

**Single Circuit progress: some notes from the meeting of the District Policy Committee regarding preparations for the Single Scotland Circuit. November 2024**

The District Policy Committee meets every two months and is keeping a watching brief on the arrangements needed for transition to a single circuit. At present much of the work is being done in small, specialised groups, reporting to the DPC. Any questions or suggestions will be welcomed – do email the Chair of District or the DPC secretary, Jill Baker [ejillbaker@btinternet.com](mailto:ejillbaker@btinternet.com). The remaining meeting dates for 2024/25 are 14<sup>th</sup> Jan, 19<sup>th</sup> Mar, 24<sup>th</sup> May and 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

The District Policy Committee (DPC) met in person at Perth Methodist Church on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The members of the meeting are Jill Baker, Janet Bryer, Val Fowles, David Gibson, Phil Haggis, Helen Jenkins, Imran Malik, Jenn Radtke, Carol Reeve, Mark Slaney, Adam Stevenson, Alix Thom. Superintendent ministers Andrew Baker and Andy Bryer were also in attendance.

**Communication:**

- Jenn Radtke has drawn up a proposed communication strategy for the district moving forward, seeking ways to communicate more widely and proactively. This will involve regular posting to Facebook and Instagram as well as continuing to use email and the District website. Jenn is willing to do much of the work entailed by this, but it was agreed that a small communications group would be helpful.
- It was noted that basic training would be needed across the district in the use of Facebook and Instagram – Jenn offered to run some sessions.
- The meeting noted that questions of authority/authorisation to post need to be addressed in any final policy.
- The conversation also considered the district website and its role in the single circuit, when all current circuit websites will be closed. It was agreed that initially the communications strategy needs to be put in place for the district and decisions about how the single circuit integrates into this can be taken later. It was noted that the term ‘The Methodist Church in Scotland’ is more accessible for internet-users than the use of ‘District’ and ‘Circuit’ as names.

**Worship: Leading & Preaching:**

- Jill Baker reported from the first meeting of the small group set up by DPC to make proposals.
- New appointments (District & Circuit tutors/secretaries) will need to be in place for 1<sup>st</sup> September. It was agreed that a joint (hybrid) meeting of the six LP meetings will take place during the final quarter of 2024/25 to ensure smooth transition. Date to be fixed and notified.
- Conversations with all preachers are to be organised both to give assurances (e.g. that no-one will be expected to travel further than they wish to lead worship) and to gather information for the new plan. A pro forma for the conversations will be produced by the group.
- A Worship Directory will be needed for whole circuit, with additional information e.g. parking, accessibility. The group will take action on this.
- Conversations around the single Circuit WLP meeting are ongoing, with the expectation that all meetings will be hybrid and held in a variety of venues.
- In connection with this (and other circuit meetings) it was noted that there is a need to identify which churches in the new circuit are, or need to be, equipped for hybrid meetings and that the DPC may need to make decisions about investment in equipment and training, as the running of a hybrid meeting (e.g. Synod) needs skilled personnel. Initial conversations with the

company 3:16 AVI (who have supported the preparation and delivery of The Gathering and Synod) will be held to gather suggestions and information.

### **Finance:**

- Host circuit: Having considered guidance from OSCR about amalgamating charities, the meeting agreed to recommend that to simplify the legal/financial amalgamation process Strathclyde would be the host circuit and the host bank account, both being renamed in the name of the single circuit.
- The 6 circuit treasurers continue to meet. They plan to put together a circuit budget & a way of allocating the assessment to be communicated to all churches by March 2025.
- The 6 circuit property officers also meet regularly. At this stage it is important to make sure all quinquennials and property returns are up-to-date.

### **Name of single circuit:**

- It was noted that it would be helpful to have a name for the single circuit soon in order to simplify transition. After conversation it was agreed that 'The Scotland Circuit' would be most straightforward and easily identifiable and this is to be proposed to circuit meetings.

**Stationing:** With regard to re-invitations of current ministers, the importance of consultation between individual Circuit Invitation Committees (CIC) and the single circuit CIC was stressed. This is seen to be the practice in line with the Connexional 'Advice for circuits which are re-configuring re presbyteral appointments.'

It was especially noted that:

- In current Circuits where a re-invitation process may take place, following the District Stationing Briefing in May 2025, and those circuits foresee that they may not hold the resources required to meet a re-invitation (e.g.: being able to fund an extension of ministry appointment) no recommendation of such re-invitation should be offered without consultation with the District Chair, Lay Stationing Representative and the Single Circuit Invitations Committee.
- In current Circuits where a re-invitation process may take place, following the District Stationing Briefing in May 2025, and either or both Minister and Circuit Invitations Committee consider a re-invitation which stretches beyond the current circuit boundaries no recommendation of such re-invitation should be offered without consultation with the neighbouring Circuit Invitations Committee, District Chair, Lay Stationing Representative and the Single Circuit Invitations Committee.

The superintendent ministers and Chair of District will continue to confer about the stationing process and ensure that all those involved within the current circuits are kept informed.