

CIRCUIT STRATEGY UPDATE

Circuit Meeting, March 2023

Why do we need a new strategy?

March 2019 Circuit Meeting agreed to develop a new strategy, as a way of carrying out 'Our Calling' in the face of major changes in society and in our churches

- Changes in society:
 - Individualism; secularisation and multi-culturalism; social polarisation; the pace of life increasing; a reluctance to volunteer
- Changes in churches:
 - Reduced membership; fewer Presbyters available; deteriorating finances

Implementing the strategy

The Church Leadership Team are focused on implementing the strategy

1. We now have a clearer sense of priorities and are focused on tangible actions required to deliver it
2. Although the Covid era has been a great challenge, there is much that we have already achieved
3. There is also much more we can do together. An overriding objective from our actions must be growth

Progress to date

- Lay & Ordained staff:
 - Area Ministry teams have been established (but more to do)
 - Appointment of Lay Pastors is a major step forward (with two further appointments planned)
 - New Superintendent appointed
 - New Presbyter for the Southern Area sought for 2024
- Youth and Children's Work:
 - The strategy, resources, and management group, are all in place
- Eco Church:
 - Eco Circuit Bronze award achieved
 - Work required to reduce carbon footprint in manses & offices
 - Work to embed environmental issues into training, & worship
 - Support offered to churches on energy consumption and solutions

Progress to date (continued)

- Finances:

- Finances have deteriorated
- Income has continued to fall, with the decline in membership, and reduced lettings during Covid
- Costs have increased with stipends, energy costs, and inflation
- Work being done to generate income from manses, and the sale or repurposing of closed churches
- Discussions with churches over assessment for next 2+ years

- Property:

- New outsourcing arrangements agreed with Savills
- Continue to work with Hellards over lettings
- Discussions are ongoing regarding Nomansland Chapel, West Wellow Chapel, and Canada Common Chapel

Progress to date (continued)

- New Places, New People
 - There are major opportunities for growth from projects focused on forming new Christian communities
 - The work needs to be done in conjunction with the District and the Connexion
 - This work has yet to be started – we are guided by Circuit Meeting, and should discuss how this is done

Next Steps

1. Complete the Area Ministry teams
2. Complete the outsourcing of Property management
3. Close the emerging gap in our finances
4. Implement the Circuit Youth and Childrens Work strategy, and Eco Church
5. Start work on New Places for New People
6. Focus our efforts on growth

We are happy to take any questions