



Open Meetings Feedback - Executive Summary Sheet

Between Monday 11th October and Monday 18th October, five meetings took place across the circuit and over 150 members from across the circuit took part in open meetings to discuss some of the key issues the circuit is facing, share ideas and reflect on other models of governance, ministry and mission taking place elsewhere in the Connexion.

Summary of Feedback of Question 1 – your hopes and dreams for your church/circuit

- Every church should review where God is in all their pieces of work.
- Question should be where God wants the Methodist Church to be in 10 years.
- We need to link outreach with our current projects – more visible in our communities.
- Much greater unity with our churches both Methodist and ecumenical.
- Certain churches in geographical areas working together. Where are the natural neighbourhoods?
- Need lively services to attract new people.
- Better communications.
- Fewer churches but better churches with workload shared more evenly.
- The churches need to be more outward looking.
- Worshipping together and knowing the members of other churches.
- Repurpose some buildings for community projects like sheltered housing.
- Need to engage in outreach more – members working with ministers more.
- Need a much more radical approach.
- Much less focus on buildings and more on personal discipleship.
- Leadership needs to be more visionary, spiritual and Bible based.
- Need a clear idea of what we are trying to achieve – then reform appropriately – what is our Methodist DNA?
- Need to link worship with outreach.
- Church is not just about Sunday.
- Need to plan to involve young people in the life of the Church.

Summary of Feedback of Question 2 – your fears and concerns for your church/circuit

- Church too institutional not fluid enough.
- People are not comfortable with our churches.
- People don't understand the purpose of Methodism and why its different.
- Circuit to be a better link to the mission of the churches.
- Combine churches and increase teamwork.
- Too much pressure on fulfilling roles rather than engaging in mission and outreach.
- We are running out of people to keep the church building and jobs going.
- Too many churches in the circuit trying to do the same thing with increasingly fewer resources.
- Need a whole new approach to attracting new people.
- Churches not welcoming enough.
- Need innovative ways to free ministers and members from bureaucracy.
- If we don't change, we will become redundant.
- Our building are becoming just spaces for hire.
- We are in a bad place – more combined working is needed.
- Other churches in the UK are thriving – what are we doing wrong?
- Success is down to leadership – turnover of minister too high.
- Need dynamic action.



- Merge with other denominations.
- Our style of worship is too traditional.
- Churches are not creating enough opportunities for people to get involved.
- Positioning of churches was correct when built – not now – London is changing.
- Look at church groups which hire our premises – they are growing – not concern about buildings, lettings etc, they focus on spiritual life and worship of God.

Summary of Feedback of Question 3 – your views on other models of mission and ministry

- Models are ok but don't understand fully.
- More time is needed thinking about strategy.
- Different parts of the circuit will require different models and solutions.
- Don't understand how people can be free up if roles are expanded.
- If people are released from roles doesn't automatically mean they will do mission.
- Multisite churches are the way forward.
- The bank idea is good but still need competent people with right expertise.
- Church needs to engage with schools or need to setup a school.
- Dynamic and inspirational leadership will show us the way to go.
- Models good but not radical enough.
- Models are too radical.
- We never review what we have currently, need to find the population centres in the circuit and then look to developing new community centre and moving congregations.
- Different services at different times will appeal to different people.
- A mixture of the models would work but would need altering to suit local needs.
- Methodist churches should not be in competition with other churches – more joined up working.
- Mission needs to be the overriding factor then use resources accordingly.
- Open to multi-church concept but need to know some more details.

Summary of Feedback of Question 3 – second part – general views and ideas

- Other organisations have overcome similar problems – lessons need to be learnt from them.
- Ministers need to lead more, launch new initiatives, and then enable members to continue.
- Need a complete change of mindset.
- People are overwhelmed by the thought of keeping everything going as currently is.
- Mission needs to be circuit based not church based then churches work together more.
- Centres of excellence – churches work towards their strengths.
- Lockdown has forced many people to review their lives – we need the same radical approach for the mission and future of the circuit.

Other areas mentioned repeatedly:

- Need young people
- Churches should be more attractive to families
- Ageing congregations
- Buildings and property maintenance take most of the time at meetings

Next Steps – the Circuit Meeting will be updated in December and the CLT will meet to reflect and pray over the feedback in January. A further update will be given after then.