

From the Circuit Meeting

A Circuit Meeting was held on 11th June, hosted by Northolt Methodist Church.

Opening Devotions

Rev Steve Day welcomed everyone and led the meeting in prayer.

Circuit Vision and Worship

The meeting received a review of the recent attempt to form an expanded Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) with representatives from across the churches. The group met twice with Sally Rush from the Learning Network for coaching, but it was felt that the format and timing had not enabled the hoped-for progress. It was therefore agreed to bring this process to a close.

Instead, a new, broader process of visioning is being developed, built around three strands:

- **Local Church Reflection** – each church will look honestly at its strengths, challenges and opportunities, sharing insights with others across the Circuit.
- **Learning from Others** – visits to other churches and circuits within the District and Connexion to see examples of creative ministry and mission.
- **Community Engagement** – intentional listening to local communities, especially those not currently part of church life, to discern needs and opportunities.

This work will take place over the coming year, with the following year focusing on drawing together a shared Circuit vision. The meeting welcomed this approach, with a strong emphasis on keeping communication open and ensuring regular updates.

Trustee Training

A recent training evening, again led by Sally Rush, introduced trustees to the “Five Golden Rules of Trusteeship”. Those attending found it clear and informative, particularly as many had not received formal training for some time. The Circuit agreed to continue offering trustee training every one to two years to ensure all trustees are confident in their responsibilities and supported in their roles.

Finance

The Circuit Accounts and Trustees' Report for 2023–24 were approved with amendments to the list of trustees. The meeting noted the significant work undertaken to address earlier queries before final approval. Concerns were raised about the slow pace of work from the auditors, Summers Morgan, and a meeting will be sought with them to discuss how communication might be improved.

The budget for 2025–26 was also approved, including a proposed 5% increase in church assessments to reflect inflation and property costs.

The Circuit continues to seek a new Circuit Treasurer. Despite wide circulation of the role description, no applications have yet been received. With Stephen Sears stepping down in September after many years of dedicated service, the Circuit faces a serious challenge. If no one comes forward, the responsibility will fall to Rev Steve Day, who would require additional support from the wider Circuit. Churches are urged to continue sharing the vacancy.

Property Matters

King's Hall

Discussions are ongoing with Ealing Council's planning department, who have been less than straightforward in their dealings with the Circuit so far. The Circuit is keen to preserve flexibility in the Local Plan to allow viable redevelopment options, and is considering contacting the local MP for support. A party wall survey is also outstanding, awaiting communication from neighbouring developers.

Pitshanger Methodist Church

Three organisations have expressed interest in leasing the building, though none can be finalised before September. To avoid the premises standing empty and vulnerable, the meeting agreed to keep Pitshanger open for community use until Christmas while further conversations take place. Rev Steve and Stephen Sears will meet with the interested parties.

Costons Avenue (Vacant Manse)

Remedial works are now complete, and the property has been placed on the market for sale.

Appointments for 2025–26

- **Deputy Superintendent:** Rev Sue Male
- **Local Complaints Officer:** Rev Steve Day
- **Circuit Invitations Committee:** Rev Dr Jonathan Dean (Chair), Rev Steve Day, Rev Sue Male, Circuit Stewards, and church representatives from across the Circuit.

Stephen Sears was warmly thanked for his long service as Circuit Treasurer. His successor has not yet been found, and all churches are urged to help identify potential candidates.

Fleur Hatherall and Jane Horwich have both agreed to extend their service as Circuit Stewards by one more year.

Andy Brierley was appointed as Circuit Meeting Secretary, with thanks expressed to Janet Malamah-Thomas for her many years of faithful service.

Safeguarding and EDI

Rev Steve Day and Rev Sue Male presented a paper on the Methodist Church's Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, which commits the Church to becoming a fully inclusive community. EDI training is now mandatory for ministers, local preachers, stewards, worship leaders, lay workers with pastoral roles, and safeguarding officers. While online training is available, engagement has been patchy, so the Circuit plans to run locally delivered sessions. This will begin with a café-style Circuit service in early September, where stories of welcome and exclusion will be shared. Four structured sessions will follow through the autumn, both online and in person.

Churches are asked to ensure all required people attend, and to encourage wider participation in support of inclusive practice.

Could you represent your church?

Several churches are underrepresented at Circuit meetings. Each church is asked to ensure that at least one representative is formally appointed for the next meeting in September, with larger churches encouraged to nominate two people. Please contact your minister or Circuit stewards if you would be interested.