



**The Methodist Church**

**Bolton and Rochdale District**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15**

**Registered Charity Number: 1130502**

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Chair of the District: Revd Paul Martin  
Secretary: Revd Sylvester Deigh  
Treasurer: Diane Hardwick  
District Administrator: Miss Jill Heppolette

## **PURPOSE**

The Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District was registered as a charity (registration number 1130502) in July 2009.

The District is governed by the Methodist Church Act 1976, the Deed of Union and the Model Trust Deeds of the Methodist Church.

The purposes of the Methodist Church are and shall be deemed to have been since the date of union the advancement of:

a the Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of the Methodist Church, and

b any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of the Methodist Church, and

c any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution or subsidiary or ancillary to the Methodist Church.

The primary purpose of the District is to advance the Mission of the Church in the Bolton and Rochdale District by providing opportunities for Circuits (groups of local Methodist Churches) to work together and support each other, by offering them resources of finance, personnel and expertise which may not be available locally and by enabling them to engage with the wider society of the region as a whole and address its concerns. We do this, wherever possible, in collaboration with other organisations.

The District serves the Local Churches and Circuits and the Methodist Conference in the support, deployment and oversight of various ministries of the Church and in programmes of training. It has responsibility for the evaluation of any application for funds by local Churches and Circuits for various projects.

The District seeks to work in partnership with other churches in the UK, ie, ecumenically and also with churches overseas. We support mission partnership programmes where ministers from the Methodist Church in Great Britain work abroad and ministers from overseas work here.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty under the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, and believe that the purpose of the work outlined above delivers public benefit.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

The District follows the Connexional policy on safeguarding as detailed in *Creating Safer Space*. Each Circuit has a safeguarding representative and the District employs a safeguarding officer to ensure the adoption of safe practice amongst those in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

## **TRUSTEES 2014-15**

### Ex-Officio

Chair

Deputy Chair

Secretary

Rev Paul Martin

Rev Ron Hicks

Rev Sylvester Deigh

District Treasurer	Mrs Diane Hardwick
District Grants Officer	Mr Mike Anderson
Resourcing Mission Secretary	Rev Carl Howarth
Rep to Methodist Council	Rev Rachel Deigh
Lay Employment Secretary	Mr Derek Jones
Lay Stationing Representative	Mr Martin Kemp
Methodist Schools' Officer	Rev Susan Whitehead
MDR Officer	Mr Neil Whitehead
Safeguarding Officer	Mr Graham Kay
District Ecumenical Officer	Rev Laurence Bullas

### Circuit Representatives

Bolton	Mrs Maudine Morris
Bolton Mission	Mrs Sylvia Fairhurst
Farnworth and Worsley	Mrs Helen Bolton
Rochdale and Littleborough	Rev Diane Hicks
Wigan	Mr John Wright
Leigh and Hindley	Mr Roddy Marr
Bury	Rev John Illsley
Rossendale	Mrs Joyce Glover

The trustees make up the District Leadership Team which meets at least four times per year.

## **VISION**

In September 2014 a new District Vision Document was adopted. This was drawn up after a long period of consultation involving key members of the District Leadership Team and three meetings in different areas of the District.

The Bolton and Rochdale District:

- seeks to provide leadership at District level that allows the effective sharing of good practice;
- encourages and inspires all Members and the wider communities in Christian Faith.

It will support projects which:

- offer the Good News of Jesus;
- encourage bold ventures where churches seek to deepen discipleship.

The Mission Actions below set out ways in which we believe the Vision will be realised:

## **MISSION ACTIONS**

In 2014/16 the District will have 3 areas of focus.

1. Leadership
2. Local communities
3. Discipleship

These have begun to and will continue to permeate our thinking as a District in terms of the allocation of resources and setting of priorities.

## 1 – LEADERSHIP

### **DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRIES LEARNING NETWORK**

This is the outcome of the Methodist Church initiative called “Fruitful Field”. In brief, it aims to promote life-long learning in the whole church which, de facto, takes some resources from initial ministerial training. It is still early days as the officers in our region (North West and Mann) work out programmes and courses in conjunction with and in response to Districts, Circuits and local churches. Wherever possible, we attempt to ensure that that which is offered by the DMLN is in keeping with our District Vision.

**SYNODS** – In keeping with the aims outlined in the District Vision (DV) we plan to have workshops at the Spring Synod and the President of the Methodist Conference will attend the Autumn Synod.

**DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM (DLT)** – At its last meeting the DLT used the second half of the meeting to discuss ways in which Transforming Churches and Communities (TCC) could be utilised in the District. The District “buys in” time from TCC and we want to make the most of that financial commitment.

**DEVELOPMENT** – Part of the Spring Synod will be given over to young people and youth leaders to encourage their talents in leading the church. The Chair of District has lobbied the DMLN to re-run the “Emerging Leaders” Conference.

**TRAINING** – Grants have been awarded from the District Training Fund. The Chair has ensured that Connexional Conferences (eg, Methodist Interfaith) are attended by someone from the District.

## 2 - COMMUNITIES

**MISSION** – This is difficult to define as it is part of our “DNA”. However, many churches are actively looking for ways in which they can make positive difference to their communities by engagement with those in need.

**EVANGELISM** – More DNA! We seek to rediscover or re-emphasise our *raison d’être*: to respond to the love of God in Christ. This is done through preaching, teaching, coffee morning conversations and, of course, action.

**DISTINCTIVENESS** – We have been keen to stress that the District Vision is aspirational rather than prescriptive. Through the Stationing of ministers and District Grants we have sought to encourage that which is contextually appropriate.

**COMMITMENT** – Circuits are very good in expressing their commitment to partner churches. Small churches, which may be able to do little practical mission will support those that do. For example, most churches in the Wigan Circuit support *The Brick* (a multi-agency support group for refugees, asylum seekers, ex-offenders, the homeless, etc) through giving of food and finance. Similar examples prevail across the District.

**HOSPITALITY** – Some churches have been encouraged to consider what is meant by Radical Hospitality (The Chair led a session on the book from which this phrase is taken, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase). In small but significant ways we are trying harder to engender a sense of belonging. For example, the “Reception Desk”

at Bolton Methodist Mission was renamed the “Welcome Desk”, as this is more in keeping with what a Christian community should be about (incidentally, the Welcome Desk was purchased using a District Grant).

**SCHOOLS** – The Chair and District Schools Officer visit the Methodist and Methodist/Anglican schools in the District to lead collective worship and speak with pupils and staff. An annual Conference is held for Heads, Chaplains and Governors with a keynote speaker. The Chair also hosts a meeting and lunch for heads of schools. An ambitious and exciting initiative in the Wigan Circuit may come to fruition in the next year.

### **3 – DISCIPLESHIP**

We support initiatives to do things differently. Sadly, we recognise that our traditional ways of doing things are not leading to the growth in number of disciples which we would like to see. This needs further consideration.

**LEARNING** – A minority of churches commit to learning through different courses. We do not have data on the number of churches which have house groups – forums for significant learning. The DMLN has arranged a number of courses which have been attended by members across the District; further monitoring is necessary.

**HEALTHY CHURCHES AND CIRCUITS** – The Healthy Church star seems to have waned! This may be because churches and circuits, having gone down this route, feel little need to revisit. However, the principle of reflecting on what we are doing as churches and circuits is one to cherish and this is an area we will revisit in the District Leadership Team.

**ECUMENISM** – There are seven churches in the District which are either Local Ecumenical Partnerships or have significant sharing agreements with other churches. Most Circuits have churches which allow other denominations to use their premises (under agreement with the Managing Trustees). We have two ministers who are Recognised and Regarded as Methodist Presbyters and four who are Authorised Presbyters.

**CONCLUSION** – This report gives a brief overview of what has happened in the District. There are many other meetings, initiatives and developments which are not mentioned here. For example, Meetings with Circuit Stewards, the re-formation of the District Property panel which advises churches on proposed building schemes. We remain committed to our primary goals of offering the Good News of Jesus and deepening discipleship.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Through the District Leadership Team, risks faced by the District have been considered. Where appropriate, risks have been transferred by paying insurers to take the risks. Security and safety of our churches is largely for those churches to determine and to mitigate following advice.

The District manse is the subject of a quinquennial inspection and the report of this is reviewed by the District Manse trustees. Action is taken to reduce the risks of injury to all who have a legitimate purpose to be on those premises.

We have considered the resilience of Circuits and the risk that they will not meet their assessments. We judge that there are sufficient resources to cover any probable shortfall in the following year.

The District operates within a statutory framework of regulation and seeks to ensure that it follows Methodist standing orders. It relies on the Connexional Office to provide guidance on changes that could affect the District.

## **TRUSTEES EXPENSES**

Trustees claim for reimbursement of travel expenses related to attendance at meetings and for reimbursement of small-value administration costs.

## **TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the District's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees have:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently using the accruals method
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- followed applicable accounting standards
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the District and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the District and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The District accounts are not a consolidation of the accounts of the Circuits in the District. The District budget is prepared by first anticipating the expenditure for the forthcoming year and then determining how that sum will be raised. In 2014/15 90% of the General Fund income came from the Circuits within the District. This income met 95% of General Fund expenditure, with the remainder coming from reserves (using around 1% of reserves) with the agreement of District Leadership Team and Synod. A similar situation is anticipated in 2015/16.

The District Advance Fund makes grants to Circuits, churches and other organisations, to further the charitable objectives of the District and the work of Methodism in the local area. Grant applications are assessed by the District Grants Committee and approved by the District Leadership Team. Of the balance of £301,207 at the year end, £238,054 had been earmarked for future mission projects over the next five years.

## **RESERVES POLICY**

### **General Funds**

£57,787 is in Fixed Assets (a nominal value for the District Manse with capital spend included, then straight line depreciation ) and £14,307 relates to investments with Chapel aid and TMCP).

£15,031 is set aside for refurbishment/major repairs of the District Manse.

£89,405 remaining in the general fund represents approximately 2 years of annual expenditure (based on a £40,000 average). Some of the surplus may be required in future to alleviate the impact of any changes to District Boundaries including changes relating to using connexionally based formula for circuit assessments. Some of the surplus will be used in 2015/16 to meet some of the District priorities.

**Restricted Funds**

£301,207 is in the District Advance Fund. As at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015, £238,054 is committed to ongoing mission projects over the next five years . The remainder (and any in year funds) will be designated at future meetings of the District Grants Committee. £12,817 relates to a number of small funds. £8,721 relate to training (lay and ordained), £1,790 is for the Williamstown project and the remaining funds are for a number of small projects.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Circuit and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Circuit and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.