

From the Circuit Meeting

A Circuit Meeting was held on 2nd December, hosted by Hanwell Methodist Church.

Opening Devotions

Rev Steve Day welcomed those present and opened the meeting with a reading from Isaiah 11.

Building a vision for our future together

The Circuit continues work on the process of discerning a shared vision for the future. A small “Guide Team”, with representation from across the Circuit, will review the draft listening framework before it is issued more widely, with the aim of ensuring the process is proportionate and manageable for all churches. Churches are being encouraged to reflect on their strengths, challenges and opportunities as part of a listening phase that will inform the next stage of planning. External support from the District and Learning Network is assisting this process. Alongside this, several members will attend training in Faith-Rooted Community Organising at Cliff College, with the aim of strengthening engagement with local communities.

Property Matters

King’s Hall

Work continues on exploring options for the future of King’s Hall. Initial conversations have taken place with Ealing Council’s planning officers to understand what may be acceptable in principle, while maintaining the balance between retaining heritage elements and introducing new development. The Circuit is continuing to work with professional advisers as part of the pre-application process, with the aim of establishing a scheme that is both financially viable and capable of securing planning support while maintaining a meaningful Methodist presence on the site.

The meeting passed five resolutions to support the next stage of this work, the first of which commits the Circuit to proceeding with the preparation of a pre-application for the redevelopment and to seek clear, focused feedback from Ealing Council’s planning officers on the acceptability of the proposals, so that

any emerging scheme reflects planning guidance and has the best possible chance of progressing.

Secondly, the meeting agreed to appoint Wainwrights Architects to develop the emerging proposals and support the project through the early design and planning stages.

The Circuit also agreed to apply to the District Advance Fund for £25,000 to support the pre-application stage of the redevelopment, helping to cover professional fees and preparatory work needed before submitting a planning application.

Fourthly, the meeting agreed to seek designation of the King's Hall project as a Replacement Project under Connexional property provisions. This would allow funds from the sale of the Costons Avenue manse (see below) to be retained locally and used towards the redevelopment.

The final resolution approved the allocation of £4,200 for professional support to assist the Circuit in progressing the project through the pre-application stage.

Pitshanger Methodist Church

Several organisations have recently expressed interest in either leasing or purchasing the building. These include a Montessori nursery, a Christian church seeking to establish a local hub, and a Middle Eastern Orthodox congregation interested in purchasing the property should the Circuit decide to sell. A small group has been delegated to continue discussions with interested parties and assess proposals as they develop. The meeting also considered whether to appoint Rapleys to market the building more widely, and a decision will be made by the next meeting in March.

Costons Avenue (Vacant Manse)

The property sale is now complete and keys have been exchanged. The Circuit intends to use some of the proceeds of the sale to fund the King's Hall redevelopment project.

Safeguarding and EDI

Foundation Module safeguarding training took place in January, with a further session planned in April. Churches were reminded of the importance of ensuring that all relevant officers and volunteers remain up to date with their safeguarding

training and DBS checks. The meeting noted the continuing challenges around access to Advanced Module safeguarding training. The Circuit will continue to engage with the District regarding future training provision. Churches were thanked for their ongoing diligence in maintaining safeguarding standards and supporting those who undertake these important roles.

Local Preachers & Worship Leaders

One Local Preacher remains on trial and continues to progress through the required stages of training and assessment.

Two Worship Leaders are currently in training and are beginning to gain experience in leading worship within their local churches under appropriate supervision.

Liv Kaszewska, a student Local Preacher attached to Methodist Central Hall Westminster, will on occasion accompany Phil Male, her supervisor, when leading worship within the Circuit as part of her training.

Circuit Treasurer

The meeting was reminded that the role of Circuit Treasurer becomes vacant at the end of the Connexional year, and no nominations have yet been received. If no-one is appointed the responsibilities of the role will default to the Superintendent, which will impact Rev Steve's capacity to perform his other duties. It is therefore vital for the smooth running of the Circuit that a new Treasurer is appointed.

Student Minister Placement

The meeting welcomed the news that Aqeela Tanveer will join the Circuit as a student minister from January 2026 until summer 2027. She will work approximately 20 hours per week as part of her ministerial formation.

Her placement will provide opportunities to gain experience across a range of Circuit activities, including worship, pastoral work and church governance. Members were encouraged to welcome Aqeela and support her development during her time in the Circuit.

[See page 8 for an introduction to Aqeela]