



District News

Vacancies

Several voluntary posts in the district await filling by enthusiastic occupants. The jobs include: *formal education representatives; *ecumenical officers for the centre and south of the district; *education and youth secretary; *co-ordinator for lay workers' training; *contact for NCH; *public issues contact; *lay secretary for World Church.

Further details may be obtained from current post holders (see *District Directory*, pp. 15-16) or from the synod secretary, Rev. Dr Martin Wellings: martin@wellingsmethodist.fsnet.co.uk.

District website

By Paul Taylor, district training and development officer.

Last January, the district website - www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk - had over 7000 hits. So, if you haven't had a look yet you must be missing out! The site includes a variety of resources to support the work of local churches and circuits, including: *information for property developments; *help with planning projects and funding; *ideas to help you celebrate the history of your church; *suggestions of learning and development opportunities.

One of the district's superintendent ministers sent this feedback: *The district website is great! Shame on me. I thought it would be boring, and never really got round to logging on to it. However, after the 'supers' meeting and the "Planning a Project in your Church" leaflets, I decided to give it a go and it was a revelation; it even gave me some bed-time reading in the form of "Celebrating your history", and I have recommended this to the circuit meeting. Congratulations!*

District briefed on changes

Ruth Bemrose, secretary to the District Executive, reports on the group's latest meeting, which included a visit by the Methodist Church's chief executive.

The Rev. David Deeks, general secretary of the Methodist Church and secretary of the conference, addressed members of the District Executive when it met on Monday 5th March. The general secretary explained how the proposed restructuring of the connexional staff team, details of which will be presented to the Methodist Conference in Blackpool this summer, would be good news for districts.

David Deek's visit was part of a plan whereby a member of the connexional team will go to each district in advance of the forthcoming Conference. In addition, all Conference representatives are being briefed ahead of what will be a crucial vote on the proposed changes. They are certainly far-reaching and will bring greater responsibilities to district officers, as well as other benefits that Mr Deeks outlined to the executive.

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District Executive contd

District Advance Fund

The executive agreed to raise the maximum District Advance Fund grant to £5,000 per annum, per application. This is in line with a connexional decision for districts to deal with all grant applications of £5,000 or less.

Safeguarding

The executive heard details of a new safeguarding scheme that will come into operation in September 2008, and which should eventually make the vetting process for both new and existing workers much easier to handle.

Local preachers

The executive agreed to grant a one-year extension to the "On Trial" period for two of the district's local preachers in training.

District office

Negotiations continue over the renting of space for a district office at Bouverie Court, Northampton. In the meantime, any meetings planned to take place at this venue in the next connexional year should be booked as soon as possible.

Full house

The executive was pleased to hear that all ministerial vacancies in the district from September of this year will be filled.

Website

The executive heard a report on the good use of the district's website - www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk - in its first year of operation. Thanks were expressed to the webmaster for the way in which the site has become a useful and accessible tool for many in the district.

Human Sexuality

Alison Tomlin, chair of the Northampton District, reports on a Connexion-wide consultation.

The Methodist Conference of 2006 decided to initiate a consultation throughout the Connexion on whether the 1993 Derby Conference resolutions on human sexuality should be revised, and, if so, what changes should be made. The first stage of this process is that the group set up to co-ordinate the consultation would like to hear from the Methodist people on whether or not they feel the church should revise what are known as the Derby Resolutions. If you want to respond in any way to this request, you can download a copy of the Soundings Paper from our district website. Please go to: www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk/resources_hs.htm. The document will also remind you what the Derby Resolutions are, and give you details of who to contact, as well as a list of the group's members. The deadline for responses is Friday 29th June.

Northampton District spring synod

At the district's spring synod on 28th April we will welcome Kirsty Smith, director of the Methodist Relief and Development Fund, as a guest speaker.

The synod will also receive a presentation from Pam Bolas and Trevor Durston Smith on important work in connection with HIV/AIDS, and sample the World Church Roadshow.