

This memorial has been circulated to members of the Peterborough Circuit Meeting to be voted on; agree, disagree, abstain. (Accurate as of 21st March)

At our recent Circuit Meeting, Isobel led the initiative for a 'memorial' to the Methodist Conference, a means by which we can call on the Methodist Church's main governing body, to reflect on what is happening locally, and act. This memorial builds on her original draft urges the Methodist Church to question how it is using its reserves at a time when the costs of ministry and maintenance are increasing. This final version presses this point further, requesting that the Church reviews how it is honouring 'the Connexional Principle' of mutual support in which those who have greater resources support those who are poorer. It also asks the Church to question, both at national and district level, whether we are being sufficiently creative with the financial options we offer. We will provide further detail beyond this memorial. The Methodist Church will include its response in the Conference Agenda for further discussion by Conference members.

The Peterborough Methodist Circuit calls on Conference to commission a review of how the Connexional Principle (mutual support, and the stronger enabling the weak) is being upheld across our Church, particularly in relation to finance, and how we help poorer circuits and local churches through periods of transition towards growth.

Our concern is that poverty in circuits is recognised not only in terms of the finance held, but also the financial insecurities around the repurposing or sale of assets, and cash flow. Confidence in the latter is crucial to giving churches and circuits the capacity to rethink the scope and focus of their mission. This challenge is intensified by our need to focus earlier rather than later on discerning the support that must be in place to nurture people through change. Meanwhile, the costs of ministry and church-upkeep are increasing.

We celebrate how connexional funding is being released to meet the priorities of God for All. We acknowledge that Districts set their own policies for grant giving. However, it may be prudent for the Methodist Church to investigate further and examine how a range of measures such as providing temporary relief towards staffing costs, bridging funding, offering loans as opposed to grants, are being deployed from our investments and reserves.

We would urge that the Methodist Church does all it can to provide circuits with the security that they need to consolidate into affordable, vibrant, sustainable entities.