

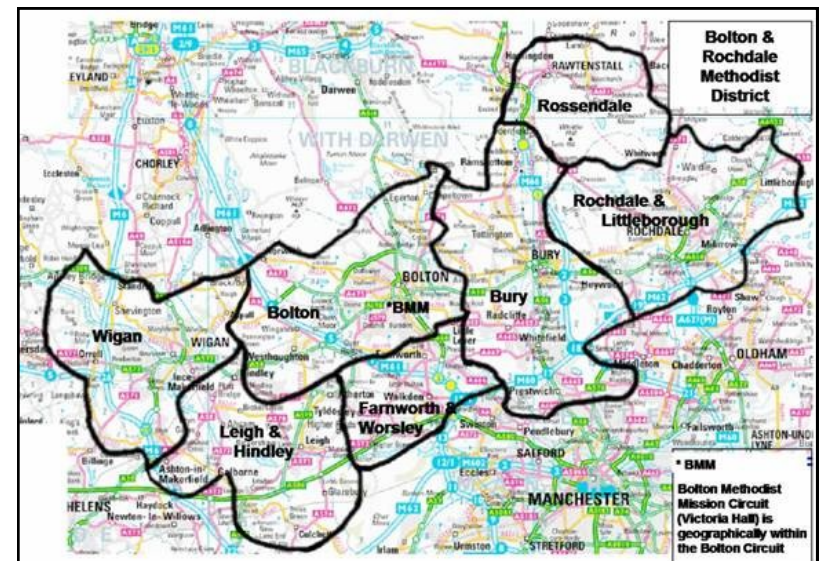


The **Methodist** Church

Bolton and Rochdale District (6)

Representative Synod Agenda Saturday 16 April 2016 9:30am

Trinity Methodist Church, Market Street,
Farnworth, BL4 8EX. Farnworth & Worsley Circuit



www.barmd.org.uk

Charity Registration No: 1130502

Much needed support for Phakamisa continues through regular giving; individual, group and church donations; donations in lieu of presents; coffee mornings and other events.

Every penny counts! Gift Aid really makes a difference, and a small amount through monthly giving by becoming a Phakamisa Partner helps to ensure a regular income.

Funding is vital for Phakamisa's day-to-day work, but so too is prayer.

Brian Tomkins has retired from the UK Trust. We thank him for his valuable contribution over many years and are pleased to welcome Jill Heppolette as a new trustee.

If you would like more information about Phakamisa's work, Phakamisa Partners and Gift Aid, or receive the Phakamisa Newsletters by email please contact:

Dawn Lancashire admees@talktalk.net 0161 703 9505

Jill Heppolette jollyjill2004@yahoo.co.uk 01204 295582

Please continue to pray for our links with South Africa and use the Prayer Handbook.

Thank you for your prayers and support of Phakamisa in any way.

Dawn Lancashire

Dear Friends

Our Spring Synod meets in its Representative Session on Saturday **16 April** 2016 from 9.30am to 1.00pm in the Farnworth and Worsley Circuit at Trinity Methodist Church, Market Street, Farnworth, Bolton BL4 8EX.

We are privileged to have as our guest Paul Field. Paul is a talented musician, singer-songwriter who has produced such musicals as *Daybreak*, *Breaking Bread*, and *Burning Questions*. Most recently he has written *Stolen Lives*, a thought-provoking presentation which looks at the issues of historical and contemporary slavery through a combination of music, songs, words, images, film and animation. *Stolen Lives* is being produced at the Triangle Methodist Church on the same evening of Synod, 16 April (7.30pm, Church Road, Bolton BL1 5SH).

In the first half of Synod we will conduct our District business so I hope and pray that minds will be focussed to allow the necessary time for Paul to share with us.

There are currently two probationer ministers in the District, Revs Lesley Dinham and Gill Sharp. The Ordinands' Testimony Service will be on **Sunday 22 May**, 6.30pm at St Helen's Road Methodist Church, Henniker Road, Bolton BL3 3TP. Please support the probationers as they go forward for ordination at the Methodist Conference in July.

I look forward to seeing you at Synod.

Your attendance and contribution is valued and appreciated, as is all that you do in your local church and circuits.

Blessings

Paul

Directions to Trinity Methodist Church, Market Street, Farnworth, BL4 8EX:

The church is well situated with good access from the M61 motorway, junction 3.

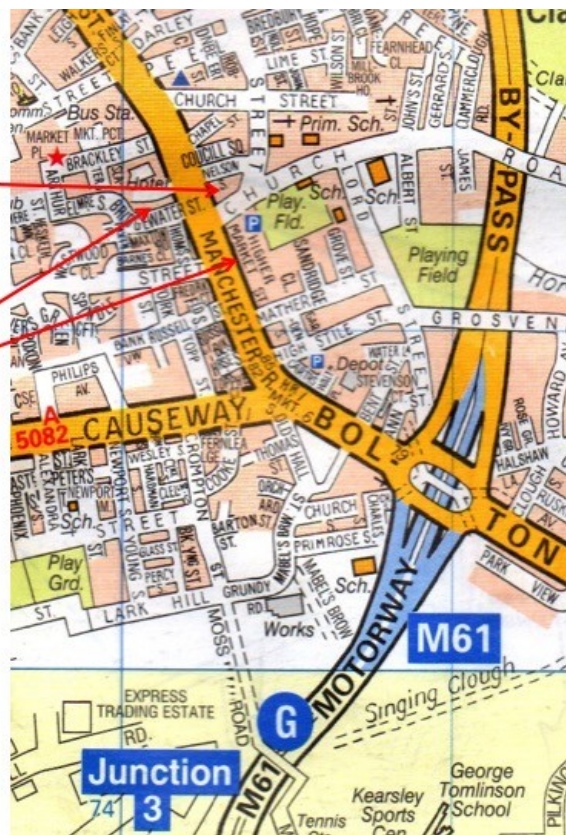
There are car parks at both sides of the church, and adjacent to the church (Hollands Nursing Home) as well as opposite the church. Please see the map below indicating car parks, which are Council owned and therefore free to park. We strongly encourage you to car share where possible to reduce our carbon footprint and save money.

Trinity Methodist Church Farnworth. BL4 8EX

Car parks on either side of building entrances via Nelson St or Church Rd

Additional car parks

Stewards (in high viz jackets) will be on hand to help with directions etc.



South Africa Links: Phakamisa

www.phakamisa.org

UK Registered Charity Number 1095757

Phakamisa puts God at the centre

It was good to welcome Thokozani Poswa, Director of Phakamisa, to the UK last year and have her share with us at Walkden, Glazebury and Victoria Hall. This was the first time that Thokozani had travelled outside South Africa. Those who met her I am sure felt greatly uplifted by her enthusiasm and passion for Phakamisa, and also humbled to hear her share her own heartfelt life story. It was a privilege and an amazing experience having her stay with John and myself (the house was very quiet after she left us!). Thank you to all for your warm welcome. It meant so much to Thokozani – she really felt loved and supported.



I have picked out some snippets highlighting Phakamisa's work in 2015:

- the importance and value of devotions before training sessions
- providing opportunities for the caregivers and teachers to share their stories, often painful.

- the value of training – early childhood development and economic empowerment

- the increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children attending the Wandering Teacher Schools

- increased members in Tholuthandu (HIV AIDS support group)
- ongoing development of the men's Poultry Project.

Rural Affairs

In November 2015 I attended the National Rural Officers' gathering at the Arthur Rank Centre. We began with a farm walk; the problems facing family farms were brought into sharp focus. Having children who are not interested in farming combined with very few being interested in either buying or renting farms means many farmers are trapped on their farms long after the age of retirement. The results are plain to see: deteriorating health and a rapidly declining business.

The gathering was addressed by Revd Richard Teal, the Chair of the Cumbria District who spoke about the ecumenical work of "A Vision for Cumbria". The result is 'God for All' – a fresh way to help everyone in Cumbria discover more of God and God's purposes for their lives, and a fresh way to encourage churches to be vibrant and loving communities serving and worshipping God.' The denominations are developing Mission Communities whereby the churches in a small geographical area come together for missional purposes with evangelism as a main priority. The challenges are many, but people are optimistic about the future mission and ministry of the church. Check it out at www.godforall.org.uk

We also heard about Community engagement in the Diocese of Oxford and all about international cereal markets! If you want to know the outlook for the markets, apparently you need a crystal ball; which probably sums up the current state of the national agricultural industry. Unusually there is no one area that is doing well. Please continue to pray for all involved and here is where to find help: Farming Help: 0845 367 9990 (7am - 11pm) farmers can reach three farming charities, with just ONE CALL

The Farming Community Network: www.fcn.org.uk,

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution www.rabi.org.uk,

The Addington Fund, www.addingtonfund.org.uk.

Worship resources, including appropriate prayers, are freely available from the Arthur Rank Centre website at

www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk.

The website also offers training schemes, discipleship courses, Messy Church materials for rural churches and lots of ideas for the main Christian festivals and some you may not have come across before. Don't forget Rogation Sunday and Plough Sunday.

David Burrow

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Representative Synod Agenda: Saturday 16 April 2016

9.30am – 1.00pm

1. Opening Worship
2. Welcome to Synod
3. Formal business:
 - a. Hours of session
 - b. Appointment of scrutineers -
 - c. Dispensations:
 - d. Apologies:
 - e. Correspondence
4. District Nomination Committee report – Paul Martin
5. Probationers – Lesley Dinham and Gill Sharp
6. Finance – Fiona Gorton
7. Work of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network – John Squares
8. District Vision and Policy
9. Safeguarding – Graham Kay
10. Christian Aid – Bex Turner
11. Memorials
12. Appointments
- Coffee** (please visit the stalls and displays!)
13. Presbyters leaving the District:
 - a. Retiring: Ron & Diane Hicks
 - b. Stephen Radford, Daniel French, Samuel Uwimana, Janice Trimble
14. Dates of forthcoming Synods:
 - 10 September 2016 – Representative at Bolton Road, Bury
 - 15 March 2017 – Presbyteral at Stacksteads
 - 8 April 2017 – Representative at Bedford with President, Roger Walton
 - 2 September 2017 - Representative at St Andrews Rochdale
15. Paul Field
16. Courtesies
17. Closing Devotions

The Dalit Solidarity campaign culminates in the Paul Field concert in May in London at which two Dalit women from the church in North India will be present as part of their visit to the UK as guests of MWiB.

Our newest venture is a five year Creative writing Competition - a meditative or reflective piece of prose or poetry on the theme "From deep within", open to anyone over 18yrs male or female, ask your local administrator for details. Closing date May 15th, please hurry. Several women from the District are looking forward to being part of a lively gathering of 250 women from all over Britain at our Annual residential conference at Swanwick Derbyshire.

We are currently seeking our next Vice president, someone who will help to lead our District team forward into the future. If you know of women with enthusiasm and commitment for encouraging women to know Christ and make him known, to help develop a creative spirituality, raising awareness and reaching out to women of all ages.

Do get in touch with any of the officers in this district to learn more. The women involved in District and Circuit events organise the Easter offering envelope collection, and organise the Circuit services as part of the Easter offering events.

We meet four times a year, January and June are our Business meetings and all are welcome, the District days are twice a year in March and October. These take place at various churches around the district, and focus on many subjects.

The officers at the present time are:-

President: Mrs Maureen Hawksworth, 9, Brockenhurst Drive Harwood, BL2 4HB 01204548919 hawksworth578@btinternet.com

Vice President: Mrs Jean Leech, 19 Dunham Gardens, Leigh, WN7 3DS 01942 682107

Forum Rep: Revd Anne Cash, 4 Green Bank, Harwood, Bolton BL2 3GN 01204 363989 annecash@uwclub.net

Secretary: Mrs Rosemary Young 12 Elleray Close, Little Lever, Bolton 01204 707043 b.b.young@talktalk.net

Treasurer: Mrs Glynis Hardman, 32 Aintree Road, Little Lever, Bolton

Rosemary Young

We all hope to receive kindness and respect in our later years and we know that sensitive, attentive caring can make a big difference to the quality of life. We ask for both your financial support and your prayers so that more older people will benefit from the loving, Christian based care MHA provides.

For more information on how we use our fundraised income and what we aim to achieve, with your help, over the next 10 years download **'A Year in Our Life'** at www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/our-publications/ or contact us for a copy.

News:

In November 2015 MHA was delighted to win the Laing Buisson 'Excellence in Dementia Care Award' for our work with music therapy. This interactive therapy enables people with dementia to express themselves and engage with their surroundings. Family and friends frequently comment on how much more expressive and communicative their loved ones with dementia become once they begin the therapy, and how it eases stress and agitation. This therapy is provided without charge in all our Homes with dementia care, and is financed from our fundraised income.

Methodist Women in Britain

Currently the only circuits of this District that are involved in MWiB are Bolton, Farnworth and Worsley, Bury, Leigh and Hindley, half of the district circuits.

It would be wonderful if the whole District discovered what MWiB have to offer as an interesting, stimulating and exciting movement, "concerned to know Christ and make him known", through creative spirituality and support for women world wide.

If you have internet access do have a look at the web-site MWiB.org.uk. MWiB is a registered charity, governed by 31 district forum reps and 5 executives, all volunteers.

A pack of Spiritual and Practical resources for Dementia Friendly Churches, was launched last year and is still available.

A heritage exhibition is now complete and is open to the public at Epworth and details have been sent to every circuit via the circuit administrator.

Synod - what it is and what it does

Synod is the policy formulating and promoting court of the District. It is the link between Conference and the Connexional team on the one hand and the Circuits and local churches on the other.

Synod has oversight of all District affairs. Its purpose is to assist mission, give inspiration, and ensure inter-relation of all aspects of church life in the District through its various officers and committees. It is a forum in which issues of public concern relevant to the witness of the church may be addressed.

Its business is the work of God in the District expressed in worship, conversation, formal business, communication of Conference matters and submission of memorials.

Membership of Representative Synod (SO410)

The Vice-President and all ex-Vice-Presidents of the Conference, being eligible;

All probationers stationed in the District, all ministers residing for the purposes of the stations in the District and any other minister or probationer entered in the stations as a member of Synod;

The Senior Circuit Steward of each Circuit in the District;

A number of lay representatives elected by the Circuit Meeting to equal the number of full-time Circuit presbyters and deacons (including vacancies) appointed to the Circuit plus one (substitutes may also be elected);

All members of the District Leadership Team;

The lay representatives of the Synod to the Methodist Council, if appointed, the District Lay Stationing Representative, the District Property Secretary and any officers appointed to the Synod to be responsible for world church affairs;

Two persons appointed by the last preceding meeting of the

Methodist Children and Youth Assembly from the young people connected with the life of the Methodist Church in the District who attended that Assembly and who are members of the Methodist Church;

All eligible lay persons who are Conference-elected representatives to the Conference

All lay representatives elected by the Synod to the last preceding or next following Conference

Such lay District officers as the Synod may determine. Namely, Disabilities Adviser, District Archivist, Appraisals Officer, Grants Officer, MHA Representative, Local Preachers' Secretary, Action for Children Secretary, MWiB President, MWiB Forum Representative, Press Officer, World Church Committee Secretary;

Synod-elected lay members, 12 in total (4 to be elected each year to serve a three-year term and eligible for nomination and re-election to a further three years)

The secretary of the Synod;

The assistant secretary of the Synod (if appointed).

Reminders:

Representatives and Substitutes

Please bring this booklet with you to Synod as spare copies will not be available. Circuit Stewards and other representatives who cannot attend should pass their papers to their Circuit Meeting-elected substitute.

Expenses: Supernumerary ministers may apply for their travelling expenses for attending the Synod from the District Administrator.

Methodist Homes

At Methodist Homes (MHA), we have the privilege of supporting and caring for around 16,000 older people, more than half of whom are members of our Live at Home schemes, living in their own homes. In 2015 we adopted a 10-year strategy which outlines our aim to increase the number of older people we serve directly to 50,000, together with the hope of influencing wider society as well. The area which will see the biggest growth is our community service, Live at Home, which aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst the older population. Currently services include one-to-one befriending, lunch clubs, outings and exercise groups – but there is a real opportunity to become more innovative. We have initiated 'Project Evolution' to drive these developments and by April 2017 we will have established the right relationships, tools and resources to enable the Charity to directly reach more than 36,000 older people in communities through its Live at Home Schemes by 2025.

The theme of the 2016 Methodist Homes Sunday Appeal on June 12th is 'Creating Communities that Care'. The theme echoes what we are increasingly coming to see as one of the core purposes of everything MHA is involved in, whether in residential work, the activities of the Live at Home Schemes or in a growing desire to join with others in campaigning for a fairer society for older people. We address the issue of loneliness which highlights the need for people to be connected in a community of their choice and as the numbers of older people continue to grow, each of those three words will become increasingly important.

Marking MHA Sunday is an opportunity to support the work which we are involved in, and it is also a way of ensuring that issues around the care and support of older people are included on our Church's agenda, so that together we can look out for those in our community who can so easily be overlooked. There will be an Order of Service contained within our Spring Heart & Soul magazine. You can also download a copy and other resources at www.mha.org.uk or contact Lesley France on 01332 296200 or email lesley.france@mha.org.uk

District Fund For The Support Of Presbyters & Deacons

CIRCUIT	2013/2014	2014/2015	
6/1	Bolton	500.00	495.00
6/2	Bolton Mission	0.00	0.00
6/3	Farnworth & Worsley	605.00	605.00
6/4	Rochdale & Littleborough	855.00	820.00
6/5	Wigan	215.00	100.00
6/7	Leigh & Hindley	867.50	867.50
6/8	Bury	2,370.00	2,370.00
6/14	Rossendale	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL	5,412.50	5,257.50

Once again, thanks are expressed to the churches for their continued support of the Fund.

Barbara Tong

Notices of Motion

These must be submitted in writing to the Chair of District and Secretary of Synod fourteen days before the date of Synod. The Secretary will ensure that they are distributed to members not later than the opening of Synod. Only on matters of urgency, and by express permission of the Synod, may notices of motion be submitted during a session of the Synod. (S0413.4)

Rules of Debate

These are contained in S0413 of CPD, which is available to all ministers and online at www.methodist.org.uk. Copies of the SO can be obtained from the District Office on request.

Representatives to Conference

The following have been elected to attend the 2016 Methodist Conference:

Ministers: Revd Darren Garfield, Revd Stephen Radford

Laypersons: Leonie O'Donoghue, Mike Anderson and Josh Orme.

Ministers who have died

Revd Michael Chapman, Revd Kenneth Sowerby, Deacon Edna Bell

Memorials to Conference

The deadline for Circuit memorials is 31 March and for District memorials is 18 May. The Synod Secretary should receive copies of such District memorials by 9 April.

Future Dates of Synod:

10 September 2016 – Representative at Bolton Road, Bury, BL8 2PH
15 March 2017 – Presbyteral at Stacksteads, Rossendale, OL13 0NB
8 April 2017 – Representative at Bedford, Leigh and Hindley, WN7 3DJ
2 September 2017 - Representative at St Andrews, Rochdale, OL16 1TU

District Leadership Team

The District Leadership Team (DLT) is constituted under Standing Order 402(1) which states, "Each district Synod shall annually appoint a district Policy Committee, and may determine the name by which it is to be known in the District." In our District it is called the District Leadership Team and is made up of representatives from across the District, both lay and ordained, whose task is to reflect on the life of the District, implement district policy, respond to issues of concern and act as a link between the Connexion and the local circuit.

It is well represented by local circuits and district officers, who offer guidance and support in a wide range of district activities. For example, safeguarding issues, local preachers, ecumenical work, ministerial status, schools work and Ministerial Development Review.

We renew the district Safeguarding Policy annually.

We also share our views and opinions about Synod and Conference; DLT is a useful way to share and debate decisions that have been made at both district and Connexional level. A significant role is in discussing and voting on recommendations from the Grants Committee and we are very grateful to Mike Anderson for the work he does.

We are also grateful to Fiona Gorton who has taken over the role of District Treasurer from Diane Hardwick, and her contribution to the life of the District is very much appreciated.

From time to time we discuss the wider aspects of our vision as a district and the contributions from DLT members is hugely valued. This year in particular has been important in that we took a vote on the re-invitation of our Chair, Paul, following the reasoned statement from the nomination committee. We continue to hold Paul in our thoughts and prayers at this time, as synod votes on his re-invitation, and as we heed the advice from John Wesley to a People called Methodist, to *"...encourage and help each other in thus working out your salvation, and for that end watch over one another in love"*

Darren Garfield

Fundraising Events & Activities

Morecambe Bay Sponsored Walk – Saturday 13 August

Join us on this famous walk across the sands led by the Queen's Guide, Cedric Robinson. This is just one example of the many activities you can get involved in throughout the year.

Please contact us below for further information and to register.



THE QUEEN'S
90TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION

Finally, our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will celebrate her **90th** birthday on 21st April 2016. Why not celebrate by holding your very own birthday party (or even a garden party!) and aim to raise **£90** for Action for Children. We can provide posters and other materials you may need.

ACTION FOR CHILDREN NORTH WEST CONTACT DETAILS:

Action for Children North West Fundraising
501 Birchwood One
Dewhurst Road
Birchwood
Warrington
WA3 7GB
Tel : 01925 850856

Or email:

Gill Dean	gill.dean@actionforchildren.org.uk
Alysha Lawlor	alysha.lawlor@actionforchildren.org.uk
Diane Goodier	diane.goodier@actionforchildren.org.uk
Helen Noble	helen.noble@actionforchildren.org.uk

Your event can take place on any day during The Giant Wiggle week of 21st-27th March, or even another date suitable for you around that time.

We and The Very Hungry Caterpillar™ really hope you might join us in 2016 to bring to life the number one read children's story in the UK and enjoy a Giant Wiggle Walk along the way! To register simply go to : <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise/fundraising-events/the-giant-wiggle/>

Action for Children Sunday 2016

This year the anniversary of our founding is on 10th July and as always there will be a worship booklet, prayer cards and gift envelopes to use in your churches. Please get in touch if you would like more information. For those of you on our mailing list, you should receive this information automatically.

League of Light

These little boxes continue to raise over £500,000 annually and are a really simple but effective way of supporting us. If you would like one, please contact either your box secretary at church or your local Action for Children fundraiser.

Legacies

Leaving a gift in your Will is a wonderful way to make a real and lasting difference to vulnerable children. If anyone would like more information on leaving a legacy or materials to promote legacies, please contact your local fundraiser or e-mail the legacies team: legacies@actionforchildren.org.uk

Talks & Presentations

If you would like to know more about Action for Children please think about inviting your local fundraiser to talk to the congregation or perhaps a fellowship group or community group. We are always keen to promote Action for Children outside the Methodist Church and spread the word so do please get in touch.

District Treasurer's Report

District Budget 2016-17

	2015-16	2016-17
Connexional Budget	284,462	289,261
Printing, Admin, Chair, District Office expenses	10,969	12,400
Visa renewals	500	500
PA/Secretarial	12,168	12,655
Manse	5,744	5,744
Manse reserve	520	0
Training	4,500	4,500
Safeguarding	0	2000
Benevolent fund	850	850
Total	319,713	327,910

Allocation to Circuits

		2015-16	2016-17	Quarterly payment
6/1	Bolton	53,191	56,504	14,126
6/2	Bolton Mission	8,607	13,884	3,471
6/3	Farnworth and Worsley	27,851	30,504	7,626
6/4	Rochdale and Littleborough	34,000	36,000	9,000
6/5	Wigan	50,800	54,000	13,500
6/7	Leigh and Hindley	35,471	33,692	8,423
6/8	Bury	79,667	76,668	19,167
6/14	Rossendale	21,000	21,308	5,327
	Total	310,587	322,560	80,640

District Advance Fund to End February 2016

Balance 01/09/2015		£303,660.64
Income 2015/16	Connexional Advance & Priority Fund	44,154.55
	District Levy	53,912.30
	Loan repayment	6,000.00
	Interest to date	1,137.63
Total		105,204.48
Expenditure 2015/16	Grants	30,561.32
Balance 31/01/2016		378,303.80
Commitments		
2015/16		132,647.00
2016/17		34,500.00
2017/18		122,200.00
Total available		88,957.80

Fiona Gorton

Action for Children

Christmas 2015

A big thank you to all our Methodist friends - many of you held collections and special fundraising activities over Christmas. This resulted in over £25,000 being sent to us in January alone from churches in the North West!

Action for Children in the Bolton / Rochdale area:

Red Centre – Bury

Offering support and respite care to children with disabilities. We offer support, guidance and advice as well as speaking out for the rights of disabled children. The project delivers a number of services including short breaks, play schemes and youth steering groups.

Bolton Children's Rights

We ensure children's rights are a priority and speak out for them. We help young people to access services that will help them and their families.

Action for Children Campaigns

We give children and young people a voice – we are constantly lobbying government for change and raising awareness of current issues. To find out more and to email your MP – please visit:

www.actionforchildren.org.uk/campaigns

The Giant Wiggle is back!

The Giant Wiggle is a fun-filled sponsored walk for under 5s in partnership with The Very Hungry Caterpillar™. Over its first two years the event has raised over £149,000 and has grown from 32,000 children to an incredible 54,000 children taking part in creative storytelling, arts, crafts, nature trails and healthy eating – all aspects of the much loved children's book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar™.

Disability Advisor's Report

This year saw the release of the 'Toolkit' from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at MCH, please contact Jennifer Crook (on 020 7467 5292) for information on this very useful resource. It enables churches to look at a particular area of Disability and Inclusion, the 'toolkit' includes actual stories, which have been de-personalised to allow those present to reflect on the issues involved.

I would also commend the work of 'Through the Roof' a Sheffield based disability group, who has produced a set of audit tools which cover five distinct areas of disability in church life.

The main Equality, Disability and Inclusion report should be coming to the Methodist Conference this year.

I have dealt with a number of enquiries this year mainly through my involvement with the Property Consent & Resourcing Mission Group (Property), which is looking to run a series of 'Roadshows' across the District, these will include an element of advice on Disability and inclusion in regard to church property and Manses. This is my last report before I move to the Cumbria District, however I will be available for questions until early August. A new officer will be appointed next year.

God bless and thanks for your support and help.

Stephen Radford

District Grants Report

So far this year we have received 7 requests for grants and at the time of writing all have had final approval and the funds made available. In addition, we are aware of three other grant applications that will be coming to the next grants' committee on 23rd May.

The grants awarded have been made up as shown in the table below.

Area	Number of grants	% of funds allocated
Youth support	3	42
Property	1	13
Outreach and evangelism	3	45

The grants made for staff are usually spread over 2 or 3 years. We have made two training grants totally £110 and were pleased to note that in each case the Church/Circuit were also contributing to this area of staff development.

We have awarded £300 to an individual to attend a Lasallian Developing World Project in Tanzania and a further £300 to support a young person attending a Guide project in Uganda. Further statistics of the grants awarded are available on request. The District Grants Committee has delegated powers to approve grants of up to £1000 which should speed the process for the small applications. Occasionally however an issue arises that requires a matter to be discussed with the DLT and because of timing cannot first go to the grants' committee. There have been two such examples.

1. The need for a grant made to Bolton Mission to be refocused in the light of significant changes at the Mission due to withdrawal of external funding for the café. Although altering the exact detail of the project the DLT were content that the spending in the remaining years of the grant was within the spirit of the original application.

2. Support for the Oasis project in Whitefield which was tantalisingly close to being able to open but had suffered from significant delays in decision making regarding a Connexional grant and a grant from Morrisons. DLT agreed to provide assured funding to allow work to be completed that would allow the project to fully open to meet the significant need on the understanding that the funds would be repaid when grant decisions were made.

The overall funding available for grants is limited and although we are still able to make substantial grants the committee often have to reduce the amount granted below that originally requested. Applicants should take this in mind when setting their budgets. Advice on grant principles and on all aspects of the application process, including on-line applications is available from the District Grants Officer.

Mike Anderson

District Manse Advisory Committee

The members of the committee thank all of the Circuit Stewards for their dedicated, conscientious care of the District Manses, which are very valuable assets. Their task is helped when incumbents report difficulties promptly. The ancient nursery rhyme reminds us that dealing with a small problem can avoid a major battle – often with the elements – when dripping taps and overflowing gutters are left untended.

We are grateful to the Manses Stewards for providing smoke alarms and fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers, which are of little use if not checked and in an appropriate position. We again remind all that a security alarm MUST be activated when leaving the property. Insurance firms expect people to be vigilant.

We express our grateful thanks to Mr. Reg and Mrs. Eva Parry who have resigned from the committee after 24 years of service. Their concern and practical advice has been valued by all.

Margaret Wood

There are some amazing things happening across our schools e.g. the new autistic spectrum unit at Blackrod. Bedford Hall has recently become an academy with Westleigh and built a new nursery. There has been a prayer trail at Wesley Methodist Primary. Radcliffe Hall is undergoing challenging building works that will be so much better for the school. Church people are volunteering across a whole spectrum and are invaluable. All our schools have prayer spaces and places just to be. The displays around the schools are distinctive in conveying the Christian and Methodist ethos as well as inspiring for learning.

The challenges that are pertinent at the moment are the government instructions that all schools will become academies. Schools must take with them the ethos they have but there will be complexities in working out how particularly as some of our schools have Anglican connections too. Also there are some tensions regarding educating children about other faiths and parental misunderstandings and misconceptions. All of this is against the backdrop of Ofsted and society.

Finally we recognise the need for personal and church commitment and some brave strong judgements that have been and will be faced in the future in the light of developing and supporting effective Methodist Christian leadership within our schools. Our conference last year came up with many RE words! I state just a few but they add a flavour to the huge amount of missional work done in our school environments that we should never lose sight of.

RE-lationship RE-science RE-claim RE-source RE-sponsibility
RE-imagine RE-member .

In our schools we should nurture for God

“ A life for a purpose and a purpose for a life”

Helen Johnson

great help to us if a volunteer versed in property matters could be found. We have recently obtained an acceptable quotation through the help of our fundraiser, Mrs Christine Hughes, and we hope that we can now reinstate our refurbishment plans and money-raising.

Next year sees the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of the founding of MIH and we intend to celebrate this with a variety of events. MIH at Manchester is now unique; it is the only surviving House that still maintains the original ethos of Mrs Hilda Porter, who set up Houses in many UK cities, and deserves to be so lauded.

Chris Hartley

Schools Work

Our Methodist Schools in the District are thriving despite the many challenges they face. These challenges re new curriculums and assessments to meet the new government guidelines will begin to be worked out over the coming months and this has many implications. As church we must work out how best we can support and encourage them and our Chaplains, Lay workers and Ministers who serve within the system. Please keep them very much in your prayers. Education Sunday would be a good way to get involved and share our gifts with schools.

We have met with Head Teachers at the Bolton and Rochdale schools conference and with the Head teachers informally and through school visits for networking and support. It should be acknowledged that James Royal head of Blackrod works tirelessly in his role for MAST and MIST. A particular focus is how Methodist Schools can be unique in what they offer and share with each other. We are also encouraged to begin to put in place contextual support structures from the church. He is looking to create a body that supports Methodist schools in a unique way.

The school chaplains have also met together to share. There is an obvious need to raise the profile of schools work within circuits and it has been suggested that the DLMN may be able to help and contribute to this. There is also a possible requirement for training for contributors who don't know all the school language which constantly changes.

District Candidates' Committee

The District Candidates' Committee met on November 18th 2015 for a training session. This introduced new committee members to the candidating process and provided an opportunity for the whole committee to hear feedback from last year's Connexional interviews.

On January 16th 2016, 12 members of the committee met at Trinity Methodist Church, Bolton, to test the call to the Presbyteral Ministry of Mr Tom Parker from the Wigan Circuit. The committee was unanimous in recommending that Mr Parker be sent to the Connexional Candidates Committee for further testing of the call. The Connexional Committee met just before Easter and unanimously recommended that Mr Parker continue on to pre-ordination training for the presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church. We wish him and his family God's blessings as they begin this new adventure.

I would like to thank all the members of the District Candidates' Committee for their work and support this year. A number of people are stepping down, either because of retirement, moving or taking on new commitments and I wish them well for the future. I would also like to thank Rev'd Ron Hicks, the previous Secretary of the Candidates' Committee, for his help to me, as I have been settling into the role this year.

The Committee is in serious need of new members to replace those who are moving on and to enlarge its number of members to form the Committee when required for the District interviews in January 2017. If you know somebody who might be willing to serve on the committee, please contact the Chair of District, Rev'd Paul Martin, or myself.

Carolyn Lawrance

District Probationers' Committee

The district probationers' group meets regularly for training, discussion and sharing the joys and challenges of ministry. Most meetings are held jointly with the Manchester and Stockport District and three times a year we also join the Chester and Stoke and Liverpool Districts. The larger group widens discussion and enables us to invite speakers to provide further training and input. Since September 2015 sessions have looked: Conflict resolution, dealing with death and dying, CPD and Biblical exegesis. The Probationers' Retreat at the end of February was again at Gladstone's Library. The retreat was led by Revd Alison Tomlin. This spring we will be reviewing the programme with the probationers and preparing for both the Ordinands' Testimony service and Ordination. The District has two probationers; both are in their second year of probation.

Gillian Sharp serves the Wigan Circuit. She continues to have a deep sense of being where God has called her to be. Her natural empathy and humility have enabled her to deal with pastoral situations that would have seriously challenged an experienced minister; no doubt these gifts are grounded in her prayer life and discipleship. She has continued to develop her work as a school chaplain and has developed very good relationships in the public arena leading to her being involved in the community through Wigan Borough Council's 'Dementia friendly communities scheme' and 'The deal in action' scheme.

Gill is studying for the Postgraduate Diploma in Mission at Cliff College and recognising the need for lifelong learning is being encouraged to study for the MA. On completion of her Diploma in June she will continue to develop her leadership skills and her understanding of worship, spirituality and discipleship through further reading. Gill's preaching and leading of worship are much appreciated in the circuit. Her style has been described as 'creative, respectful, honest and sincere'. She is an effective communicator; this was evidenced in her presentation of her Gospel in context project at the DPC.

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Methodist International House

We are pleased to report that, as last year, residence numbers have remained high; MIH continues to be a very popular choice of stay for students both from overseas and the UK. Our postgraduate student population has also been maintained particularly important as they stay with us throughout the year and this engenders an atmosphere in which friendships are forged to last. As Mr Dimitri Brady, the Warden, recently noted, MIH is a *continuing* community with close contacts being maintained through the social media long after residents leave us. In his considerable experience this is very rare, and it is in no small measure a tribute to him and that of his Deputy Warden and team of Assistant Wardens, whose hard work achieves this outcome. We have maintained our team of external advisers and volunteers who enrich life at MIH, and continued to support our local community by offering local groups our facilities for meetings. As part of our pastoral caring we were still able to offer rooms to some refugee students.

Mrs Audry Barnard and Mrs Christine Hartley, the MIH Chair, continued to advertise the work of MIH to churches in our district and others through their 'Friends of MIH' initiative, and this has brought in vital funds.

Much of the Executive Officers' time, in particular, has been taken in maintaining the facilities and fabric of our buildings. As well as dealing with problems as they arise, the programme of refurbishing the student rooms continued as we were able. Our Treasurer, Mr John Hughes, continually monitored our cash flow and ensured that we remained in credit. Our plans to upgrade the residents' kitchens had to be put 'on hold', in part because of the difficulty in obtaining three creditable quotations for the work; it would be of

The courses are run on a regional basis in conjunction with the DMLN, and we have courses locally at Chorley in April and Penrith in May.

Safer Recruitment

Revised Safer Recruitment Guidelines were approved, last year, by Methodist Council and they were distributed around the District at the beginning of September 2015.

It is important that all Circuits and Churches follow these guidelines, and that all aspects of the process are completed before the individual starts in their role.

Case work practice

The details of casework undertaken by the District Safeguarding Officer must of course remain confidential, but over the course of the year advice and support has been given on:

- Assessing blemished DBS checks
- Investigating allegations
- Preventing access to children
- Address challenging behaviour by vulnerable adults
- Advising on action required when there is a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult in their family
- Ensuring Covenants of Care are in place and reviewed
- Advice about cross denominational issues
- Monitoring individual behaviour towards vulnerable church members

It is important to remember that whenever there is a concern in a Circuit or local Church, this should be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer.

If there is any aspect of Safeguarding on which you require clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Graham Kay
District Safeguarding Officer

Gill's confidence has grown noticeably since last year and to quote her superintendent, 'Gill offers an impressive example of Christian discipleship and in the churches she serves is greatly appreciated and loved.'

Lesley Dinham serves the Bolton Circuit. Lesley's sense of call has been strongly affirmed during the last year and her growth in confidence has meant she continues to minister with enthusiasm, joy and energy. Her ability to reflect theologically is also impressive; she evidenced this in her Gospel in Context project as she reflected on Holy Saturday.

Lesley continues to nurture her own relationship with God, and actively seeks to encourage others to do the same. Lesley's excellent interpersonal skills, allied with her approachable and easy manner, have enabled her to form strong relationships with colleagues, church members and those outside the churches. The DPC noted her gift of empathy and her ability to deal well with conflict. Lesley has a passion for the church and wants it to be a vital presence in the future. People have confidence in her leadership; she has the gifts and graces to be creative in her role and to challenge and inspire others. Lesley leads inclusive, dynamic and captivating worship with confidence. Lesley will submit her dissertation for her BA in Theology at Queens in July. To quote Lesley's superintendent, 'Lesley has been good for us in the Bolton Circuit and it has been our privilege to accompany her in her probationary time.'

The District Probationers' Committee voted unanimously that both Gill and Lesley go forward to reception into full Connexion and ordination.

David Burrow

Continuing Development in Ministry

There have been considerable changes in the way that Continuing Development in Ministry is administered and supported in the Methodist Church. There has been a transition of the funding to the DMLN. This is now complete following a transitional year, that funding was used to enable the Pre Advent Retreat day at Whalley Abbey and support surprisingly few Ministers to develop their ministry in the past year. Our ministry is poorer if we do not take time to take in and learn. The CDiM funding of £250 and four days of leave for this purpose are part of the 'Covenant' that the Methodist Church has with its Ministers. It is meant to be used in connection with the outcome of the Ministerial Development Reviews. (The four days are still available). I am grateful that our Chair Rev P Martin has supported those who have applied for funding this year. These have been used to fund an Advanced Reconciliation Course along with other creative resourcing courses.

The pre advent retreat day is part of the provision for CDiM and this year was led by the Rev K Davies. With the removal of the funding the nature and location of this event which is mandatory is being reviewed by the Chair.

This is my last report as CDiM officer before I move to the Cumbria District this summer. The future of CDiM will have to be resolved nationally, I want to thank all of those who have supported me in this role over the last six years, especially Mr N Whitehead (the District's MDR officer). Finally I would like to commend the courses and training available through the DMLN NW & Mann, please contact Alison Ransome.

Stephen Radford

District Safeguarding Officer Report

As you will be aware, I work across the Bolton & Rochdale District, Cumbria District and Lancashire District. This report covers the work that I undertake in all of the three Districts.

Past Cases Review

The report on the Past Cases Review was issued in May, last year, and Methodist Conference appointed an Implementation Group to take forward all of the recommendations from the review.

Some of the recommendations will have an impact at District, Circuit and Church level, and I will keep Ministers and Safeguarding Coordinators advised, as appropriate, on any changes to be implemented as and when this needs to be done.

Creating Safer Space Training:

Foundation Module

The Methodist Conference in 2015 agreed that there should be a revision to the Foundation Module from September 2016, taking into account the learning from the Past Cases Review and updating changes to legislation etc. Additionally, it agreed that there should be a new Refresher Foundation Module, again from September 2016, to be attended by those who are reaching the fifth anniversary of attending the original Foundation Module.

As a result of this, the districts will have significant numbers of people requiring training [within 6 months of taking up their role] and retraining before August 2017. As the responsibility for arranging and delivering the Foundation Module training lies initially with the circuits, they are being encouraged to review the number of accredited trainers that they have and to recruit more if needed. I have already provided Circuit Safeguarding Coordinators and Superintendent Ministers with details of the Train the Trainer courses being organised by the DMLN.

Leadership Module

The majority of those who need to complete this module have now done so, but there are still some outstanding in each of the Districts. They now need to attend the course as a matter of urgency.

Ecumenical Report

Several Churches Together groups from the District took part in a highly successful evening sharing insights and experiences in February. It took place at Bury URC church and was led by the inspirational Lloyd Gordon, appointed last year as Ecumenical Facilitator for Greater Manchester Churches Together. The evening – the first of its kind – was intended mainly for CT groups in Bolton, Bury and Rochdale, and seemed to show that events targeting a limited area are more attractive than those for the whole conurbation. A follow-up event is being planned.

GMCT's annual Assembly will be focused on the part churches can play in the coming devolved structure of government in Greater Manchester. The keynote speaker will be Tony Lloyd, interim equivalent of London's Boris Johnson - full-time Mayor of Manchester (the conurbation rather than the city). Anyone can attend, although only official representatives can vote at the AGM. The event will take place at the Salford Cathedral Centre on Monday, October 10, from 5.00pm.

Meanwhile, I continue to offer whatever help and support I can to Local Ecumenical Partnerships and CT groups. As the Bolton Circuit looks set to withdraw from the St George's Anglican/ Methodist/URC LEP in Westhoughton, the Farnworth and Worsley Circuit celebrates a thriving new partnership with the URC at Little Hulton. Work should begin soon on a new church and community building with the help of a substantial grant from the Methodist Connexion.

Laurie Bullas

Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network:

Our work has a number of aims, including developing sustainable networks of people who gather around a shared ministry, providing learning opportunities for lay leaders, learning opportunities for ordained leaders, supporting the learning infrastructure of the Methodist Connexion, support for churches, circuits, districts and individuals for development.

We work under 4 areas of focus, Church and Community, challenging and equipping mission-shaped communities, Ministry Development forming and equipping those who share in lay and ordained ministry, Discipleship Development nurturing and equipping Christ-like disciples, and Scholarship, Research & Innovation enabling and encouraging creative thinkers in an environment of scholarship, research and innovation.

We have specialists in the first three categories all eager to help with your needs and each DMLN member is beaver away to provide resources that are well researched and innovative.

Here in the North West & Mann region we have allocated one person in our team to be the link for you to access all of this provision – in your District this is John Squares. This does not mean that John will deliver everything himself, but we hope it makes things simpler for you in terms of having just one person to access rather than the 8 of us in our regional team or the additional 50+ of our specialist colleagues based in either Methodist Church House or Cliff College.

I have written a fuller report for your Synod which you can find on the news section of our website www.discipleshaped.org this report is a snapshot for your Synod papers.

What we've been doing uniquely in your District

- Methodist Identity Project which we are working on and will be able how claiming our Methodist Identity may change the way we see ourselves.
- Domestic Abuse Awareness course.

- John Squares has been preaching in the District with frequency and working with congregations to talk through discipleship programmes, better support for leaders and vision.
- We have had an active role in your Superintendent's retreat and enjoyed the open sharing there.
- We have offered supervision to your One Programme appointment.
- We have had one on one vocational talks and have run Vocational Days for those exploring what the many ways God may be calling you could look like.
- We have worshipped with you when possible, spread words about your events to the region and have opened doors for you to explore events in other parts of the region.
- We pray for you daily.

What we have offered to every District

Working alongside churches in visioning and setting a direction of travel. And – responding to individual ministers, churches and circuits as requests arise. This work is varied and may involve one meeting, or involvement over a period of time. Since May Synod 2015 these are the headlines for some of that which we have offered;

- Connecting Disciples
- Resourcing lay employees
- Growing Through Conflict
- Worship: Leading & Preaching
- Circuits and churches considering their ministry
- Children and young people's participation
- Pioneer Pathways
- Safeguarding
- Lifelong learning for Presbyters and Deacons
- Resourcing lay employees
- Circuit Stewards
- Discipleship development
- Candidating Support
- Methodist Identity

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Property Consent and Resourcing Mission

In our Report last year we finished by expressing our belief that buildings should be a Resource for Mission, and extended an invitation to any Church or Circuit to contact us if they felt that we could offer encouragement and support. That has happened in one or two particular situations where we have been personally encouraged, and even excited, by the vision being shown by local people to use their buildings in creative ways. The invitation to be a part of that envisioning process is part of our raison d'être and we do hope that Churches and Circuits will continue to make use of us.

We would also like to be useful as a District Property Panel by creating a "Property Road Show", which hopefully will help local Churches and Circuits in the ongoing challenge of looking after their premises.

During the past year we were privileged to attend, along with Mike Anderson the District Grants Officer, the Connexional Resourcing Mission Forum held at the Kings Park Conference Centre in Northampton. This was well worthwhile with some inspirational presentations, from the Launceston Skate Park in Cornwall to the West End Methodist Church, Community Centre and Café in Stoke-on-Trent.

The one presentation from which all our churches could gain something was that by Joanna Booth, the education Officer at Blackburn Cathedral, called "Achieving Excellence in Visitor Welcome". However warm the welcome of our congregations we need to ask ourselves how welcoming our buildings are. Much of what she suggested with regard to that could be readily adapted by many of our churches. If anyone wants a PDF of her presentation please let us know.

Carl and Pam Howarth
District Property Secretaries