at their identity using the Healthy Circuits Handbook. One Circuit expressed strong interest so far.

Strategy Summit

This is due to go ahead later in the year.

Identity Detail

Item		Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
1	Change District Title to 'Lincolnshire Methodist District'	Experience of Circuit support. Approved by Autumn 2012 Synod. People in the Churches are already starting to use the language of Lincolnshire	District Council	1	1	Conference to approve 2013
2	Change District logo	Experience of Circuit support. Approved by Autumn 2012 Synod.	District Council	1	1	Done
3	Website guidance on logo	DDE to look at Methodist Church Guidance and offer District Guidance for use of the logo as well as downloadable options. Liaise with Alison McNish to get on website	DDE/Chair PA	1	1	Initial work set for last week in May, needs completing before August 2013
4	Coordinate signs, posters and notice boards	Positive feedback received from Olympic 2012 posters and book marks. Lent/Easter 2012 poster produced, feedback was limited but positive. Anecdotal feedback is that not all Churches used what was sent, but if there were reasons for this they have not been communicated in the form of feedback or comment. Short term further seasonal posters can be explored and developed based on feedback. As the DDE currently undertaking this work is due to finish 31 st August 2013, options need to be explored as to who might take this on in the future. DDE report to Spring Synod 2013 included a request for interested people to come forward, but this received no response. Long term views would include a Lincolnshire District Sign for all churches to use and/or consistency/quality of notice boards or equivalent. There would need to be a feasibility exploration that looked at what was possible for each Church as it is likely a solution that allows for some variables will be the most effective. Short term work on this aspect would be to identify someone who could take responsibility for such a project in the future.	EDEV Fund	Done Done 1 3	1 for short term, 2-3 for long term	1-2 for short term including DDE exploring who might take on work post August 2013 2-5 for long term

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Timescale
5	District Day	<p>Ongoing – can be used to explore and develop issues around Toward 2020 Vision including identity plus it is an opportunity for Lincolnshire Methodists to meet together.</p> <p>The District needs to consider soon how and indeed if this work will continue post August 2013 when current office holders undertaking this project are no longer in post. This may involve developing working patterns with the new Regional Network of staff post Fruitful Field implementation. It may also involve looking at what purpose such events are for, what we are hoping to achieve with them and therefore whether District is the most appropriate way to gather following on from the cancellation of this year's event. It will be key in moving forward to look closely not only at our identity as District, but at the issues of who we are identifying with in that capacity, in what ways we are seeking to do that and how best we resource it.</p> <p>For example, the ad hoc alternative to the District day had 53 attendees. This was more people than were booked on the District Day. It was shorter, more locally focussed and informal. Perhaps then connecting people in terms of District identity doesn't mean that the whole District meets together and identity within the District may best be strengthened and developed across a range of localised, contextual and purposeful gatherings rather than a single District Day.</p> <p>DDE also sits on Youth Team and we had some discussions with guest Mark Wakelin about future District events because of similar difficulties with attendance. Plan is for DME with DDE to look in terms of engagement at getting an up to date picture of children's & youth work. Youth Team can then look at where and how district identity might be helpful to that group by establishing the purpose and aim for any District events based on the needs of those working in that field.</p>	EDEV Fund	1	1	Ongoing – annual event

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Timescale
6	Circuit identity	<p>Encourage Circuits to look at their identity, possibly using material such 'The Healthy Circuits Handbook' to continue to develop best working practice and a good understanding of culture and context. This has been sent to Superintendents and Circuit Stewards and was spoken about at Spring Synod 2013 with 2 free copies going to each Circuit. DDE available to run starter sessions for any Circuit that would want it up to August 2013.</p> <p>One circuit has expressed strong interest and has been provided with some black and white copies for all the leadership team by DDE.</p> <p>Most circuits have yet to make a response or give feedback about their intent to use this resource. DDE will do a follow up in June to see if uptake of the resource is greater than uptake of DDE help.</p>	District Council/ DDE	2-3	2	1-3 years
7	Strategy Summit	Circuit Stewards/leadership teams – continue to develop a culture where this group meets together and has the opportunity to be connected in to strategy development. Connects well with the previous item.	EDEV Fund	2	1	1-2 years

Co-operation with Others

Summary

Prepared by Sue Wilkins, District Ecumenical Officer, March 2013

To seek a clearer vision of what it means to cooperate with others

There is a distinction between doing things ecumenically and doing ecumenical things. This is a summary of my findings and reflections:

The District Council to adopt an Ecumenical Policy for the District
The District Council to promote closer relationships with main stream denominations and an awareness and understanding of other faiths and wider interfaith issues.
LEPs have not been reviewed for a number of years. A timetable of LEP Reviews to be agreed with CTAL to help Churches re engage and seek ways of working more closely together to identify opportunities for shared mission.
To make better use of the District Website and explore opportunities for cross denominational communication e.g. Good News stories, sharing information.
The District to coordinate and where appropriate seek opportunities to work with other denominations to maximise our effectiveness to respond to issues of social responsibility. To establish a forum in which social issues can be raised – to explore the possibility of appointing a County Social Responsibility Officer working alongside the County Ecumenical Officer.
To identify how chaplaincy services can cooperate more closely with local churches and communities.
To consider opportunities for interdenominational cooperation when planning training.
Church Leaders to seek closer cooperation and provide a forum in which matters of common concern can be discussed including the sharing of resources in terms of buildings, finances and people, and the ecumenical implications of policies and appointments. The development of strategy partnerships between the Church Leaders and the leaders of secular organisations.
The District Council to encourage cooperation between churches/circuits to identify common needs, a common mission context and, where appropriate, to take a lead in facilitating opportunities for consultation. Opportunities for developing mutual support, a shared vision and mission strategy to be explored e.g. Market Towns. Where appropriate to encourage clusters of churches/circuits to cooperate in developing a Mission Action Plan to provide a vision for the future.

Co-operation with Others

Detail

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Aims
1	Ecumenical Relationships	<p>Our common understanding of what it means to be 'ecumenical' is a core issue. There is a distinction between doing things ecumenically and doing ecumenical things.</p> <p>Across the District, ecumenical relationships vary from those who affirm that there is no other way than to work together if our churches are to survive and Christ's mission is to grow and others who see any moves towards unity as threatening.</p> <p>There is also the need to promote closer involvement with interfaith groups and being aware of wider interfaith issues.</p> <p>The word ecumenism is derived from the Greek oikoumene, which means 'the inhabited world', and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The word is used predominantly by and with reference to Christian denominations separated by doctrine, history and practice. In its broadest meaning, ecumenism refers to initiatives aimed at worldwide religious unity. It is understood in this sense in the Baha'i vision that advocates a greater shared spirituality across Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths</p>	DEO/DC	<p>To agree a District Ecumenical Policy.</p> <p>To develop the long term sustainability and growth of the ecumenical vision within the District.</p> <p>To establish a more effective communications strategy.</p> <p>To provide information, news and resources.</p> <p>To communicate good news stories.</p>	1	<p>District Committee to adopt an Ecumenical Policy for the District</p> <p>Make better use of the District Website</p> <p>To explore opportunities for improving cross denominational communication</p> <p>The District to publicise ecumenical events and to encourage Methodist support and attendance.</p> <p>To promote cooperation and better understanding between religious groups or denominations, where unity is not an aim.</p>

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Aims
2	Common Issues: Social Responsibility	<p>This is an area where Christians of all denominations find it easier to work more closely together. There are many examples around the District where Churches and individuals are working together.</p> <p>Examples of initiatives are: Foodbanks, Street Pastors, Farm Crisis Network, work with the homeless, Chaplaincies. The Forge ...</p> <p>The Cuts Conference organised by CTAL brought together the Churches, local government and agencies to raise awareness of the effects of social and economic issues upon the people of Lincolnshire.</p> <p>A way needs to be found for a greater sharing of knowledge, know how, expertise, academic and theological reflection and practical outworking across the District and between churches and denominations, to enable the Church to see more clearly the issues Christ calls us to engage with in an effective, compassionate, prayerful and visionary way.</p> <p>Chaplaincy Services – the work of the Chaplaincy Services is not generally well known.</p>	CTAL/ Church Leaders/ DC	<p>A forum in which social responsibility issues can be raised would provide opportunities for Churches to share common concerns, respond/take action/ follow up and keep a watching brief.</p> <p>Chaplaincy Services to seek ways of relating more closely to local needs, responding to new initiatives, and developing closer links with local churches and communities.</p>	1	<p>The District to coordinate and where appropriate to seek opportunities to work with other denominations to maximise our effectiveness to respond to issues of social responsibility.</p> <p>To explore the possibility of a county social responsibility officer to raise awareness, and facilitate a forum in which coordinated action and denominational response to issues of social responsibility can be focused. This post may need to be funded.</p> <p>To invite the Cumbria CT Social Responsibility Officer to share their model of best practice (Helen Boothroyd)</p> <p>To identify how Chaplaincy Services can respond to local needs and to develop ways of working alongside churches/circuits/community agencies/groups.</p> <p>Those newly appointed as Church Leaders or as Circuit Stewards to be made aware of Chaplaincy Services and local contacts.</p>

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Timescale
3	<p>Common Issues:</p> <p>Resources: Buildings, Finance, People</p> <p>Mission and Discipleship</p>	<p>Seeking ways of sharing resources in terms of our buildings, finances and people by encouraging full and early ecumenical consultation so that the churches may use resources with sensitivity and in the interests of good stewardship.</p> <p>Mission and Discipleship are high on the priorities for all the Churches.</p> <p>A Resources Exhibition to equip Christians in mission and discipleship EQUIP will be held on Saturday 14th September 2013 from 9.30am to 4.30pm in the Exhibition Hall, Lincolnshire Show Ground.</p>	<p>Church Leaders/DC</p> <p>DEO/CTAL</p>	<p>To encourage and enable Churches to grow together in trust, mutual acceptance and understanding</p> <p>An opportunity to consider the training needs of clergy and lay and consider doing this ecumenically, where appropriate.</p>	2	<p>The Annual District Day could be an opportunity to explore ecumenical themes.</p> <p>The Planning Group to consider inviting speaker(s) from other denominations to share insights from other traditions</p>
4	LEP Reviews	<p>Many LEPs have not been reviewed for several years, if at all.</p> <p>A joint review of Methodist and Anglican churches in Scunthorpe undertaken by the Superintendent Minister, the Methodist EO and the Anglican Area Dean/EO has identified a mission opportunity for a Pioneer Youth Worker. This is an exciting ecumenical initiative. Partly funded by North Lincs Council and the Cof E and based at Centenary Methodist Church. The DEOs and the Superintendent are continuing to meet on a regular basis.</p>	CTAL/DEOs	<p>A timetable of LEP Reviews to help Churches re engage, seek ways of working more closely together, to identify opportunities for shared mission.</p> <p>The Scunthorpe example could be extended to other circuits</p>	2	<p>The Circuits and the District to be willing to encourage and support local ecumenical initiatives.</p> <p>The District not to lose sight of ground level issues.</p>
5	Church Leaders	Church Leaders to meet together to provide a forum in which they can consult together about matters of common concern including the ecumenical implications of policies and appointments.	CTAL	An opportunity to develop strategy partnerships between the Church Leaders and the leaders of secular organisations.	2	<p>Dependent upon the willingness of Church Leaders to meet on a regular basis.</p> <p>To give a lead to Churches in ecumenical matters.</p>

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Timescale
6	Cooperating: Ecumenical	<p>As financial and people resources become more stretched across the circuits and the District, ecumenical opportunities may be a positive way forward. Examples from other Districts can be an inspiration, for example in Cumbria where ecumenical cooperation has led to the Diocese, the District and the North West Synod of the URC entering into a formal, ground breaking Ecumenical Area.</p> <p>The County Ecumenical Officer to work closely with DEOs and Churches Together Groups to identify potential for ecumenical initiatives and areas where support is needed. To be prepared to develop bottom up priorities and vision.</p> <p>However, for ecumenism to succeed cooperation is paramount and for some people and for some churches doing things ecumenically is very slow.</p>	<p>CTAL/DEO/ DC</p> <p>CTAL/DEO</p>	<p>To consider offering an ecumenical welcome to members of other local churches that have closed.</p> <p>Charity Commissioners, CTE National Church Leaders and Ecumenical Representatives are aiming to reduce the time and paperwork involved in setting up LEPs.</p>		<p>Charity Commissioners, CTE National Church Leaders and Ecumenical Representatives are aiming to reduce the time and paperwork involved in setting up LEPs. Model Documents are now available for Single Congregation LEPs, Ecumenical Areas. Churches in Covenanted Partnerships to be available soon.</p> <p>The District to invite Ecumenical Reps from Cumbria to share their ecumenical journey and insights.</p>
	Cooperating: Churches/ Circuits	<p>The District Council to encourage cooperation between churches and circuits to identify common needs and a common context and provide a forum in which to develop mutual support, a shared vision and a mission strategy.</p> <p><i>This level of cooperation can be done ecumenically, where appropriate, or between churches and circuits.</i></p>		<p>To encourage the leadership of churches with a similar mission context such as Market Towns, rural/ farming, urban, coastal, tourism, etc to meet to discuss the challenges of ministry, share creative ideas, seek ways of supporting one another and develop a mission strategy and shared vision.</p>	2	<p>The District Committee to encourage clusters of churches to cooperate in developing a Mission Action Plan. The District Committee to encourage the leadership of churches and circuits to meet to discuss common issues and develop a way forward for mission.</p> <p>The Circuit Leadership to be encouraged to cooperate across churches and circuits to develop ministry, mission and discipleship. The District to take a lead in facilitating opportunities for consultation</p>

Engagement with Others

Summary

Liz Childs, District Mission Enabler, Version: May 2013

'Engagement' was one of the three priorities in the District's 'Toward a 20:20 Vision'. Key players in high profile organisations were interviewed e.g. Christian Aid, MRDF and The Nomad Trust. Other individuals known to be involved in community work were contacted and surveys were attempted in some circuits in an attempt to quantify our Engagement.

The results as outlined in my report show there is a vast range of engagement happening across the District, and I feel that I have only scraped the surface of the true picture. Many Methodist people are actively engaged with voluntary organisations and statutory bodies – too many to document accurately.

Some circuits have a high workload in primary and secondary schools through assemblies, weekday clubs, holiday clubs and toddlers groups. Examples of outreach included older peoples' luncheon clubs, holiday at home, and caravan/bus visits to villages and isolated communities. It would seem that this is not as a result of any dictate from the Methodist Church but rather a sense of the outworking of their faith in their community and in the world. Although some projects originated through the CLT's focus on Mission over the past decade plus the MSM course and CTAL events.

Everyone was enthusiastic about their activity. Most were pleased that someone was showing an interest in what they did. Many shared their frustrations as well as their joys. The most common joy was feeling they made a difference. The most common frustration was that not everyone shared their passion for the cause - especially the particularly Methodist organisations e.g. MRDF, South India, Methodist Schools and the Forge. Representatives of each of these expressed some sense of ploughing a lonely furrow. It would appear that engagement in a variety of other activities by churches and individuals hinders strong involvement in these areas some of which are reliant on Methodist support. Larger, more heavily publicised organisations appear to gain greater support – e.g. Christian Aid rather than MRDF; Nomad Trust rather than the Forge.

Reflecting on this research, my findings are that Methodist engagement with organisations in their community, society at large and in the world is as a result of a sense of calling. It would seem that their personal life experiences act as a prompt to respond to God's call and they do so by involvement in a particular cause and in a particular way. Sometimes they are able to encourage others within their church to support their passion and so it becomes the engagement of a church rather than an individual.

I conclude that it would be counter-productive to create priorities for engagement at District level as this aspect of Christian discipleship appears to be very personally driven and not something people can be directed to do. But people do need recognition and encouragement for their involvement.

Recommendations for District Action:

Give encouragement, recognition, resources and publicity in support of worthwhile community projects. Help people see their roles in the community as an instrument for mission, bringing about transformation within that cause, alongside people of no faith. Methodist causes, in particular MRDF, The Forge, South India and Methodist Schools, be revisited to explore how or if the Methodist people can be more fully engaged.

Engagement with others

Detail

Item		Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
1	MRDF	<p>Conversation with Jim Marr.</p> <p>Not a high profile in Lincolnshire but amount raised would be missed if it dried up altogether. Britain suffers (in Jim's assessment) from feel good response to poverty. He would be interested in an opportunity to explore long term eradication of poverty with others.</p>	<p>The District could facilitate an opportunity for exploration. Jim is a resource for churches to help raise the profile.</p> <p><i>Jim is to lead a workshop at April Synod</i></p>			
2	South India Dioceses of Tirunelveli and Tuticorin/ Nazareth	<p>Conversation with Alison McNish.</p> <p>Began 1992 as ecumenical project. Aimed to bring World Church alive. Only those who have visited seem really interested. One Methodist on last visit – he would like to see a youth visit. Considering a long term visit by Indian pastor to a Lincolnshire church in 'reverse missionaries' style. Question mark over a District project – perhaps needs to be more locally owned.</p>	<p>£800 committed each year from District budget.</p> <p>Would need a strong driving force to impact the District.</p>			
3	Evangelism among Baby Boomers	<p>CTAL group meeting with reps from CofE, URC, Groundlevel and Methodist (ongoing)</p> <p>This age group (born 1945-'65) are not being reached by our churches. They are not attracted by traditional church and outreach to young people is not appropriate either. There are some people of this age range in church, often somewhat frustrated with church. It would be possible to create Fresh Expressions of church for this age group quite simply while we still have contact with some of the same age group.</p>	<p>A desire by individual churches to take up the opportunity to do church differently for baby boomers.</p>			

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
4	Circuit engagement (Gainsborough)	Audit of a circuit with which I am familiar: Evangelism & Mission: Outreach caravan in 2 villages Holiday Club weeks in 3 villages Discussion group, men's breakfast in local pub Café Church, Messy Church, Toddlers Lunches with Children's Links providing Movers and Shakers Prospects (learning difficulties) worship and meeting for day centre activity on premises. Voluntary organisations: Action for Children – boxes/cards/quizzes/annual charity 2010 Leprosy Mission – quizzes/boxes/annual preacher Smile – support and publicity Matthew Rusike Zimbabwe – annual charity 2011 Homestart – annual charity 2012/toy service annually/management committee Zambian Children's home – annual charity 2009/individual partners sponsor Ukraine – visits/exchanges/aid collections/fundraising/individual sponsorship Bible Lands – sponsorship of 2 children Gainsborough House – weekly help at lunch club/Xmas lunch Swallow Court, Misterton – weekly lunch club Amnesty International – individual support and letter writing Fairtrade Church and Town with representation on Social Justice Action Group. Nomad Trust – harvest gifts Local Government: One District Councillor, one Parish Councillor, one JP. Christian Aid: Regional organiser/envelope collection in church/community, coffee mornings, stalls (ecumenical).				

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Circuit engagement (Gainsborough) - continued	Education: Assemblies in 5 primary schools, School clubs in 4 primary and one secondary school, Schools use churches for harvest, Christmas and church projects. Annual yr 4 festival for schools. A Teaching assistant and School governors.				
5	Local Government	<p>Interview with Ray Sutton (NE Lincs Councillor) Ray expressed a recognition of the challenge he faces as a Christian within politics.</p> <p>He believes that it is essential that Christians involve themselves with the decision making processes of politics and is concerned to improve the way the church is seen as a whole by society – perhaps more concerned about sexuality than global issues.</p> <p>There seems to be two sides to the problem of Christians engaging in politics: the attitude of the church: and the perception of society. The perception of society is that the church is irrelevant and concerned with issues no-one else is interested in.</p> <p>If the church does take a stand in political matters it is often faced with hard traditional attitudes which separate secular from spiritual and will be met with a ‘well you would say that’ response.</p> <p>On the other hand the attitude of the church can be just as problematic with a tendency also to separate the secular and the spiritual.</p> <p>Prayers of Intercession often relate very little to everyday major issues in society.</p>	<p>Party political engagement is perhaps something for individuals who feel called by God to that role.</p> <p>A greater awareness of and involvement in political issues by church members would be valuable and the ability to debate the issues would be something the church could encourage.</p> <p>It is an area the Lincoln & Grimsby LP Study Course has addressed in its training of LPs.</p>			

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Local Government Continued...	<p>Christians are loath to speak about politics and there is often a tension between party political standpoints which Church members are unwilling to debate.</p> <p>To be a Christian in the political arena is to stand up for what you believe to be right on any particular issue in the face of much disagreement. It is an uncomfortable place to be because there are times when as a member of a political party one must be prepared to compromise and this will upset some Christians who hold a different opinion.</p> <p>It demands great integrity to listen to the debate and decide what is the best way forward and have the strength to follow through with that decision.</p> <p>There is a spectrum of political involvement outside of elected representatives and party politics which Christians could, and do get involved with: Governing bodies, movements for change, lobbying, to name but a few.</p>				
6	Education	<p>Interview with Gill Wright.</p> <p>Gill works in the District under the Connexional Team member Lisa Nolan who is responsible for all 65 Methodist Schools.</p> <p>At present Gill has attempted to meet all of the varied criteria of the job description including visiting all of the schools, despite being unsure what her brief is when Ministers, Vicars and other church workers are in regular contact with each of the schools.</p>	<p>The question arises as to whether or not this is the best use of our limited District resources.</p> <p>Although it is easy to view Methodist Academies as a great way to reach children with the gospel, it would be unwise to consider this as an opt out to doing Church children's work and returning to the days when we could assume the school was doing that piece of outreach for us.</p>			

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Education continued....	<p>She is to attend a meeting of District Schools' Officers on March 20th when she hopes this will be clarified. Whatever the brief, the task of Schools' Officer is only likely to increase as MAST comes into force through which Methodist Academies will come into being. In this District Wainfleet School is already going down this route and Gill becomes a Trustee which will entail a huge amount of time and work.</p> <p>If all the Methodist Schools in the District eventually become Methodist Academies (which would be the desire of LCC and the policy of the Methodist Church) the workload will become untenable and we may find ourselves needing to employ at least one dedicated full-time paid worker.</p> <p>Gill's report to Synod 2013 needs to be read alongside this comment especially the recommendations which David Gamble is putting before the District.</p>	Gill's expertise in this area is invaluable and as a District we need to be guided by her as to what may or may not be feasible. We need to plan and speak out for what we can and cannot achieve rather than be faced with a fait accompli where we have calls on our resources prioritised by others.			
7	Voluntary organisations	Article by Ian Hardcastle attached Engagement with Nomad Trust.				
8	The Forge	Article by Laura MacBean attached				
9	Wesley Guild	<p>Conversation with Geoff Freeman, Middle Rasen. The Wesley Guild was initially established by the Methodist Church over 100 years ago.</p> <p>Today, the Wesley Guild is a mid-week fellowship for men and women of all ages, meeting at weekly, fortnightly or monthly intervals with a programme of diverse interests, devotional, cultural, Christian service and social.</p>	This seems a good platform for Methodist people to develop a greater awareness of a vast range of subjects and to enjoy fellowship. It reminds me of U3A – a flourishing organisation for Baby Boomer generation. The question arises as to whether this could be developed as an outreach tool.			

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Wesley Guild continued...	<p>The Wesley Guild is part of the social and caring life of the Church.</p> <p>There are a number of Guilds in the District – Middle Rasen and the Haven who meet together a couple of times a year, and travelling Guild in Mid Lincs.</p>				
10	Christian Aid	<p>Notes and reflections by Nick Thorley, Regional Coordinator, also drawing on conversations with colleagues. Predominantly reflecting on the period from August 2011 up until the present – Feb 2013 (time of Nick's employment with CA).</p> <p>I was invited to deliver a workshop at the Spring Synod, April 2012. My offer to interview 2 overseas visitors from a Christian Aid Partner Organisation in the Lebanon at Synod in September 2012 was warmly received and I was given a generous time slot on the platform.</p> <p>Of the 13 Superintendents I initially contacted in the Autumn of 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 invited me to meet one to one. We had a very positive meeting and I was invited to speak at a Circuit Service. The invitation was subsequently withdrawn due to a double booking for the service and the offer of another date didn't come before they left the District. • 2 invited me to speak at Churches Together meetings in their town. • 1 invited me to speak at their Circuit staff meeting • 1 has invited me to speak and has been very supportive of the Lincolnshire Tour and their local CA group 	<p>Nick comments: as can be seen by some of our partnerships with Anglican Diocese, there are opportunities to deepen our relationship. I'd be really keen to explore how this might look and discuss various options.</p> <p>As a Methodist District we need to balance our support of Christian Aid with that of MRDF – this can sometimes cause us a problem</p>			

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
10	Christian Aid continued...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 was too busy to meet but put forward someone from their circuit to be a “Christian Aid Champion”. This has resulted in some excellent opportunities and great support. • 1 responded by requesting a speaker for a CA Week service • 3 didn’t reply initially but subsequent letters / phone calls have resulted in a 5 minute meeting with one which didn’t amount to anything and a pending meeting with another who seems reluctant to meet. • 2 have never replied to my initial email, a follow up email and a subsequent letter • 1 has said that they do not wish to meet or support CA due to our funding of Islamic Partners. <p>This all means that at present there are 7 Circuits where at least one church or minister is very committed to CA. This has a variety of expressions including Gainsborough where a minister is acting as the local CA Week organiser, Grimsby and Cleethorpes who have committed to raising £5,000 for our partnership scheme (in response to our interview at synod) and Lincoln North where Becki Stennet is a volunteer speaker, chair of the Lincoln CA committee and extremely enthusiastic about moving things forward.</p>				

	Item	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
11	Children and Young People	<p>Visit to the District Youth Committee.</p> <p>The committee organises events during the year to try to bring young people together from across the District – Summer Camp, Sports Safari. In recent years they have tried to organise Children’s days too as there is no longer a Children’s committee.</p> <p>There is little take-up for these events from the many groups existing across the District.</p> <p>Discussion has taken place regarding how to reach the leaders and discover from them what would help them in their work and the children and young people in their activity programme. The DME and DDE agreed to discover the contact details of groups throughout the District so that having direct contact with them some of the questions can be asked of them.</p>	<p>The purpose of this Committee probably needs to be reassessed. The small number of participants who are all busy working with children and young people, has led to them only being able to continue to organise events they are familiar with. A new injection of enthusiasm from others at the coal face may help to clarify the purpose and discover a productive role for the District in supporting and equipping the work of local churches.</p>			
12	Overseas projects, churches and people supported by local churches	<p>There are clearly many projects linking Methodist Churches with overseas Christians.</p> <p>Gainsborough & Side Door linked with Ukraine.</p> <p>Caistor linked with El Salvador</p> <p>East Lincolnshire with Phakamisa</p> <p>Lincoln South with Sri Lanka</p>	<p>Churches seem to need a personal contact with overseas churches and people in order to support fully a project.</p>			

Lay Formation Summary

Prepared by Jane Bingham, District Training Officer. Version: July 2013

Areas covered

- Lay Employment
- Safeguarding
- Local Preachers/Worship Leaders
- EDEV and candidating
- Children and Young people
- Circuit Stewards
- Pastoral Visitors (in part)

Trend analysis summary – although there is a great deal of detail to be considered, as indicated below, there are some broad headings which seem to be recurring and these include

- Raising the profile and visibility of these forms of ministry within the district, in some cases with specific positions on key committees such as Council
- Finding ways to boost resources to support those involved in lay ministry eg. to cover training, travelling and materials – this includes money
- Honing and embedding strong and robust processes and “policies” that lead to a level playing field across all our churches and circuits, if necessary promoting and creating them.
- Investing in information and communication especially to enable the right messages to get to the right people
- Embed good training practice and information provision e.g. induction sessions for all lay ministry roles regardless of geography or priority
- Actively seeking out strong leaders and participants in key roles to ensure lay ministry remains at its strongest
- Initiating regular gatherings and celebrations for all those involved in lay ministry so that Gods people across the District will recognise the value of lay ministry in all its forms

(KDR = Key District Resource)

Lay Formation

Detail

Area of Lay Formation Overview						
Lay Employment						
Currently Lay Employment is overseen on behalf of the District by Rev David Leese. He has some experience in this field and works hard to maintain currency in his understanding. Churches and circuits work in a variety of ways some more effectively than others. Lay employees themselves have a varied experience of working for the church and whilst there are pockets of improving practice amongst churches and circuits there is little to no consistency across the piece. In many cases local approaches take precedence even down to the fact that there is minimal clarity about numbers of employees, roles, JDs etc. Employees have only met as a cohort once in the last 3 years and support provided by the district for learning and development is minimal.						
	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	There is no firm sense of who is employed within the district, by whom and for what purpose.	It would be advantageous to know this from an employment law perspective as well as gathering and supporting employers/employees	District to develop a policy and process for lay employment that includes best practice and the completion of an annual return with up to date details about their employees. KDR – Support and emphasis WHO??	1	1	By December 2013
	The role of DLEO is one that's hard to fill historically and may benefit from the experience of a professional currently working in this field.	Employment law is complex and best advice is required to avoid problems for churches and ensure that our employees have a good working experience	Actively seek with an advert for a volunteer appointment KDR - admin			
	There is a lack of understanding within churches and circuits about their role, the approach required or best practice in this field. The DLEO often offers a great deal of detailed advice which you might expect a circuit or church to pick up themselves	Although training has been offered within the last 12 months some churches and circuits are still wary of employment and the associated issues. This may be due to turn over of key stewards or a lack of designated roles within church or circuit teams	An annual meeting of representatives from churches and circuits who have employees is recommended. This am require expenses for travel to be covered by the district for all who attend. An expert speaker may also be needed and this may also mean costs are incurred. KDR - Funding	1	2	By August 2014

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	There is a high administrative burden for volunteers in churches and circuits	Circuits and churches are wary of the detailed admin required to employ effectively especially around the fields of tax, ni, leave etc	See above In addition circuits are to be encouraged to work in clusters through a specialist volunteer to maintain knowledge and levels of expertise			
	There is a lack of continuity for some workers in terms of supervision, specification of role etc – churches seem to be better at this than circuits are	Workers do not have consistent provision especially those employed by circuits where stewards are on limited appointments	Circuits/churches to be encouraged to have a dedicated team member to care for lay workers both pastorally and professionally. District to model the ethos for those it employs or even with volunteer roles			
	Lay Employees are often left to their own initiative to pursue training and development needs. This means that although effective in some places support is sporadic.	Meeting and sharing is minimal and happens in clusters according to geography and relationship. Some are not freed up to treat gatherings as a priority over their day to day work	Gathering together with others from across the district as part of their role twice a year to share stories, issue and receive input. Chair to lead in worship and consultation KDR – Finance and visible presence through Chair			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

Safeguarding

The district now has an employed Safeguarding Officer, Howard Smedley, who is supported by a volunteer administrator and a volunteer group of workers the DSG who meet 6 weekly at present. The District has a dedicated contact point in this group through the DDE, appointed there to see that there is continuity for the officer and policy provision. Each circuit has a designated representative, who meet together 3 times a year, and each church has identified a contact point. A district policy and flowchart has been share and activity is more streamlined and visible than it was. The situation has changed substantially in the last 4 years.

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	The DSG, whilst full of extremely valuable volunteers, is lacking in current professional experience. Group numbers are dwindling as some members need to	To enable a better service and improve support on matters in the district the DSG needs to take up a more operational role supporting the district should the DSO be unavailable. To do this they need to be more aware of current	Advertise and recruit more professional volunteers to the role. Circuits and district to encourage participation through support for expenses and also through promotion of safeguarding work. This may include releasing volunteers form other church roles they undertake.			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	retire and to become a more operational group the level of expertise needs to grow.	safeguarding practice a guidelines and the group members need to be drawn form a variety of professional roles that can enhance the knowledge base for the district.				
	The DSG need an independent chair	Owing to the conference guidelines an independent chair for the group needs to be in place but is yet to be sought or found. This person must be the right person for the role.	Recruit through a detailed job description in September 2013. District to promote importance of role.			
	The Circuit Reps need to be considered as operational colleagues and probably need a development programme to boost their existing knowledge	Whilst in the most part Circuit reps are drawn from allied professions such as teaching, healthcare and social work etc some may need their skills updating.	Whilst training can be provided through the DSO the District may need to support this work with funding for travelling expenses of volunteers or costs for venues and speakers			
	The DSO needs an external supervisor for his work	There is a requirement arising form the conference recommendations that the DSO has a fully funded external supervisor	District to work with DSO to find the right person for this compulsory role. Funding is mandatory.			
	The Volunteer administrator is moving from the district.	The administrator needs to be replaced with someone suitable and who has time to commit to the work. It is a far more labour intensive than one might suspect and would not sit well alongside someone who is already working in a full time role.	Recruit to this role through a carefully prepared job description and in conjunction with eth DSO. Best outcome may be for a funded post but al a minimum expenses must be paid.			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Better connections need to be built between the DSO and other oversight mechanisms within the district e.g. the District council, synod or the supers group.	The district council and other groups such as the synod or supers group need to be up to speed with the nature of safeguarding issues in the district and the lessons learnt. The visibility for the DSO may need to be raised to ensure that nothing is overlooked. Although currently the DDE can act as a go between that role is changing and	Ensure that the DSO has a dedicated place on the District Council and is visible in other for a e.g. supers, ministerial synod, circuit stewards, LP meetings etc			
	Whilst improving each circuit and church must have Safeguarding in sight in all its activities	Some circuits and churches do still not treat SG as very important and the issue should be more visible through meeting agenda items. This also includes the CLT where often the issue is not covered.	Through policy encourage every meeting to have SG on its agenda and in particular the focus of CLT at some point during its meeting. District to endorse the ethos of SG being at the heart of the gospel It may be a consideration that in the not too distant future the District has full time dedicated DSO provision.			
	Circuit reps are very often left out of the loop by ministers seeking advice and this is frustrating especially as they often know what to do.	Circuit reps are rarely included in safeguarding issues despite their good up to date knowledge of L&G processes and procedures. Ministers often do not include them in their conversations.	See above			
	A better understanding of Safeguarding in terms of the faith context would help with embedding it into church life	The vision for safeguarding is often kept away from the faith context in which we work. People are unsure of the theology and where it meets with procedure and also about how this sometimes thorny issue really does sit at eth heart of our faith.	Use the current DSO, recognised Baptist pastor, to be involved in the slightly broader context within district life. Consider encouraging schemes of bible study that look at these areas and see how they link with 21 st century life.			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Work is set to increase in the autumn of 2013 when the district is involved in the past cases review.	This piece of work is labour intensive for ministers and the DSG and will require a lot of thought and analysis by all involved. This will be on top of the current workload	District to fully support this complex piece of work and review the provision of additional resources if they prove necessary.			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

The District has a LP Strategy group which tries hard to oversee the work of LPs and WLs across the District. It is made up of the DLP Secretary and the DLP Tutor with volunteers and has given rise to the new style course, regular meetings and training days and a twice yearly newsletter for LPs. The district is represented on the group through the TO and DDE and also through the chair which is currently the DEE. It also manages reviewing the annual returns and undertakes some admin such as LPs who have been on trial more than 5 years, LPs memorial at synod etc. A representative from this group goes to the Connexional officers meeting twice yearly. Student LPs have benefitted from the development of a dedicated “new approach” to LP training and this has been connexionally endorsed. The approach is now in its 3rd phase and working with a regional focus. It’s being used as the basis for many new offshoots across the connexion and is very well regarded.

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	The group is facing substantial change	The current chair stepping down and DOs roles changing through the fruitful field initiative. There are no diaconal or WL representatives at present.	A recruitment drive is required to bring the team up to speed by 31/8/2013. District to work alongside the group in promoting the importance of LPs and WLs to church life. The groups profile should be raised and opportunities to share sties about the impact of preaching should be sought at a district level.			
	WL training is sketchy as the connexional material is out of date.	The WL training is out of date and requires adaptation. As it’s delivered locally there is no control of how it’s adapted and whether the full role of WLs is being effectively explored.	District to encourage better sharing across the teams training WLs. District to consider endorsing eth recently reviewed WL course created by the DDE			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	WLs and LPs find it hard to work together effectively.	In the local context many WLs and LPs find it hard to work together and often their working relationship	Discussions should be help about this issue with Supers and Ministers. Best practice guidelines to be established with LP secretaries and their Supers t endure string working relationships.			
	There are diminishing numbers of LPs and WLs with increasing age becoming an issue.	LPs are not being active in answering and testing Gods call on them and although there are a variety of routes now available for training few are coming forward.	District to head up a vocations day or recruitment drive to this key role that ensure preaching can take place each Sunday. Continue to support funding for those wishing to train who are facing hardship. District to resolve who will support the work once dedicated DOs are no longer in post.			
	The effectiveness of LP meetings varies from circuit to circuit.	LP meetings are very mixed in approach and value. Some focus on business alone whilst others do include some CLPD. Many are considered “Tedious but necessary” and do little to enhance the life of preaching in a circuit. There is no best practice approach in CPD only a summary of what must be undertaken.	Develop best practice guidelines on what a meeting might look like and how it is run. District to prioritise this work for the DOs in their work schedule and to encourage LP secretaries and Supers to be involved.			
	LP & WL CLPD is very hard to encourage	Whilst a number of district events encourage CLPD for LPs and WLs some circuits really struggle with it as an ethos and even at a basic level of discussion and reading find it had to get long standing preachers engaged.	Continue to support the volume of events for LPs but also encourage new approaches. Support the LPSG in achieving their goal in this field. District Council to write to every LP and ask them to consider their accreditation commitments and how they might help one another achieve them			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	LP effectiveness may be dwindling owing to lack of assessment and feedback and also a lack of willingness to discipline those who are not preaching effectively and outside Methodist doctrine	Once accredited LPs are not required to undergo regular assessment (unlike WLs) and many suffer from being static in their approach and understanding. There is often unwillingness for the LP meeting to tackle the issues of wayward preachers who cease to be up to the task or are not prepared to act within the discipline and doctrine of the Methodist Church.	Encourage an ethos of quality improvement and offer guidance on how to approach feedback and assessment on a per review basis. District to ensure Supers and LP secretaries are equipped to deal with difficult situations and support their choices even if it means the provision for the plan is depleted. District to uphold the lines of preaching within the discipline and practice of the Methodist church as a basic for all preaching.			
	LP Tutors are working in isolation often and with small student numbers	Many tutors work in isolation in their circuits with only very few if not single students. This means they many not be updated on current approaches or find it hard to maintain a high standard of tutoring when working alone. Recent gatherings at a district level have been unsuccessful	District to continue to endorse gatherings of LP Tutors and support this work. Circuits to be asked to work more closely together and share the burden of tutoring so that students can have a better experience.			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

EDEV & Candidating

The District has a volunteer officer in this field – Rev’d Margaret Rowe, and some limited financial resource arising from a connexional grant. Some work is undertaken alongside the N&D District to enhance numbers and the learning experience on a year long programme for those who are considering their call.

Discipleship more broadly has been supported through promotion of the Step Forward course across the district. Work is underway to on building up a good lending library or resources that could be helpful to potential candidates.

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Uptake of the “What next lord?” course is limited from our district	In the early days of what next the provision was not well spread across the 2 districts but that has changed and now it is more evenly	District to support the work of the DCS in all the developments she is putting in place.			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
		spread. There are concerns that it is not well advertised in circuits and people are unsure of the right contacts and approaches	This may include permission to use some elements of the financial resource together with opportunities to share information about the work at District Gatherings. Supers and circuits to be encourage to raise the issue of calling and consider a dedicated opportunity to look at the issue and challenge members			
	Vocational mentors and portfolio mentors are low in numbers	Numbers of folk available to support candidates needs to be boosted	District to support safe recruitment to these roles.			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

Children and Young People

The District has a Children and Youth team made up of volunteers from across the District chaired by Mark Thompson. It also has dedicated Children’s minister Revd Julie Doddrell and a dedicated Youth Minister Revd Langley Mackrell –hey. Both roles are voluntary in addition to their circuit duties. The district has a direct link into this group through the DDE as policy development in this field is on the current DDE JD.

A regular pattern of events for the district is underway each year. These include a sports safari, summer camp, children’s day and involvement in “the bank”. Financially thing are reasonable with monies being well managed.

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	The role of the DO that has a link to this group is changing	The group is linked into the oversight mechanisms of the district through the DDE whose role is changing. There is a concern that ether will, be no link for the C&YP team after the end of the summer.	Develop a dedicated route into the oversight mechanisms in the District e.g. through a seat on the District Council or similar for a nominated group member			
	The group is not representative of every circuit across the district with not every circuit represented	The team has been well attended for many years but it I made up of enthusiast and workers and is not representative of every circuit in the district. It is feared that some activities therefore go	Renew the invitation to all circuits to have a representative on the C&Y team. This invitation could be backed up by policy or emphasis from the District. Some representatives may need sponsoring in terms of travel costs etc.			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
		unsupported or understood and there is limited interest in some places				
	It is very hard to understand what volunteer C&YP workers need at a local level. The district does not have up to date information about the activity taking place and the contact lists are very out of date	Some work was started on this issue about 5 years ago and a goggle map was created showing the activity. This work has not been pursued owing to time and resource constraints and there is no up to date picture of activity for contact points. Only in some places are they known. As a result local needs are still elusive.	<p>Make a concerted effort to ascertain an up to date position of this kind of work across the district. Consider enhancing and utilising the existing district map.</p> <p>Some work may also be necessary in connection with visibility and slots a synod or other key meetings e.g. supers, circ stewards etc may help.</p> <p>Once a network is better established then the website and other routes can be used to develop a resource bank etc and specialist networks across the district e.g. a messy church network to share ideas that have worked.</p>			
	Much of the work done can go unnoticed and taken for granted with folk in isolated pockets of activity.	Linked to above	Commissioning services should be encouraged through the Supers/Circuit Stewards gatherings to ensure visibility of this work and mission.			
	The role of District Youth Enabler has never come to fruition despite a lot of work having been done	Work on a job description and the potential funding issues was done by the team in conjunction with the DDE. Nothing ever came to fruition though as the role was included in a district review small group process. No feedback was ever formally given on this position. Finance seems to have been a sticking point for this as well as many of the other issues across the district.	<p>Re-examine this work in the light of the District working party and establish whether it is a role to be considered or if other routes are to be tried.</p> <p>Consider finding a District Specialist on grant sourcing. There are many opportunities for grant funding but these are often time consuming. Could the District encourage a volunteer to become a dedicated resource in this area and become a specialist for churches?</p>			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
			(Paid may be better as they are likely to earn their keep but may not be realistic)			
	Geography of the district really makes an impact in the work. Whilst opportunities are available across the district there is an unwillingness to take part and often this is connected to travel	The nature of volunteering is becoming increasingly local and although there are many small groups the benefit of the large get together to meet with new faces and new ideas is limited and both time and resource to travel can be hard to come by.	<p>Raise visibility of the importance of this work at every opportunity.</p> <p>Consider supporting travel with matched funding for circuit and church travellers.</p> <p>Work with the youth team to raise the profile of funding available through their small pot of monies.</p>			
	The voice of children and young people is not clearly heard in society or within the Methodist system	Whilst we like to think that we are inclusive of C&YO often their voice is either confined to being seen as “lovely” or “cute” and not heard clearly. This is especially true for C&YP in small pockets unable to get noticed.	<p>Take time to embed full and careful participation in all district led events and promote the same at circuit and church level.</p> <p>Encourage input from C&YP at all levels and then demonstrate how their views have been included in decisions.</p> <p>Use video materials and shared stories through the website to ensure that voices from all ages are heard. (Advice on how to do this safely is available)</p> <p>Set up a circuit advocate system where a nominated person speaks for the C&YP at every opportunity. This may have to be fleshed out more but is unlikely to be the voice of volunteer/employed workers but rather the voice of someone who holds a passion for C&YP and can work in every form from the LP meeting to the CLT to the district synod to keep focus on this group.</p>			

	Issue	Investigation	Action/Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
			Involve the youth participation officer whilst still in post to offer advice to circuits and churches on how to do this work better.			
	There is a lack of proper provision in worship for C&YP. This partly links with a lack of mutual respect between C&YP and the general Methodist population	Worship is not really designed often with C&YOP in mind and where it is it is treated as something separate and “For them” and not treated as an important part of the worship experience for all. This can be typified in a children’s address approach or similar.	The District should encourage visits for groups to other churches and circuits that have some success in this work and enable shared learning. Where possible C&YP should be encouraged to lead and share in worship and in their own way.			
	There is concern that C&YP are not being given a scriptural or theologically strong message but rather are being treated to the wrong balance of style and substance.	The advent of messy church and similar approaches are a great starter and stepping stone to faith but in some cases these routes, together with more traditional Sunday School, are about playing and crafts and have little real teaching in them. Similarly events for YP can be more about hot chocolate than the gospel and somehow a sense of the balance is not there.	Better provision for teaching on how to get the message across to C&YP effectively. Consider inviting speakers to equip workers in this field. (This cannot be done though without a list of folk to contact) Promote travel to events such as cliff college weekend, new wine, etc and support these ventures centrally as well as locally.			
	Communication may not be right for C&YP as they operate on quite a different level.	The advent of social media and electronic communication has posed a real challenge for those involving young people in their churches. There are issues about being ill equipped to meet the communication needs of the modern world and how to do it safely.	Better understanding of guidance on effective safe working this way is useful though again a list of who to tell is critical. Any information should be for the benefit of workers and C&YP alike. Hearing the voices for C&YP on what would be useful to them. This might be achieved by asking them to say on a vox pop how modern communication works and what we can learn from it.			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

Stewards – in particular across circuits

Circuit Stewards are a rare breed and often tricky to recruit but every circuit needs them and indeed has them. The church would not function without them. The balance of getting the right people and the level of commitment required is hard to achieve especially with the current demographic of the church with many finding themselves being circuit steward more than once in their lifetime. The cyclical nature of the work with a 6 year limit is often difficult too as expertise can be lost. Fresh faces often feel out of their depth often not having a deep understanding of Methodism let alone the role to which they have been called and so find it hard to be useful immediately. The dynamic between them and the clergy they work with is critical.

Regular meetings with the District Chair are proving fruitful and support materials are available although not much known about.

	Issue	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	<p>Many stewards fail to understand the role to which they are called. It is a complex balance of support, responsibility, authority.</p>	<p>Some CSs come to a new role without experience and often find themselves with a lack of understanding of how Methodism operates let alone the subtleties of the role. Acting as an interface between circuit and churches, making key decisions and also driving forward mission within a circuit is a tough balancing act. The way stewards work with clergy as “critical friends” is also important. CSs may find themselves acting as advocates, facilitators, gatekeepers, decision makers, friends, supporters, listening ears and leaders all at once</p>	<p>Material should be made available with basic information. (already prepared but made need wider publicity)</p> <p>Initial induction to anyone new to the role utilising existing CSs could bring valuable insight.</p> <p>Development training to offer skills and tools for all CLTs to bring a strong sense of working together and belonging could prove fruitful</p> <p>KDR – time and resources, including financial support</p>			
	<p>The role relies on strong relationships to enable leadership and service to take place</p>	<p>Relationships need to be built with clergy staff teams, each other, treasurers, church members and ecumenical colleagues.</p>	<p>See above</p>			
	<p>Stewards can feel under informed about Methodist thinking and current approaches to tricky subjects</p>	<p>CSs often find themselves making decisions or asked questions about tough issues. They may feel under informed and therefore powerless to act effectively especially if there is a wide variety of view across their CLT</p>	<p>Current consultations with the Chair are very valuable and should continue.</p> <p>It may be helpful for the Chair to draw in experts on key issues to help CSs with the detail of things.</p>			

	Issue	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
			<p>Time to share experience is also important and would be welcome more often when possible in gatherings.</p> <p>A clear communication route from synod and other key events may help CLTs get on the front foot.</p> <p>Strong 2way formal representation on the District Council is critical</p>			
	<p>CSs can find their visibility within their circuits is low and that their role is little understood. As a result recruitment to the role can be difficult.</p>	<p>Some church members may not understand the significance of circuit or connexionalism. CSs may find themselves the jam in a political sandwich on occasion and need to find ways to make themselves known and truly useful</p>	<p>Clear job descriptions and approaches to how CLTs work in different places would be helpful.</p> <p>Guidance from experienced colleagues on what to do is vital and this may mean a buddy relationship with new stewards might prove useful.</p> <p>Regular accreditation/recommitment of CSs when new colleagues are appointed is recommended. Worship notes could be offered by the District.</p>			
	<p>CSs undertake very key decision making roles around stationing, re-invitation, church closure, appropriate use of finances, discipline issues, pastoral issues, merger and many more</p>	<p>Many CSs face new challenges as part of their tenure and often feel ill equipped to deal with them. Strong CSs may have residual skills from their day job or other life roles but teams can find themselves lacking if this is not the case.</p> <p>Particular processes e.g. stationing are important and need extra levels of understanding</p>	<p>Good training materials and skill sharing to be put in place as part of a formal plan.</p> <p>Regular meetings for those involved in stationing (already done to an extent) and other complex decisions would be welcome. Detailed input from visiting experts e.g. What's the difference between a deacon and a presbyter in real terms? <i>Or</i> Does merger work? would also help</p>			

Area of Lay Formation Overview

Pastoral Care

There is no cohesive approach to pastoral visiting and care within the district. Some circuits and churches have groups and committees whilst others have no structure for this kind of work. In many places the minister is the person with responsibility. The sample taken here is very limited as even finding spokespeople for the subject area more broadly than a very local context is difficult.

	Issue	Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
	Pastoral visitors do not necessarily see it as a church role and more of a “friendly visitor” extending friendship	There is a varied understanding of what being a pastoral visitor is and although training packages exist there is a resistance to treating it too formally	Improved training provision and encouragement to use the connexional materials as the norm especially with new volunteers			
	The variety of approaches to this work across this district is huge.	In the rural context team working in this field is considered often very difficult. Some folk are only willing to be involved if they can do things their own way. This may leave the church as a whole, its workers and those it serves vulnerable.				
	The ageing demographic of the church makes the visit more vital but also means that our visitors are potentially more frail and vulnerable too.	What best practice ideas does the district have to help those involve din this work				

Ministerial Formation

Summary

Prepared by Martin Amery and approved by Ministerial Development Action Group Version: June 2013

General comments: Our primary purpose is to equip ministers (presbyters and deacons) in their ministry by providing training opportunities which meet their needs and time available alongside opportunities for appropriate support. We are concerned at the pressures upon those engaged in ministry and have found that training events organised by the District and Region are very poorly supported by the ministers in this District. We are concerned to get the expectation in respect to ministerial events and training at the right level so that no minister feels unable to access training they need or feels compelled to attend events which simply add pressure.

CDIM: We need to ensure that ministers are aware of training opportunities and can be supported in attending events they wish to. We need to create channels of communication so that we can provide the training ministers seek. At present the channels are there, but are rarely used. Can we discover why?

MDR: We have sought to maintain the advantages of the previous system within the constraints of the new one. We would wish to maintain the role of the accompanist, but are struggling to do so because of the difficulties of defining the new role and of attracting new people to become accompanists. We need to clarify how the new system works and then seek to find new people to assist as accompanists if we feel we can maintain that role for the future. We need to maintain the scheme as a gift and benefit and not just a hoop to be jumped through. Circuits need to be involved more.

Probationers: We need to continue to support and encourage probationers in their transition from training to circuit, recognising how great the strains are especially with all the things required of them by the Connexion.

Sabbaticals: We need to encourage and support ministers in sabbaticals

GIM and SPRINT: These provide a valuable mixture of informal and formal opportunities for mutual support for ministers at differing stages in ministry. We need to encourage all the relevant ministers to make use of these opportunities and consider them as a priority. The gatherings do need to be effective in their supportive purpose

Retreats: These provide an important opportunity to build up relationships between ministers and also to enable them to re-charge their physical and spiritual batteries during a few days away from their circuits. The format of the retreats need to be such that these two purposes are achieved for all those attending and there needs to be a constant monitoring process to ensure they are successful, especially as they are to be seen as compulsory.

Ministerial Synod: This provides an important training opportunity alongside the limited business we have to do. Again, as ministers are expected to attend, it is important to ensure that the training is meeting their needs and a monitoring process is important. This is also an opportunity for fellowship and for supernumeraries to feel part of the ongoing ministerial life of the District.

New initiatives: We are inclined to the view that the programme of opportunities outlined above provides sufficient for the needs of the ministers in the District, especially if they become engaged in those that they see will benefit them. We believe ongoing training should be part of every minister's priorities, but that, on the whole, ministers need to be free to source their training from the places that suit them best. We regret the demise in joint training events with the Diocese and will continue to explore any opportunities that arise.

Ministerial Formation

Detail

Item		Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
1	CDIM	We need to ensure that ministers are aware of training opportunities and can be supported in attending events they wish to. We need to create channels of communication so that we can provide the training ministers seek. At present the channels are there, but are rarely used. Can we discover why?	MDR CDIM Sec Training Network	Not very successful so far	High	Continuing
2	MDR	We have sought to maintain the advantages of the previous system within the constraints of the new one. We would wish to maintain the role of the accompanist, but are struggling to do so because of the difficulties of defining the new role and of attracting new people to become accompanists. We need to clarify how the new system works and then seek to find new people to assist as accompanists if we feel we can maintain that role for the future. We need to maintain the scheme as a gift and benefit and not just a hoop to be jumped through. Circuits need to be involved more.	District Appraisal Group (needs new members)	Not sure if we can maintain the current scheme or what might replace it	High	Within the next year
3	Probationers	We need to continue to support and encourage probationers in their transition from training to circuit, recognising how great the strains are especially with all the things required of them by the Connexion.	District Probs Sec and Committee	Already done well	High	Continuing
4	Sabbaticals	We need to encourage and support ministers in sabbaticals	District Sec	Good at present	Medium	Continuing
5	GIM and SPRINT	These provide a valuable mixture of informal and formal opportunities for mutual support for ministers at differing stages in ministry. We need to encourage all the relevant ministers to make use of these opportunities and consider them as a priority. The gatherings do need to be effective in their supportive purpose	Leaders and members of the groups	Hopefully good	High	Continuing

Item		Investigation	Resource	Feasibility	Priority	Time scale
6	Retreats	These provide an important opportunity to build up relationships between ministers and also to enable them to re-charge their physical and spiritual batteries during a few days away from their circuits. The format of the retreats need to be such that these two purposes are achieved for all those attending and there needs to be a constant monitoring process to ensure they are successful, especially as they are to be seen as compulsory.	District Chair and others involved in organising retreats	Hopefully good	Medium	Continuing
7	Ministerial Synod	This provides an important training opportunity alongside the limited business we have to do. Again, as ministers are expected to attend, it is important to ensure that the training is meeting their needs and a monitoring process is important. This is also an opportunity for fellowship and for supernumeraries to feel part of the ongoing ministerial life of the District.	District Chair and others involved in organising Synod	Hopefully good	Medium	Continuing
8	New initiatives	We are inclined to the view that the programme of opportunities outlined above provides sufficient for the needs of the ministers in the District, especially if they become engaged in those that they see will benefit them. We believe ongoing training should be part of every minister's priorities, but that, on the whole, ministers need to be free to source their training from the places that suit them best. We regret the demise in joint training events with the Diocese and will continue to explore any opportunities that arise.	MDAG	Unsure	Low	Continuing