



## District News

### District executive discusses and decides

By Ruth Bemrose, secretary to the district executive

When the executive met on 28 August, we agreed to recommend to the September district synod that it should authorise:

- district advance fund grants agreed by the finance and grants committee for extra staff in the Market Harborough, Aylesbury Vale, and Kettering and Corby circuits, as well as property schemes at Loughborough, Princes Risborough and Brackley;
- an addition of £3,000 to the training budget for small grants;
- an increase in the working time of the district safeguarding officer to 14 hours per week;
- the appointments of the Rev. Dr Joseph Suray as interfaith adviser, and Mr Roy Littlecott as district property secretary (date yet to be agreed).

We also agreed that the Rev. Tim Woolley would involve the district in the Pioneering Ministries Scheme (see p.1)

Paul Taylor, director of training and development, introduced the executive to EDEV (Extending Discipleship, Exploring Vocation), which will be the basis for some of his work. The executive agreed the process needs a snappier title!

The executive heard that arrangements were in place to collect from circuits all documents relating to the property they hold, and to deliver them to the Land Registry (the collection subsequently took place at the September synod, and the executive thanks all who enabled this to happen).

The executive heard that the rollout of the computerised property consents process had been delayed, while changes are being made to the programme.

The executive agreed to inform synod that Property Points now contained more than information on property, and required wider use in circuits.

Various Churches Together bodies, which the district supports, have made requests for extra funding for major expensive ecumenical events. In the light of this, the executive decided to seek information from these groups about how they allocate their monies.

The executive agreed a process for the district to find a presbyter to become its representative to the Methodist Council from September 2009 (see p.3). The district is also seeking an ecumenical officer and lay employment officer.

### Pioneering ministries to reach unchurched

This year's Methodist Conference approved a new multi-million pound initiative to reach out to those, especially young adults, who have no experience of church. The Pioneering Ministries Scheme will see the establishment of new Christian communities and congregations in a variety of locations from city centre and suburban areas to more rural settings.

There will initially be twenty new projects; the first will begin as early as possible in 2009. Each project will be designed to serve the spiritual and practical needs of those who have previously had little or no experience of church. Although the plan is for the projects to become independent, the scheme will involve a major investment of church resources and funds, with an initial set up cost of more than £4.3m. The Methodist Church will recruit as "pioneer ministers" lay and ordained people with the vision, motivation and ability to inspire others. These pioneers will receive support and training, and be tasked to build new, viable independent Christian congregations rooted in the Methodist tradition.

Are there places and situations in your locality where a pioneer project could be established? The Rev. Tim Woolley, the district's director of mission, has asked circuits to prayerfully consider this exciting opportunity for mission, and to contact him (t.r.woolley.00@cantabgold.net) if they would like to be involved or need further information.

### Methodist Conference 2008 on the Web

Reports from the Northampton District's representatives at this year's Methodist Conference in Scarborough are available on the district website: [www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk](http://www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk). Other reports are available on the national Methodist Church website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk).

## Refreshment for preachers

Even the best preachers and worship leaders need to hone their skills from time to time. Now, there is a chance for them to do this, when the College of Preachers holds three one-day seminars around the district in the new year.

### **Saturday 17 January in Wellingborough**

"The use of the Bible in preaching" and "Not by preaching alone – preaching and worship".

### **Saturday 14 February in Melton Mowbray**

"The use of the Bible in preaching" and "Switching channels – connecting with contemporary culture".

### **Saturday 16 May in Kidlington, Oxford**

"Switching channels – connecting with contemporary culture" and "Refreshing your preaching skills".

All seminars will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and cost £10 each. More details available from Peter Cooper, tel. 0116 271 5525; quinton16@tiscali.co.uk.

## Fresh Expressions news

On 31 July, the first district consultation on Fresh Expressions took place at Roade Methodist Church. People shared stories, heard of new training opportunities and connexional developments, and enjoyed fellowship together.

The next consultation will be in 12 months' time. In the meantime, an e-group will be set up to continue the exchange of ideas and information. If you would like to be part of this, please contact the Rev. Tim Woolley, the district's director of mission (t.r.woolley.00@cantabgold.net).

## Lay employment adviser

There is a growing trend for Methodist churches and circuit to employ lay people. Over the past few years, Graham Wood, our district's lay employment adviser, has provided guidance on this topic. Graham is soon to retire and the district is looking for someone else to take on this important role. The tasks include:

- advising those seeking to employ a lay person about the process to follow;
- commenting on adverts, job descriptions and person specifications;
- advising on the content of contracts, and holding copies of all contracts into which the district enters;
- advising on general employment matters, including grievance and disciplinary issues.

The Methodist Church personnel office will support the post holder with information and advice but the person appointed must have experience in employment legislation.

If this job is something you could do, or if you want more information about the role, please contact the synod secretary, the Rev. Dr Martin Wellings, tel. 01865 559026; martin.wellings@oxfordmethodists.org.uk.

## District rep needed for Methodist Council

The Methodist Council is "the conference between Conferences"; it makes decisions and exercises governance across the Connexion.

Each district nominates one member of the council, and from September 2009 a presbyter will represent the Northampton District. The 2009 Conference will make the appointment on the nomination of our district's spring synod. The selection process begins with an open application. A job description, person specification and a nomination form are on the district website. Applications must reach the synod secretary by 30 November.