



York Methodists

Circuit Annual Reports 2019-2020

Dear friends,

It's fair to say that the last few months have not been what we expected or what we were looking forward to when we gathered last summer at Acomb Methodist Church for our 2019 Circuit Celebration and AGM.

As a result of the coronavirus restrictions, this year's annual Celebration, which was to have been on 14th July, is not going ahead. We hope to find an opportunity to gather later in the year, and next year we hope to have our Celebration as usual. But for now, we felt it would be helpful to distribute the usual reports on what has been happening around the Circuit over the past year, and what we hope will be happening in future. We have also included some information on the strategic planning we have been doing, and on the Circuit's financial position. We hope you find it useful and hopeful as we look to the future.

We may not know what the future will exactly look like, but we do know that God will be there, and will be with us. Let's praise God for that.



Lois Cross, Circuit Support Manager & PA to the Superintendent.

If you have any questions please let us know. Contact the Circuit Office (admin@yorkmethodist.org.uk or 01904 499661) or speak to Revd Keith Albans.

Senior Stewards Report for 2019-20

Plans, like well written plays, should have their conclusion written before they are enacted. This was indeed the case with Circuit plans for the year. So, now that we are in Coronavirus lockdown, our objective in 'Growing in Christ' remains just as clear, but our plans for the journey may need some adjustment.

This year we welcomed Revd Steve Barlow who moved from the Wetherby to combine his District role with oversight, along with Revd Helen Freeston, of Acaster Malbis, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe and Stillingfleet. He also facilitates our Circuit Strategy Group. We also welcomed Revd Ruth Duck who joined us part-time to provide oversight at Strensall and Sheriff Hutton.

The year started with much prayer, planning and discussion in developing our strategy for the future, which was heartily endorsed by Circuit Synod, then ratified by Circuit Council in early 2020. These plans recognise the problems faced by shrinking and ageing congregations and a shortage of ordained presbyters.

The strategy places emphasis on developing people. The thirty one Churches in six groups will be staffed by Presbyters and local pastors to meet congregational needs, these may lie anywhere between providing pastoral support and leading pioneering mission. Budgets have been drawn up to allow for increased staffing costs in the early years.

The Shipton Mission and Transformation Fund has been created from the proceeds from the sale of Shipton Chapel. It provides finance for local Church, small-scale mission projects, for circuit-led new forms of worship and for facilitating the work of the Circuit through information technology.

The new Circuit Hub at Melbourne Terrace was opened in March and now provides an essential base for the invaluable work of Circuit staff including our Support Manager, Resource Manager and the Children and Youth Teams. Meanwhile other Circuit initiatives are helping us carry the love of Christ to other sections of society, such as the revamped Carecent premises for the homeless, expanded provision for housing refugees in our unused manses and plans to



The Circuit Hub

develop nationwide conference facilities being investigated at our Central Church. Sadly our inspiring project at Cornerstone (St Georges) Church ended in February, when the small but enthusiastic membership voted to cease worship there. Happily Christian witness continues from this building, as it is being sold to York Community Church.

Since the Coronavirus lockdown on 23rd March all our buildings are closed and physical events cancelled for the foreseeable future. However some wonderful virtual services, Bible study, meetings and much more have blossomed on the internet and over social media, as new people have joined us. Meanwhile the work of the Church continues on the ground keeping the elderly and vulnerable safe and actively in touch with the wider Church. Discussions continue on how to combine our new virtual skills with traditional practices as we exit lockdown.

We bid a fond farewell to Rachel Muthoni, who moves at the end of this year as her husband Japhet and family go to a new stationing in London. Rachel has given inspiration and joy to many as she has brought the love of Christ to different churches around the Circuit. She leaves with our love, prayers and best wishes as she continues her ministry.

We would like to thank all Circuit staff and committee members as well as our fellow stewards for their sterling work, which has been invaluable this year. We greatly value and appreciate the dedication you have given to the Circuit in this strange and exciting time, which has demanded new ways of working from all of us.

With God's grace guiding us through changing times, 'Growing in Christ' is precisely what God's Church in the York Circuit will do.

With best wishes,

John Middleton & Janet Bowling



The 2019 Circuit Celebration at Acomb

Looking Forward to 2020-2021

Although we are still in lockdown and don't know when it's going to end one of our biggest challenges will be Churches getting back into their buildings and settling down to their new "normality". We have seen a lot of creativity when people haven't been able to meet together physically with people using digital communications to Stream and Zoom services, and Zoom meetings and Bible Studies. We need to see how this can be followed through in our Churches' mission to bring about Christ's Kingdom.

This year we will be appointing a Local Pastor to replace Rachel who will be leaving us in September. Other Local Pastors may be appointed in the future. During the year we will be looking for a new Superintendent Minister as Keith is stepping down from that role in 2021.

We will keep monitoring our Circuit Strategy to see how effective new ways of working are.

It is good to have the new Hub and we will be taking full advantage of its facilities as soon as we are able.

Talks are taking place between Central Hall, Westminster and Central over its management and development and we will follow its progress with great interest.

We look forward to working together with the Circuit to further God's work and will value your prayers as we seek to do this.

Janet Bowling and Joyce Jinks.



Strensall holiday club

Children, youth and family team

It has been a busy year for the children, youth and family team! We have settled into a pattern of working as a team, as well as each of us focussing on different areas:

- Heather leads on community cafes
- Lorraine leads on connections with schools
- Amy has taken the lead with the volunteer network
- Victoria gets the fun task of admin and regulatory stuff, both for the team and for church support.

As a team we:

- **Run One X** the circuit youth group. This meets twice a month on a Friday evening with a consistent group of young people this group is strong and growing. This group has continued meeting through the lockdown.
- **Organise the youth, children's and family volunteer network.** This group has now met twice and been well received by those attending. Although interrupted by Covid19 we are planning a digital meeting in June.
- **Lead worship.** Amy is involved with board game church and the new contemporary service. We run family worship as part of One X, and Victoria continues on trial as a local preacher.



The OneX group

Although the lockdown has presented a challenge we are staying in touch with churches, young people, families and churches, offering pastoral and mental health support to those who need it. We produce a weekly digest of useful resources for churches to recommend to families as well as developing our own resources for families and young people. Currently we are working on a family resource pack for Bible month and a 'Holiday Club at Home' a portfolio of digital resources that churches can offer to families who might have come to a holiday club.

The Youth, Children and Families Team.

Financial Report

Budget for 2019 to 2025

In January 2020, a draft budget was developed for the period up to 31st August 2025. This built on the existing budget for 2019/20 and projected forward to 2025 using the assumptions necessary to support the proposed Circuit Reconfiguration. The key assumptions in the draft budget were:

- The overall total recovered by the Assessment increased from £540k per year to £560 in 2020/21 after being static (in total) for several years, and thereafter increased by £10 per year.
- The Presbyter resources drops by one full time equivalent from the current level in 2020/21 and remains constant thereafter.
- The increase in lay resources required to support the proposed Circuit Reconfiguration would be phased in over a two-year period to 2021/22.
- Other costs and income were increased by 3% for inflation each year.

A summary of the draft budget is shown in the table below:

Income	Budget for Year Ending 31 August					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Assessment	£540,000	£560,000	£570,000	£580,000	£590,000	£600,000
Lettings	£36,400	£37,485	£38,609	£39,768	£40,961	£42,189
Other	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Total Income	£579,400	£600,485	£611,609	£622,768	£633,961	£645,189
Total Costs	-£625,000	-£626,736	-£685,001	-£705,551	-£726,718	-£748,519
Surplus / (Deficit)	-£45,600	-£26,251	-£73,392	-£82,784	-£92,757	-£103,330
<i>Income Percent via Assessment</i>	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%
<i>Assessment / Total Costs</i>	86%	89%	83%	82%	81%	80%

The annual deficit is forecast to increase slightly from the financial year 2021/22, when the increased resources are fully in place, as the costs are forecast to increase at a slightly higher rate than the Assessment. This is reflected in the reduction in the percentage of total costs covered by the Assessment, which reduces from 89% in 2020/21 to 80% in 2024/25. The percentage of total income raised by the Assessment remains unchanged at 93% throughout the period.

The budget resulted in a deficit of £424k over this period to 2025, and it was proposed that this is funded through the strategic management of reserves and assets which have been accumulated over the years, as well as applying for

Connexional funding through, for example, the return of levies to fund specific pieces of missional initiative. A range of potential options were considered that came to well in excess of £424k, and whilst not all will be either feasible or desirable the conclusion was that the Circuit can be confident of funding proposed deficit.

Finally, it was recognised that whilst it is realistic to plan for no longer than five years, it is understood that a budget deficit cannot continue indefinitely. Clearly many factors can change over such a timescale in our income, costs and available assets, and the approach adopted by the Circuit Leadership Team is that the budget should be reviewed every year and adapted to changing circumstances. The position is that we should always be able to ensure that we understand how the Circuit will be funded up to five years ahead.

The draft budget was approved by the Circuit Council on 11th February 2020.

Update of Circuit Finances, 2019/20

In March 2020, the projection for the Circuit accounts for 2019/20 was updated based on the actual income and costs for the first half of the year, and individually assessing each line item for the next six months. The overall picture looked to be **£57k** better than budget. The main reasons for the improved position relative to the budget were:

- Staffing costs were forecast to be **£18k** better than budget largely due to the overall staff numbers being one less than budget.
- Income of **£17k** received from Cornerstone was not in the budget.
- Maintenance costs were likely to be **£14k** lower than budget.
- Administration, Utilities, and Insurance were forecast to be **£5k** below budget.
- Several smaller items added up to the remaining **£3k**.

Clearly there will continue to be some uncertainty on the final outturn numbers, but at the mid-point of the Connexional year the best view was that the Circuit would be over **£50k** better off than budget.

With this in mind, the focus turned to the financial impact upon Churches resulting from the decision on 17th March 2020 to close all buildings for worship and lettings, which was likely to be significant. The impact inevitably varies across Churches based on their dependence on lettings income, reserves, and proportion of giving that comes from standing orders. However, it was inevitable that for some Churches this

will cause genuine financial stress, and the Circuit felt it was appropriate to consider ways of responding and potentially providing financial assistance.

There were further discussions with several Churches in April and early May 2020 which resulted in some one-off reductions in the May Assessment, together with some deferrals which were required due to short-term issues. These reductions were funded from the improved financial position relative to the budget for the current Connexional year outlined above. The next challenge will be to review the position for the August Assessment since Churches are unlikely to open before then.

Review of Salaries and Remuneration for Lay Employees

The Yorkshire North and East District produced a report in late 2019 which proposed bands of pay for a range of lay employees. This provided some clear guidance on the pay bands for different lay employees, and the rationale for paying at different levels within the range. It also made proposals around the level and timing of the annual salary increase.

The adoption of the proposals by individual Circuits is not mandatory, although the District are strongly encouraging Circuits to adopt it. The Circuit Stewards reviewed the report and decided to adopt the proposals going forward.

Nick Dawson, Circuit Steward (Finance)

[Strategic Resource Review](#)

Over the last eighteen months the Circuit has been engaged in a process of strategic review which has included two Circuit Synod meetings, a Pastoral Review including questionnaires in churches, discussions with Circuit staff, Circuit stewards, Circuit Council and other key people, all drawn together by a Strategy Task Group. At a Circuit Synod meeting in January 2020 the findings and recommendations of this process were presented for discussion. They were then further discussed at the Circuit Council



Lidgett Messy Church

meeting on 11th February, and were subsequently approved, to be implemented in the coming months. This article attempts to summarise those proposals– for a more detailed description please talk to your church’s Circuit Council Representative.

The strategy group used the information they gathered during this process (including churches’ own descriptions of how they see themselves, collected in the Pastoral Review process) to categorise churches according to their potential for mission.

This information was then used to consider what resources each group of churches needed to nourish the potential for growth, or to explore different ways forward.

This included the deployment of staff, both ordained and lay. This better understanding of churches’ needs can then be used to decide where additional resources are needed.

A key part of the strategic resourcing plan is to increase the number of ‘Local Pastors’, a role which is part of a District-wide strategy to train and encourage people, often lay employees, in working with local churches in mission and pastoral care. Sometimes this may involve working alongside a minister to offer complementary pastoral care or missional encouragement to churches; in other places the Local Pastor may take the place of a minister to provide pastoral care or develop outreach in a local community. In our Circuit John Bailey is already working in this role alongside Andy Lindley.

The need to look more to lay leadership in future is inevitable due to the decline in the number of candidates for ministry nationally compared to the number of appointments being sought in stationing. This strategic planning allows us to be flexible with which roles need to be filled by a presbyter or deacon, and which could be filled by a Local Pastor, and should hopefully lead to less worry if appointments cannot be filled during stationing.

While there will be costs to increasing the number of Local Pastors, these will be partly offset by savings in other areas, e.g. the sale of manses which are not required if the number of ordained staff decreases. A five-year budget has been developed and ways of increasing the funds available to the Circuit are being investigated.

The goal is for every church to feel cared for, whatever their potential. While not all churches may have an ordained minister ‘in charge’ the intention is that all will have someone with the skills to provide the local leadership and pastoral care needed and to encourage them to consider how best to provide a faithful witness in their community.

The strategy proposes the following groups of churches and staff members:

Group A

Churches: Acaster Malbis, Acomb, Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Hessay, Holgate, Lidgett, Poppleton, Rufforth, Southlands, Stillingfleet, West Thorpe

Presbyters: Ian Hill (100%) Andy Lindley (70%) Helen Freeston (50%) Steve Barlow (30%)

Local Pastors: John Bailey (30 hrs/week) New Appointment (30 hrs/week)

Group B

Church: Heslington

Presbyter: John Schofield (80% University Chaplaincy, 20% Circuit)

Group C

Churches: Dunnington, Stamford Bridge

Local Pastor: New Appointment (15 hrs/week)

Group D

Churches: Clifton, Clifton Moor, Easingwold, Heworth, Huby, Huntington, Sheriff Hutton, Strensall

Presbyters: Elizabeth Cushion (100%) Ruth Duck (50%)

Local Pastors: New Appointment 1 (37 hrs/week), New Appointment 2 (18 hrs/wk)

Group E

Churches: Alne, Stillington, Tholthorpe, Thornton-le-Clay

Local Pastors: New Appointment (10-12 hrs/week)

Group F

Church: Haxby & Wigginton (with Aroma café)

Presbyter: Rory Dalglish (100%)

Local Pastor: New Appointment (20 hrs/week)

Group G/ Circuit Hub

Churches: Central, New Earswick, Trinity

Presbyter: Superintendent Minister (70% allocated to Superintendency)

City Centre Deacon: Judith Stoddart (100%)

Other Staff: Circuit Support Manager, Resource Manager, Children's & Youth Team

Draft Membership of the Circuit Council from September 2020

Circuit Ministers

Revd Dr Keith Albans (Chair)
Revd Steve Barlow
Revd Elizabeth Cushion
Revd Rory Dalgliesh
Revd Ruth Duck
Revd Ian Hill
Revd Andy Lindley
Revd Dr John Schofield
Deacon Judith Stoddart

Circuit Stewards

Mrs Janet Bowling (joint senior)
Mrs Joyce Jinks (joint senior)
Mrs Ruth Morrison
Mr Nick Dawson
Mr Vic Paylor
Mr John Middleton

Local Preachers' representatives

Revd Michael Chester
Mr Jonathan Morley

Church Representatives to Circuit Council (representatives may change once Church Councils have met)

Acaster Malbis:	Graham Langton	Huntington:	Brian Freeborn
Acomb:	Rob Harrison	Lidgett:	Rosamond Carter
Alne:	TBC	New Earswick:	Elizabeth Jefferson
Bishopthorpe:	Mandy Brewer	Poppleton:	Sheila Middleton
Central:	Dorothy Godfrey	Rufforth:	Karen Valentine
Clifton:	TBC	Sheriff Hutton:	Eric Hayhurst
Clifton Moor:	Emma Dearlove	Southlands:	Alison White
Copmanthorpe:	Russ Smallwood	Stamford Bridge:	Catherine Richardson
Dunnington:	Diane Conway	Stillingfleet:	Mrs Jeanette Free
Easingwold:	Brian Taylor	Stillington:	Robin Jackson
Haxby & Wigginton:	TBC	Strensall:	Michael Jinks
Heslington:	Ruth Schofield	Tholthorpe:	John Lancaster
Hessay:	Kathryn Wright	Trinity:	Peter Kitchin
Heworth:	David Thompson	West Thorpe:	Chris Jarratt
Holgate:	Mark Bevan		
Huby:	Carole Smith		

Circuit Representatives to District Synod 2020-21

Janet Bowling
Joyce Jinks
Nick Dawson
Rosamond Carter
Tim Duffy
Rosemary Freeborn

Sue Gill
Robin Jackson
John Middleton
Malcolm Parker
Ruth Watson

Members of Circuit Action Groups from September 2020

The Superintendent Minister is an ex-officio member of all groups.

Circuit Property Advisory Group

Chair: Mr Malcolm Parker
Secretary: Lois Cross
Mrs Angie Creswick
Mr Nigel Cox
Mr Peter Harrison
Mr Vic Paylor
Mr Chris Spedding

Lay Employee Management Group

Chair: Revd Keith Albans
Secretary: vacant
Line Managers:
 Revd Keith Albans
 Mr Martyn Holman
 Mr John Middleton
 Mr Ken Hopwood
 Mr Russ Smallwood
 Mrs Sally Gall
Circuit Finance Steward
Plus a Circuit Steward

Model Trust Money Group

Convenor: Mr Tim Duffy
Mr Peter Harrison
Mr Paul Hudson
Mr Peter Metcalf
Mr John Middleton
Mrs Frances Postlethwaite
Mr Nick Dawson

Manse Committee

Chair: Mrs Sally Gall
Secretary: Lois Cross
Mrs Bev Duffy
Mr Tim Duffy
Mr Peter Harrison
Mr Nick Dawson
Mrs Ruth Schofield
Mr Tim Short
Plus a circuit steward

Safeguarding Group

Chair: Revd Ian Hill
Secretary: Lois Cross
Safeguarding Children & Young People
Co-ordinator: Mrs Alison White
Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator:
 Mrs Christine Dickinson
Safeguarding trainers:
 Mrs Elizabeth Griffiths
 Mrs Jane MacLennan
 Victoria Etherington
 Amy Shephard
 Mrs Alison White
 Mrs Christine Dickinson
 Revd Ian Hill