



The Methodist Church
South-East District

Circuit Stewards' Handbook



November 2011

Acknowledgements

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Other sources that have been used are the Methodist website, the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church and various reports of the Methodist Conference.

I am grateful to colleagues, both ministers and Circuit Stewards, for their help and comments on earlier drafts of this Handbook. Their advice has helped to make it more readable and accurate. Any errors, of course, remain my responsibility and will be corrected in future versions.

John Hellyer



Picture above: ©<http://www.ideachampions.com/heart/teamwork.jpg>

Front cover: I Komang Wahyu, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia
"Jesus Bless Children"
From the "Jesus Laughing Exhibition 2007" <http://jesuschrist.uk.com>

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Foreword

For a long time there has been a tendency in the Methodist Church to invite people to take up responsibilities with words like, “There is not a lot to it...” It’s only later that people discover just how much they have taken on.

The office of Circuit Steward is one of the significant leadership responsibilities that a lay person can hold in a Circuit. Those who consider taking on the role need to have a sense that it is something that God is calling them to do and that they will have the support and prayers of others in the Circuit. They also need to have a clear understanding of what the role involves, the people they can turn to for help and how their role fits in with what other people do in the life of a Circuit.

This Handbook is intended to help fill this need. It is meant to be put in the hands of people before they agree to be a Circuit Steward as well as being a resource for those who are already serving as Circuit Stewards.

John Hellyer
Chair of South-East District
November 2011

A note about Ecumenical Areas

In the South-East District we are privileged to have a number of Circuits that have joined in an ecumenical partnership with the United Reformed Church to create Methodist/URC United Areas. These Areas have developed their own distinctive structures, which means they use different terminology to describe their meetings and officers. In these United Areas, the Area Meeting has delegated to it some of the responsibilities of the United Reformed Synod and all of the responsibilities of a Methodist Circuit. Between them, those who are appointed as Area Officers also undertake all of the roles and responsibilities of Circuit Stewards. We hope that this Handbook will be of value to United Areas and ask that all references to Circuit Stewards and Circuit Meetings should also be read as applying to the Methodist responsibilities of Area Officers and Area Meetings.

Our Calling

The calling of The Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

The Church exists to:

- increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love;
- help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care;
- be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice;
- make more followers of Jesus Christ.

The Methodist Conference 2000

Priorities for the Methodist Church

In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments on this priority:

To proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church.

As ways towards realising this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to the following:

- underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer;
- supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor – in Britain and worldwide;
- developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved;
- encouraging fresh ways of being Church;
- nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible.

The Methodist Conference 2004

What is a Circuit Steward?

Circuit Stewards love God, the Church, the world and those fellow workers committed to their care. They rely on both the grace of God and the expertise they have developed in other fields to carry them through their responsibilities. They play a key role in the oversight of every aspect of the life of a Circuit and its local churches. This means that they will be involved in the leadership, governance and management of the Circuit. In doing this work it is important that they learn to work together with each other and alongside the Circuit ministers as a team who are committed to the development of God's work in the Circuit.

The role of a Circuit Steward is both practical and strategic, enabling individuals to find fulfilment in Christian service. As such each Circuit Steward will discover different and personal ways to respond to God's call.

The Circuit Stewards are responsible, with the Superintendent and ministers, Deacons and Probationers appointed to the Circuit, for the spiritual and material well-being of the Circuit, and for upholding and acting upon the decisions of the Circuit Meeting.

Standing Order 531 (1)¹

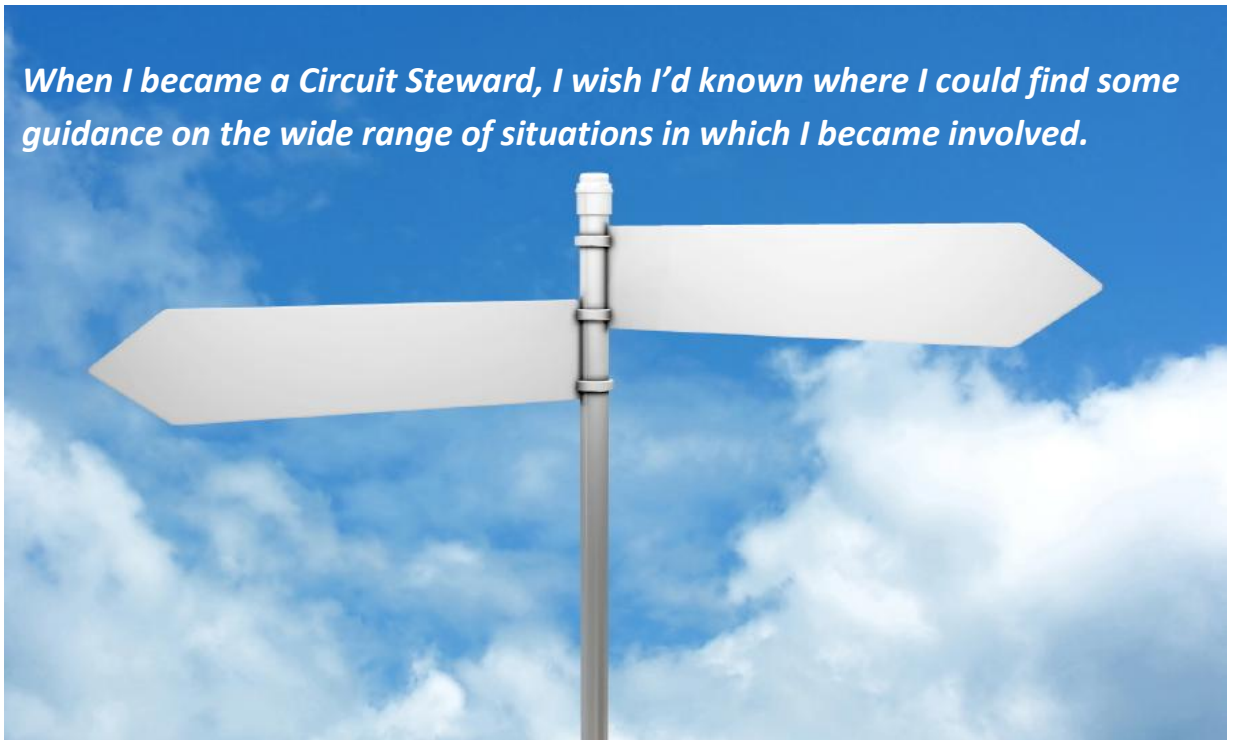
Circuit Stewards share collective responsibility for leadership of a Circuit as members of a Circuit Leadership Team along with the Superintendent and Circuit ministers and in that role have specific duties to:

1. offer pastoral care and support for the Circuit staff and their families;
2. be sensitive to the needs of the Circuit and its officers and staff;
3. meet as a Leadership Team whenever necessary;
4. work together to develop vision and plan for mission and ministry within the Circuit, ensuring appropriate consultation;
5. keep themselves informed of the activities of each local church;

¹ Standing Orders can be found in Volume 2 of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD)*.

6. be aware of District and Connexional policies affecting the Circuit and its churches;
7. inform themselves of developing movements in Methodism and the Church generally;
8. be alert to and take advice on the legal consequences of their office and its responsibilities, e.g. lay employment, finance, property;
9. and arrange in a manner suitable to the Circuit how these responsibilities are exercised.

When I became a Circuit Steward, I wish I'd known where I could find some guidance on the wide range of situations in which I became involved.



A Person specification for Circuit Stewards

Essential

A person who:

- is a disciple of Jesus Christ;
- has a vision for God's Kingdom;
- is willing to be supportive and affirming of others;
- has personal credibility;
- able to maintain confidentiality;
- is willing to learn;
- has good communication skills;
- is a strategic thinker;
- is a team player;
- is consultative;
- has ability to delegate;
- has the ability to ask for help;
- has sensitivity;
- exercises flexibility;
- is an agent for change.

Desirable

A person who:

- has developed leadership skills;
- has management experience and/or some understanding of employment law, given the Circuit's responsibility for the employment of Lay Employees;
- has administrative skills;
- understands the responsibilities of charity trustees;
- has a working knowledge of Methodist structures and procedures and some experience of Circuit Meetings and events;
- is tenacious;
- has a willingness to learn on the job;
- has some financial understanding;
- possesses negotiating skills;
- has a sense of humour.

Circuit Stewards work as part of a team so that each person does not have to have all of the desirable skills. It is important that they can be found within the team.

Oversight of the Circuit

A report to the Methodist Conference of 2005, *The Nature of Oversight*, defined oversight as—the process of ensuring that the Church remains true to the gospel, Christian (particularly the Methodist) tradition and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.² It highlighted three important responsibilities which the Church must engage with in order to discharge its duties of oversight:

Leadership – Governance – Management

Although these distinctions are often blurred in practice, these three major aspects of oversight can be defined like this:

Leadership

This means:

- inspiring people to be imaginative and to participate in the development of new vision;
- helping the vision to be articulated and considered;
- initiating action;
- willing to take risks where the realities of the situation have been honestly assessed;
- highlighting where risks contravene Christian principles or the law;
- showing by example how to exercise power with authority, justice, and love.³

Governance

This is the means by which an organisation directs and controls its responsibilities. In a Circuit it does this by:

- formulating and adopting the principal purposes and policies of the Circuit under the guidance of the Spirit;
- monitoring and assessing the fulfilment of those purposes;
- setting parameters for the implementation of those policies;
- ensuring that the Circuit complies with both the Methodist Church's regulations (e.g. Standing Orders, doctrinal standards) and external legislation (e.g. accounting rules, Charity law, data protection).⁴

² *The Nature of Oversight: Leadership, Management and Governance in the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (2005), 1.7

³ *The Nature of Oversight* (2005), 1.13.

Management

This is the process by which:

- specific strategies are formulated for enacting the Circuit's policies and fulfilling its purposes;
- objectives are set concerning the implementation of those strategies;
- human, financial, capital (e.g. investments and buildings) and technological resources are deployed to achieve those objectives;
- the performance of individuals and groups in meeting the objectives is monitored and assessed.⁵

This *Handbook* looks at the place that Circuit Stewards have alongside other people to make sure that there is effective oversight of the life and witness of a Circuit in terms of leadership, governance and management.

The Superintendent

One of the key relationships for a Circuit Steward is with the Circuit Superintendent. Superintendents exercise their ministry of oversight as part of a team of both ordained and lay people in a Circuit, but they have particular responsibilities in the oversight of a Circuit.

They are expected to gather together any presbyters and any deacons appointed to or stationed in the Circuit, and any lay workers employed in the Circuit in order for them to take prayerful counsel together, support each other, supervise each other in their professional practice and develop vision. As such the Superintendents do not just (in the words of Standing Order 700 (9)) "have oversight of all the ministers, deacons and probationers stationed in the Circuit" but also allow themselves to be "watched over in love" in turn by them. In all this they are taking the lead in a group which is primarily exercising *leadership*.

They act as the chief officer in the Circuit Leadership Team (although someone else may be the convenor of its meetings). The Circuit Leadership Team is made up of presbyters, deacons and Circuit lay officers and meets to articulate vision, to formulate recommendations for practical strategies to enact that vision, to prepare business for the Circuit Meeting and to act in the light of its decisions.⁶ The role of Superintendents here is therefore that of taking the lead in a group which is

⁴ *The Nature of Oversight* (2005), 1.11.

⁵ *The Nature of Oversight* (2005), 1.12.

⁶ Standing Order 515(2).

primarily concerned with exercising *leadership* in a context of *executive management*.

They act as the Chair of the Circuit Meeting which is the chief source of governance and decision-making in the Circuit under the Conference. In extreme circumstances this would involve them in appearing as the representative of the Circuit at any legal action or tribunal concerning the actions of the Circuit. The role of Superintendents here is one of taking the lead in a group which is primarily concerned with exercising *governance*.⁷



Ghislaine Howard (b.1953)

"The washing of the feet"

From the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art.

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⁷ *What is a Circuit Superintendent?*, Report to Conference 2005

Leadership in the Circuit

The nature of leadership: some Biblical characteristics ⁸

It is not possible to pick out a couple of texts from the Bible to serve as the basis for saying what kind of leaders we need in the Church in 21st Century Britain. To make use of the Bible intelligently we need to be aware of the variety of different kinds of leaders found in both the Old and New Testaments; the way in which the Church is organised differently and the great cultural gap between then and now. However it is possible to find in the New Testament some characteristics of the kind of leadership that disciples of Jesus Christ should try to imitate.

In a recently published report nine characteristics of Christian leadership were identified.

1. All leadership is service modelled on the example of Jesus. See Mark 10:41-45, Luke 22:24-27, and John 13:12-17.
2. Leaders are not self-appointed. They are called by God and that call is confirmed by the wider Church. This means that leaders are accountable to God (I Corinthians 4:3-4) and the church (Acts 11:2-3, 18).
3. Leadership is frequently shared. Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs and the book of Acts frequently refers to the way the Apostles worked together even if at times relationships became strained.
4. Leaders are called to encourage and challenge the Church to be faithful to its calling even if sometimes this means sometimes saying difficult things. See Revelation 2-3.
5. Leaders are to have a particular concern for the vulnerable. See Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 11:17-22.
6. Leaders help the local church community to see itself as part of the bigger picture of what God is doing in the wider Church. See Romans 15:26-29, I Corinthians 4:17, 7:17, II Corinthians 9:1-5, I Thessalonians 1:7-10.
7. Leaders are role models and they take Jesus as their role model. See I Timothy 4:12, I Peter 5:3, I Corinthians 11:1, I Thessalonians 1:6.
8. Leadership is not simply about caring for the church and its members it is also about mission. See Matthew 28: 16-20; Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:8.

⁸ Working Party On The Roles Of The President And Vice-President Of The Conference, (2010), para 3

9. The image of shepherd is often used in the New Testament, with particular reference to Jesus (John 10) but also of local church leaders (as in Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:2). The image points to key activities of leadership:
- guiding (pointing the direction for the people of God to go);
 - feeding (offering resources of mind and spirit for the journey);
 - protecting (warning against the influence of false ideologies and distortions of the gospel);
 - and supporting (moral support under pressure).

The image of the shepherd also serves as a reminder of the key qualities needed in Christian leaders: a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the Church and a willingness to deny oneself in its service. .

We often talk about “gifts and graces” when it comes to discerning whether someone is called to ordained ministry. The phrase reminds us that when we make people leaders in the church we are looking for signs of God’s Spirit at work in their lives. This should also be true of those who are called to other positions of leadership such as Church Stewards, Circuit Stewards, Pastoral Visitors and Local Preachers.

Christian leadership today

This brief survey of some New Testament characteristics of Christian leadership suggests some important principles that need to be seen at work in the Christian community.

As individual members of the team:

1. to be on their own journey of growth in discipleship;
2. to be committed to the principles of working collaboratively.

Together as a team:

3. to be aware of one another’s strengths;
4. to establish relationships of mutual trust and accountability;
5. to be open and honest;
6. to be able to offer the church a shared sense of vision and purpose;
7. to communicate the vision clearly and effectively;
8. to help the church to plan to turn the vision into achievable action;
9. to identify and seek to resolve problems openly;
10. to encourage and support initiatives taken by others.

Circuit Leadership Teams

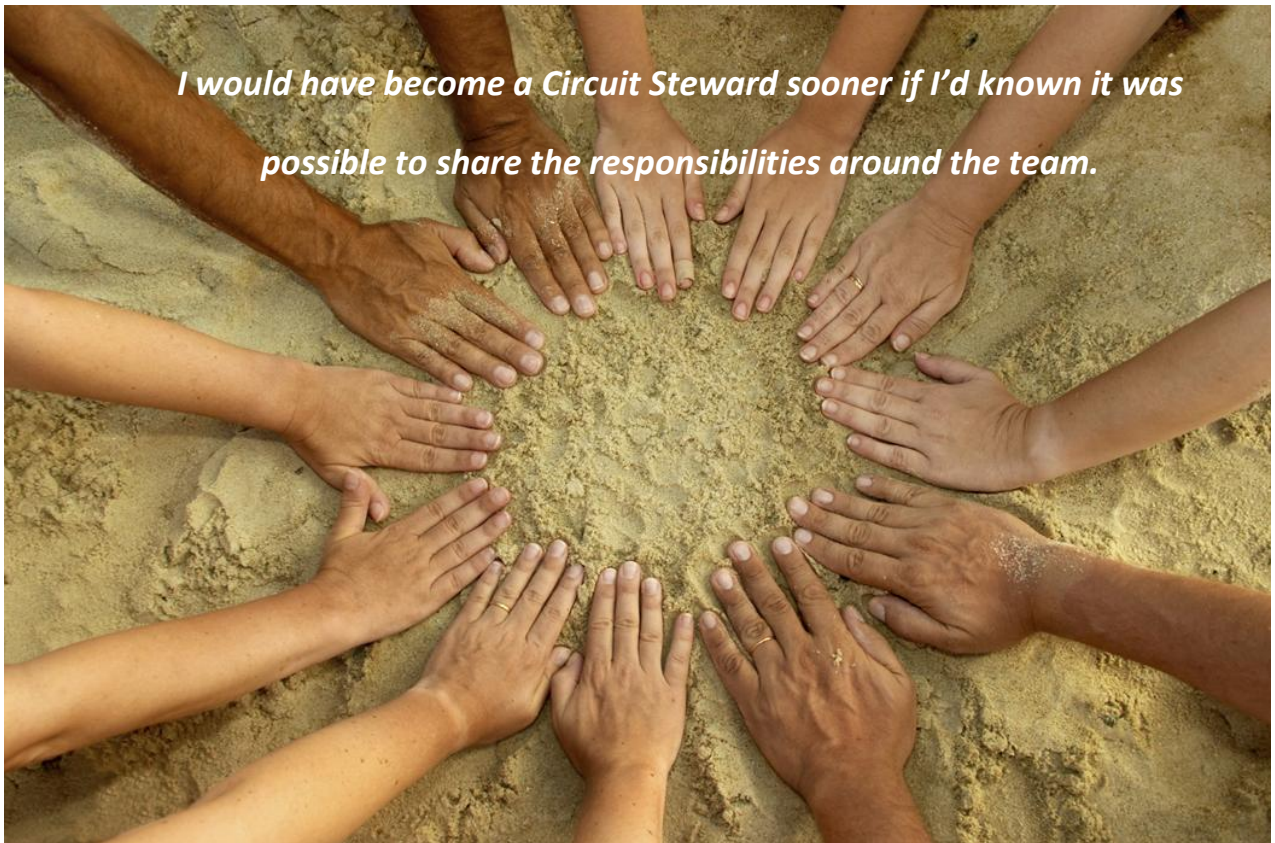
CPD encourages the setting up of a group of people who will work together to provide leadership in the Circuit. These groups are often called Circuit Leadership Teams. Although there is no laid down membership of a leadership team it is envisaged that the core membership of the group will be the Circuit Stewards and the Circuit ministers and other Circuit staff. The purpose of the group should be to work together in developing a sense of vision for the Circuit in its particular context and to communicate that vision in a way that others will be encouraged to share it. To be most effective when they meet, Circuit Leadership Teams need to be careful not to get caught up in the detailed management of the day to day running of the Circuit and should ensure that they do not assume the governance responsibilities of the Circuit Meeting.

All this means that the leadership that Circuit Stewards offer is made as part of a team of people. Every Circuit Steward will have different experience, strengths and skills to contribute. Some will be good at thinking up new ideas and others will have an eye for detail. Some will be able to contribute spiritual insights while others will feel more comfortable in administrative matters. These and many other skills are needed in a good leadership team and no member of the team can possibly be expected to have all the gifts and graces that are needed to lead the Circuit effectively.

As leaders, Circuit Stewards need to keep in touch with the churches in the Circuit. As well as attending the Church Councils of some of the churches this also means attending Sunday worship occasionally and getting to know some of the leaders in the churches. Good communication is essential and it comes out of developing good relationships with people.

When Circuit Stewards together develop a good overview of the life and witness of the churches in the Circuit they are in a good position to help to lead the Circuit through times of change and crisis. This kind of overview helps them to realise that the Circuit is more than the sum of its parts, but a means through which churches can support and encourage one another in the work of God's Kingdom. It will enable Circuit Stewards to keep the life of the Circuit under review and help in the development of a vision for the future of the Circuit.

One thing that helps is for Circuit Stewards to keep in touch with what is happening in the wider Church through involvement in the District Synod and by trying to be properly informed about what the Methodist Connexion is doing and saying. The Methodist website, The Buzz, E-news and the Methodist Recorder (which is a newspaper that is independent of the Methodist Church) are just some of the ways this can be done. Of course it is just as important to know what is happening in other denominations and the world church.



Governance of the Circuit and beyond

The Circuit Meeting is a focal meeting point for those who are in leadership in the local churches within a Circuit. Its responsibilities combine spiritual leadership and administrative efficiency. Members of the Circuit Meeting, and hence Circuit Stewards, are Managing Trustees for Circuit property (normally manses) and funds. The general powers of Managing Trustees are identified in CPD.

Its concerns include the invitation and reinvitation of ministers; employment of lay employees, the allocation of personnel and money for mission and ministry, identifying training needs, approval of those ready for admission as Local Preachers and the annual appointment of Circuit Stewards. Through its policies, procedures, and decisions it needs to nurture ministry and mission and encourage Spirit-led new initiatives such as “Fresh Expressions” and “Pioneer Ministries”.

Circuit Meetings

Circuits work in different ways and have a variety of patterns of meetings. Every Circuit is required to have a properly constituted Circuit Meeting, whose members are the Managing Trustees of the Circuit. The Circuit Meeting must meet at least two times each year in September and March. Many Circuits find that to be effective and to speed up decision making another meeting is also required. In United Areas a meeting will be constituted which has the powers of a Circuit Meeting delegated to it.

The Circuit Meeting is the group of people who are the legally constituted trustees who are responsible for the governance of the Circuit. This involves the development of policies and plans for the future that are in accordance with the purposes of the Methodist Church. It is intended that the Circuit Meeting will act as the focal point of the working fellowship of the churches in the Circuit, overseeing their pastoral, training and evangelistic work.

The Circuit Meeting can also send “Memorials” to the Conference. These are requests for the Conference to consider any matter to do with the mission and ministry of the Connexion. The Conference has to send a reply to any memorial.

Invitations Committee

See below.

Other meetings in a Circuit

Subcommittees of the Circuit Meeting can also be established for various purposes depending on the size and particular needs of the Circuit. These are the groups that can oversee some of the issues that need detailed management in a Circuit, such as property, safeguarding etc. They can also be working groups which support and advise the Circuit Meeting on matters of policy and strategy for the development of mission and ministry.

Church Councils

A Circuit Steward is an ex-officio member of, and entitled to attend, all official meetings connected with the Circuit, except for Local Preachers' meetings (unless they are a Local Preacher). Any Circuit Steward is therefore entitled to attend the Church Council of any church within the Circuit. One Circuit Steward should be appointed, by the Circuit Stewards, to attend each Church Council (SO 610). It is most effective if the Circuit Steward appointed is not a member of a church whose Church Council they attend in their Circuit Steward role.

It is important to note that Local Ecumenical Partnerships will have different governance arrangements which will be laid down in a Constitution that has been agreed by the Methodist Church.

By attending a Church Council, the Circuit Steward will be able to:

- represent the Circuit at the meeting;
- offer information on matters relating to Circuit events and Circuit policy;
- gather information on local church events or concerns that need to be reported back to the rest of the Circuit Leadership Team.

District Synod

The District Synod meets three times each year, once in its ministerial session which draws together all of the presbyters in the District, and twice in its representative session which gathers lay leaders from the Circuits together with the ministers. CPD defines the role of the District Synod as:

the policy-making court of the District, serving as a link between the Conference and the Connexional Team on the one hand and the Circuits and Local Churches on the other. It shall have oversight of all District affairs. It shall formulate and promote policies, through its various officers and

*committees, to assist the mission of the Church, to give inspiration to the leaders in the Circuits and to ensure the interrelation of all aspects of the Church's life throughout the District. It is a forum in which issues of public concern relevant to the witness of the Church may be addressed.*⁹

Representatives from the Circuit are appointed by the Circuit Meeting and at least one Circuit Steward of each Circuit in the District is included amongst their number. The other lay representatives will often include some of the other Circuit Stewards.

At Synod there are opportunities to:

- meet with representatives from other Circuits;
- hear about what is happening in the wider Church in Britain and around the world;
- pick up ideas for taking back to the Circuit;
- find out what is happening in the District;
- pass on information relating to the Circuit;
- vote on resolutions;
- elect representatives to Conference;
- send memorials and resolutions to the Conference.

The nominated Steward should report back to the other Circuit Stewards who have not attended Synod and to the Circuit Meeting.

Circuit Stewards and Treasurers' Meetings and training

Every November the District Chair and Treasurer arrange a meeting for all Circuits Stewards which provides an opportunity for introducing Connexional and District policies and initiatives; sharing good practice and ideas for training. Every May there is a meeting for Circuit Stewards who will be involved in organising the Stationing and reinvitation process for the coming year. Further training days will also be arranged in three locations in the District every March.

Making meetings work

If you are responsible for the meeting use the following questions as a checklist as you prepare. Or, if you are attending a meeting that isn't working use them to diagnose what's wrong and help make the meeting become more effective:

⁹ Standing Order 412

Thirteen key questions:

1. Is there a clear purpose/agenda?
2. Are the appropriate people present?
3. Is there an agreed finishing time?
4. Do people know why they are there – have they been given enough information to make an informed decision?
5. Do people know and trust each other?
6. Is the meeting chaired fairly and clearly?
7. Is someone taking minutes or notes?
8. Has the necessary preparation been done?
9. Is there clarity about the decisions being made, and are decisions properly followed up by named individuals?
10. Are any special needs being addressed, e.g. hearing impairment, transport needs, meeting times?
11. Is the environment/meeting place appropriate and conducive to the business of the meeting?
12. Is there a need for confidentiality, and has this been addressed?
13. Are people offered refreshments?



Managing the Circuit

The Circuit Steward team is expected to share the following responsibilities for managing the work of the Circuit between them.

Finances

The Circuit Fund

The Circuit Stewards are collectively Treasurers of the Circuit Fund so the term 'Circuit Treasurer' does not occur in CPD. However, most Circuits have one of their Stewards who has the necessary skills and knowledge to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Circuit Funds who acts as the Circuit Treasurer or Finance Steward. Otherwise the Circuit must secure a competent person to carry out these duties under close supervision of the Stewards.

The Circuit Stewards have to present to the Circuit Meeting a forecast budget covering a 12 month period and an indication of how the costs will be met. Sometimes Circuit projects will require long-term financial planning. Discussion with individual Church Treasurers is essential when assessing contributions from the Churches prior to presenting figures to the Circuit Meeting for its consideration. Some Circuits hold a meeting of Treasurers whilst other Circuits approach each Church Treasurer on a one-to-one basis. It should always be treated as a sensitive issue.

The Circuit Stewards must ensure that stipends and agreed rates of allowances to meet Circuit expenses are paid to ministers and other staff including any Lay Employees. All ministers are paid through the Central Stipends Scheme that is administered by the Connexional Team. Lay Employees can be paid through a similar scheme; otherwise the Circuit Stewards will need to become involved in income tax, national insurance, superannuation and other items of book-keeping.

In exercising financial control the Circuit Stewards need to know that SO 012(1) states that:

Methodist money shall not be held in private accounts but in official bank accounts requiring the signatures of, or electronic authorisation by, two persons for withdrawals.

They must maintain the payment of financial obligations as set out in the annual budget, e.g. payment to District funds, the upkeep of Circuit properties (manses) etc.

The financial year for Methodist purposes is from 1 September – 31 August. The annual accounts are presented to the Circuit Meeting. A Standard Form of Accounts must be completed and a copy sent to the District Treasurer, having been audited or independently examined by an appropriate person.

Circuits with total income or expenditure in excess of £250,000 must prepare their accounts on an accruals basis and where gross income is £500,000 or the income is over £250,000 and gross assets are over £3.26m, then a Registered Auditor must be appointed. Circuits whose gross income or total expenditure is less than £250,000 in each of the last three years will normally choose to have their accounts independently examined rather than audited. An independent examination is a form of scrutiny that provides assurance that nothing is amiss, while an audit is concerned with gathering evidence that a true and fair view is shown in the accounts.

The Charities Act 1993 describes an independent examiner as "an **independent** person who is reasonably believed by the trustees to have the requisite **ability** and practical **experience** to carry out a competent examination of the accounts". The Circuit Meeting as managing trustees have the responsibility of appointing the examiner.

To be considered independent the examiner must have no connection with the Circuit Meeting that might appear to prevent an impartial examination of the accounts.

For example:

An independent examiner must not be:

- a member of the Circuit Meeting or any of its sub committees;
- an employee or person who receives benefit or support from the Circuit Meeting;
- a close relative, business partner or employee of any of the above;
- a major donor to the Circuit or any of its churches.

The Charities Act 2006 requires all religious charities to register with the Charity Commission if their gross income is over £100,000. The deadline for registration was 31 December 2009. Registered charities will be expected to submit their Annual

Return including Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts to the Charity Commission nine months after the year end. The Commission will email all charities four months after their financial year end. The email will offer the choice of completing the annual return online or requesting a copy (which is then mailed to them).

The Charity Commission contact centre (Tel: 0845 300 0218) can deal with any individual enquiries that the Circuit contacts may have regarding returns and accounts. Copies of the Trustees' Annual Report and the Annual Return can be found on the Methodist website with guidance notes:

www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/example_trustee_annualreport.pdf

www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/trustee_annual_return_2009.pdf

Different legislation applies in Malta and Gibraltar so Circuit Stewards from these two Circuits need to familiarise themselves with the law in their jurisdictions. However the requirements of CPD in terms of the best practice in handling finances still apply.

A year in the life of a Circuit Treasurer/Finance Steward

The Methodist Financial Year runs from 1 September to 31 August. However, the work for a particular financial year starts well before 1 September and ends long after 31 August. The following is the list of activities for a typical Financial Year (Year 1):

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
December Year 0	Provide figures for applications for Connexional funds for Year 1
February/March Year 0	Set budget and assessments for Year 1 for presentation at Circuit Meeting. Connexion will have sent information on stipends, pensions and travel expenses for Year 1 and advice on tax matters. District Treasurer will have sent District Assessment. Other expenses will have to be judged from previous years, bearing in mind inflation or other indications of increases. Assessments can be set in a variety of ways. These should not be based solely on membership but take into account such items as giving, investment income etc and also reflect the 'ability to pay'. The share system is also used by a number of Circuits where churches volunteer how much they can afford to give. It is useful to receive each church's accounts and often valuable to have a meeting of all Church Treasurers.
August Year 0	Church assessments for September are officially due eight working days before the beginning of the quarter and the stipends payment is due four

August Year 0	working days before the beginning of the quarter. It is useful to do as many of these as possible, by transfer through Central Finance Board or Bank accounts. These transactions should be recorded in the accounts for Year 1 if accruals accounting is used (a requirement for Circuits whose income or expenditure is in excess of £250,000 in a year).
September Year 1	District Assessment is due by the seventh day of the quarter. Again a direct transfer is advisable. Other payments should be made during the year as required.
End of November Year 1	Request from Circuit staff details of expenses to be reimbursed for 1 st quarter and contribution for personal phone calls. Mileage rates are agreed with the Inland Revenue and these should not be exceeded. <i>The quarterly activities need to be repeated each quarter.</i>
End of May Year 1	Forms P11D, which indicate taxable benefits received by a minister, will be provided by Methodist Church House and need to be completed and returned to them for each member of staff. These contain details of 'benefits in kind' received by staff in the financial year ending 5 April and will include relevant expenditure since 6 April in Year 0. The Dictionary of Taxation from Ministerial Benefits at Methodist Church House gives good advice on what to include.
August Year 1	It is best to try and pay all amounts due before the end of the month and bank all money received to avoid complications with accruals in the accounts.
Autumn Year 2	A statement of accounts should be presented to the Circuit Meeting as soon as it is practical.
October Year 2	Accounts need to be audited if the Gross Income is over £500,000 or Gross Income is over £250,000 and Gross Assets are over £3.26m by a qualified auditor or independently examined by a suitably competent person – not a member of the Circuit Meeting.
End of November Year 2	The Standard Form of Accounts should be completed, signed by Treasurer, auditor/ independent examiner and Superintendent and sent to the District Treasurer. The agreed Circuit Reserves Policy must be submitted with the accounts.
April Year 2	The District Treasurer reports on the accounts received to the District Synod and names those Circuits which have failed to return accounts on time so that the Synod does not have to take any legal responsibility for this.

Circuits with other employees can either arrange for them to be paid by the Connexion or register as employers and pay them directly. This will involve other responsibilities with regard to salaries and taxation which are not covered in the above scenario.

Clearly the above does not cover basic activities such as book-keeping, record-keeping, opening bank accounts, changing signatories, reconciling bank statements, drawing up and presenting annual accounts and making the best use of resources, funds and reserves.

Circuit Stewards should also be aware of the fact that Supernumerary ministers are entitled to payment for all services that they lead and other relevant expenses so need to ensure that systems are in place to guarantee these payments are made. Circuits are advised by the Connexional Finance Services Office annually of the recommended preaching fee and mileage rate for Supernumeraries.

If you need more guidance, contact the District Treasurer.

Manses

The responsibility for the maintenance of manses lies with Circuit Stewards although they may delegate this work to another person or group of people. So, many Circuits have a Manse Committee and Manse Stewards. Ministers need to be clearly instructed who they need to consult in the case of work needing to be done on the manse they occupy and who has the authority to authorise expenditure when urgent or emergency repairs are required. Circuit Stewards should be ready to take the necessary action if any dispute or disagreement arises.

Circuit Stewards need to make sure that for every manse there is someone who will:

- liaise regularly with occupants on the state of manses and undertake renovations and repairs as necessary;
- arrange for Quinquennial inspections to be carried out every 5 years on each manse; review the findings and recommendations of the inspectors and take any necessary action; send copies of Schedule E and the Quinquennial report to the District Manses Secretary;
- prepare the annual property schedules (Schedule C), both of accounts and investments and of the state of the properties, and take any action required;

- be involved in matters such as the purchase, sale, extension or alteration of manses and take appropriate action to get consent for the work through the online District Consents Process by liaising as needed with the District Property Secretary and the Connexional Property Office;
- open and maintain a log book for the retention of the annual property Schedules and other relevant material, and ensure that the log book is kept up to date. Establish a file for each manse in which to retain Quinquennial reports, work sheets, invoices, guarantees, inspection certificates, etc.;
- manage the money budgeted for the manses in the Circuit which should be based on the annual sum for manse maintenance recommended by District Council;
- present a report on the local property to the Circuit Meeting annually and after every Quinquennial inspection.

A charter about manses

The Conference has agreed a *Charter for Incoming Ministers and Deacons* which sets out what those moving into a manse can reasonably expect. This can be found in CPD. It states that on their arrival in the house ministers can expect to find:

- all carpets cleaned (shampooed if necessary) and vacuumed;
- all curtains cleaned and re-hung;
- all interior paintwork washed down;
- all cupboards empty, cleaned and washed out so that all shelves are usable immediately;
- a clean cooker;
- that all domestic refuse has been removed from the premises;
- that anything which had been disarranged by the previous occupants has been put back, rearranged and made good by those occupants;
- a list of useful information such as the name and address of doctor and dentist, the day for collection of refuse, details of local emergency contacts, etc.

In the garden ministers can expect to find:

- that all hedges and shrubs have been trimmed or pruned at the appropriate time;
- all lawns cut;
- all beds weeded;

- all garden rubbish removed from the premises;
- all greenhouses and sheds emptied and swept out;
- the garage emptied and swept out.

The care of manses is at all times a matter of partnership and co-operation between the occupants and the Circuit Stewards. It is not necessary for Circuit Stewards to have copies of keys) to the manse to fulfil their responsibilities. To carry out their responsibilities, Circuit Stewards, for example, whilst respecting the privacy of the manse, must have whatever access is necessary to ensure that the property is kept in good repair and that an annual and ongoing programme of maintenance and redecoration is sustained. Such things should not be left to the few days when a manse may be vacant at a changeover. In this partnership it is the responsibility of the Circuit (as set out in Standing Orders 533, 803 and 954) to provide a suitable manse, to decorate it and to furnish it with carpets, curtains, a cooker, office furniture and a lawnmower. It is the clear responsibility of the occupants, on the other hand, to keep the manse clean and presentable and at a changeover to make sure that the manse and its Circuit furnishings are left clean and tidy. Exceptional circumstances will occasionally arise in which, for various reasons, occupants are unable to fulfil this basic obligation – in which case arrangements should be negotiated with the Circuit Stewards. Normally, however, incoming ministers and deacons can expect to find that their predecessors have left the manse clean and habitable in the ways indicated above.

In planning work when a new minister is taking over a manse, be aware of taxation implications - see Finance Section under P11D. This is because some work done on manses when the minister is in residence can be classed as ‘benefit in kind’ and would be taxable and has to be reported. It can get very complicated! If you need more guidance, contact the District Treasurer.

Circuit Stewards should also ensure for all manses that there are adequate smoke detectors and fire blankets and that an annual gas inspection is carried out. Where practicable, there should be a broadband connection in each manse.

When I became a Circuit Steward, I wish I'd known that I was supposed to look after the ministers.

The Stationing system

Each year the Connexional Stationing Committee issues a Connexional Good Practice booklet for everyone involved in stationing. The booklet has the status of Standing Orders and is intended to help all those involved in the invitation and stationing

process and should be read in conjunction with any Conference requirements which are set out in the latest edition of CPD.

Your responsibility as a Circuit Steward is to ensure that the process is adhered to by the Circuit and individual churches. Ministers should expect consistency in the application of the process around the Connexion. Do not assume you know the process because you have been involved with it before.

The process generally follows the pattern as indicated in the table below which was accurate at the time of publication of this edition of the Circuit Stewards' Handbook in November 2011 (note - some of the dates may vary from year to year):

1 First stages

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Who is involved</i>	<i>Action</i>
March	Circuit Meeting	Appoint Circuit Invitation Committee (which may have delegated powers to offer initial invitations)
May–July	District Chair Lay Stationing Representative Ministers involved in reviews/moves and their partners Superintendents Circuit Stewards	District briefing meeting to explain the process. <i>Connexional Good Practice</i> is distributed. Meet with District Chair and Lay Stationing Representative to reflect on appointments that are subject to re-invitation.
	Circuit Stewards	Period of reflection on Circuit's policy and future needs
	Minister Circuit Stewards	Period of reflection and discernment conversations to establish whether minister wishes an extension to be considered If 'Yes', go to Part 2 If 'No', go to Part 3

2 Next stages

If an Extension is sought (*for new appointments see Part 3*)

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Who is involved?</i>	<i>Action</i>
May–July	Minister and household members Circuit Stewards	Meet to consider any personal or family issues
	Circuit Invitation Committee Circuit Leadership Team Superintendent	Meet to plan and agree the consultation process (District Chair or an Assistant Chair must be invited if a Superintendency is being considered)

	minister (District Chair)	
	Circuit Stewards Church Stewards	Briefing on how to conduct the consultation – best done in a meeting.
July– August	Church Stewards	Consultation in local churches (max. 3 weeks)
	Circuit Stewards Church Stewards at other churches in the Circuit	Consultation in other Circuit churches (if for a Superintendent’s extension)
	Circuit Stewards	Consultation in other areas of minister’s work e.g. ecumenical work; chaplaincies.
	Circuit Stewards	Gather all responses, prepare a written report and give feedback on the responses in a face to face meeting with the minister. If the minister still wishes an invitation to be considered finalise written report for the Circuit Invitation Committee
	Circuit Invitation Committee	Meets to receive Circuit Stewards’ report and decide its recommendation to September Circuit Meeting. Decision to be conveyed to the minister. (District Chair or an Assistant Chair must be invited if a Superintendency is being considered)
	Circuit Invitation Committee	Prepares a reasoned statement and sends it to District Chair and Lay Stationing Representative and Warden of the Diaconal Order (if appropriate) at least 3 weeks before the Circuit Meeting
	District Chair Lay Stationing Representative	Approve reasoned statement (and amend it if necessary)
	Minister	If the minister does not agree to the recommendation, he/she may prepare their own reasoned statement
	Circuit Meeting Secretary	Distributes reasoned statement(s) to members of Circuit Meeting at least 14 days before the meeting with an explanation of the voting procedure
On or before 20 Sept	Circuit Meeting	Considers the extension and votes if required
After the Circuit Meeting	Chair of Circuit Meeting	Reports the Circuit Meeting’s decision to the District Chair (<i>and Warden of the Diaconal Order if the decision is about a deacon</i>)
	Circuit Stewards	If an extension is offered and accepted, prepare a letter of understanding, which must be sent to the

	Minister	District Chair for approval. Issue letter of understanding.
	Circuit Stewards	If the decision is against an extension, proceed as for 'New Appointment' – see Part 3

3 Next stages

New Appointment

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Who is involved</i>	<i>Action</i>
May–Sept	Circuit Stewards	Vacancy is notified to the District Chair <i>and (for diaconal appointments the Warden of the Diaconal Order.)</i>
	Circuit Invitation Committee Circuit Leadership Team Superintendent District Chair <i>Warden of the Diaconal Order</i> Lay Stationing Representative Ministers and partners	Consultation and decisions about the appointment(s) to be filled Meet with District Chair and Lay Representative to discuss the appointment.
	<i>Warden of the Diaconal Order</i>	<i>Profile forms sent to deacons and Circuit Stewards</i>
	District Chair	Profile forms sent to presbyters and Circuit Stewards
	Ministers Circuit Stewards	Prepare draft profiles
	District Chair Lay Stationing Representative minister	Meet to discuss draft minister's profile
	District Chair Lay Stationing Representative Circuit Stewards	Meet to discuss draft Circuit profile(s)
	By 6 Sept	Deacons Circuit Stewards
By 23 Sept	Circuit Stewards	Probationer application forms to District Chair
24–25 Sept	<i>Deacons</i> <i>Warden of the Diaconal Order</i>	<i>Conversation and information days for all deacons being stationed</i>

By 27 Sept	Deacons Circuit Stewards	<i>Deacons' profiles and Circuit profiles requesting a diaconal appointment to be with Warden of the Diaconal Order</i>
By 27 Sept	District Chair	Probationer application forms to the Discipleship and Ministries Cluster of the Connexional Team
By 1 Oct	Presbyters Circuit Stewards	Presbyter profiles and Circuit profiles (for presbyter appointments) to District Chair
By 6 Oct	District Chair	Forwards profiles to Stationing Administration

4 Final stages

Matching of Presbyters, Visits, and Direct Stationing

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Who is involved</i>	<i>Action</i>
End of Sept	Initial Stationing Sub-committee	Accepted probationer appointments and those for transferring ministers are designated
Mid October	<i>Diaconal Stationing Sub-committee</i>	<i>Meets to consider all diaconal appointments</i>
Late Oct	Stationing Administration	Profile books/CD-ROMs posted out
Late Oct	Circuit Stewards and ministers District Chair Lay Stationing Representative	Discuss possible suitable matches
Oct–Nov	Circuit Stewards	Preparation for possible visits
Early Nov	Stationing Matching Group 1 (SMG 1)	Considers all presbyteral appointments and notes diaconal appointments
End of SMG 1	District Chair Circuit Stewards and Presbyters	District Chair notifies each presbyter and Circuit whether a 'match' has been made
End of SMG 1	<i>District Chair</i>	<i>Deacons and Circuits informed of diaconal stations</i>

9.00am day after SMG 1	Circuit Stewards Minister	Circuit Stewards contact minister to arrange a visit to the Circuit
Within 10 days after SMG1	Circuit Stewards	Information pack sent to presbyter
	Presbyter	Sends CV and other information to Circuit
	Circuit Stewards and minister/Superintendent Others in the Circuit, as appropriate	Ministers visit to Circuit
Within 2 days after visit	Circuit Invitation Committee Minister	Separately: prayer, reflection, consultation, then decision on whether to accept the match Together: share decisions and agree outcome
	Circuit Stewards and minister /District Chair <i>Warden of the Diaconal Order</i>	Circuit Stewards and ministers report the outcome (with feedback if match is declined) to their own District Chair <i>and Warden of the Diaconal Order (for diaconal appointments)</i>
In the next few days	Circuit Invitation Committee	Issues formal invitation to minister and, if accepted, issues a letter of understanding
	District Chair	Reports outcomes to Stationing Administration for Circuit appointments in their District
Early Dec	Stationing Matching Group 2 (SMG 2)	Deals with as many of the remaining vacancies as possible
After SMG2	(See above)	Matching reports and visits (see above steps following SMG 1)
Early Jan	Initial Stationing Sub-committee	Meets to station probationers and ministers coming from overseas
Mid Jan	Stationing Matching Group 3 (SMG3)	SMG 3 – deals with unresolved stationing
After SMG3	(See above)	Matching reports and visits (see above steps following SMG 1)
Feb–June	Stationing Action Group	Tries to resolve unfilled stations
March	Circuit Meeting	Appoints Circuit Invitation Committee
April/May	Stationing Committee	Recommends the stations to Conference
July	Methodist Conference	Stations approved

Circuit Stewards should familiarise themselves with the whole process and at the March Circuit Meeting ensure that an Invitation Committee is appointed and decide

what powers are delegated to the Committee. The Circuit Meeting must decide whether to give the Committee delegated powers to agree a match where an initial invitation is concerned. Delegated powers are highly desirable in the case of an initial invitation in order to avoid a delay caused by the need to call a Circuit Meeting before an invitation can be issued. Delegated powers cannot be given to the Circuit Invitation Committee where a reinvitation is being considered.

The constitution of the Circuit Invitation Committee is not specified in Standing Orders but SO 541 indicates that membership can be drawn, principally, from members in the Circuit or elsewhere in the Connexion. But note that the Superintendent, other presbyters in the Circuit, deacons and others under SO 552 are ex-officio members of “all official meetings (however described) connected with the Circuit”. It is not appropriate for the minister leaving the Circuit to be in attendance at the Circuit Invitation Committee though he/she may be consulted on the preparation of the profile.

To be effective the Committee needs to be a manageable size, able to undertake the tasks required and also have the confidence of the Circuit Meeting. A core membership of the Superintendent, Circuit Stewards, Circuit meeting secretary and Circuit Treasurer seems to be the minimum. The Superintendent will be a member except when her/his extension is under consideration but the involvement of other presbyters and deacons needs to be considered carefully in respect of the particular appointments under consideration.

It is also the responsibility of the Invitation Committee to consider any application for curtailment.

It may be desirable to appoint a sufficient number and range of people from whom a suitable panel can be drawn for specific events such as a curtailment (not dealt with further in this Handbook but see SO 544). In matters of stationing it is vital that the membership should provide a fair balance and be representative of the churches concerned. It may be necessary to call it at short notice. It is not appropriate to resort to co-opting arrangements, which might skew the Circuit Meeting's desire to be representative.

In the case of the reinvitation of a Superintendent, the District Chair or another minister appointed by him (probably one of the assistant Chairs) will attend and chair the Invitation Committee and the Circuit Meeting at which the re-invitation is considered.

Every May, the District Chair and District Lay Stationing Representative hold a meeting to prepare Circuit Stewards, ministers and their families for the stationing round. It is vital that Circuit Stewards and ministers who will be going through the re-invitation process attend this meeting. Spouses of ministers are also welcome to attend this meeting if they wish. They will not be sent a separate invitation, but ministers should make them aware that it is happening. For ministers this and all other meetings associated with the stationing procedures are more important than any other church commitment that they may clash with in their diaries.

The Circuit Meeting which considers a reinvitation recommendation needs to be held on or before 20th September to allow time for the decision to be forwarded to the District.

The whole process of stationing and reinvitation is stressful for the Circuit but very much more so for the minister and family. It is the Circuit Steward's job to ensure that all consultations are conducted as sympathetically as possible and this is best achieved by following the guidelines at all stages. Remember that support is available within the District.

If you need more guidance, contact the Lay Stationing Representative or the District Chair who will always be available to offer advice and guidance.

When I became a Circuit Steward, I wish I'd known that I'd be writing Stationing Profiles every year! (It isn't the case for every Circuit, but they can sometimes be unexpected)

When a new minister arrives

The arrival of a new minister in the Circuit is a stressful time for everyone concerned. The Circuit Stewards will need to make sure that everything is in order in the manse and the minister and any family they have will be looking forward to a new challenge, and at the same time some will be grieving the situation they have left while others will welcome the opportunity of starting again with a clean slate.

A welcome pack with essential information about the manse and the local area is always helpful. The offer of food and even overnight hospitality is sometimes needed because long distance moves often take two days.

Be aware of special arrangements which are needed for those in their first appointments as probationers or from the world church.

Welcome services will need to be planned in partnership with the Superintendent and the date will need to be set in consultation with the District Chair. If a probationer is being welcomed this is always a service of Holy Communion. Where the church is an LEP, the date will also need to be decided in consultation with ecumenical partners.

Supporting the Circuit staff

The Circuit staff can be a mixed economy of lay employees, probationer and ordained ministers. Some of them will be working in a voluntary capacity. Everyone who works as part of a Circuit staff team should have clear understanding of their role (a job description if they are a lay employee and a letter of understanding if they are a minister). Lay employees should also have a designated line manager to supervise their work and know who to turn to if they have a complaint or a grievance. Often these management responsibilities will be undertaken by one of the Circuit Stewards.

Circuit Stewards have a particular responsibility for the support and encouragement of ministers so need to be available for Circuit staff. Circuit Stewards should be able to offer ministers a sensitive listening ear if they need it. They should help to protect ministers from the sometimes conflicting demands that are put on them by their own and their congregation's expectations.

A Self-assessment Wellbeing Toolkit is available to help Circuit staff address issues to do with work-life balance, exercise, diet, etc. See Appendix 2.

Ministerial Development Review

For some years the Methodist Conference has required ministers to undertake a regular process of "reflective learning and development." The purpose of this is to strengthen ministers in fulfilling their vocations by examining three areas:

- (i) how the minister's personal calling to ministry is currently experienced;
- (ii) the ways in which that vocation is being fulfilled in relation to the Church as a whole;
- (iii) the ways in which that vocation is being fulfilled in the particular appointment in which the minister is stationed.

From September 2011 the Conference has decided that every ordained minister in a circuit appointment, including supernumeraries who have agreed with a circuit to

have pastoral responsibility for a church or churches should meet this requirement by undertaking a process of review called “Ministerial Development Review.” Circuit Stewards are not necessarily directly involved in these reviews, however they should be aware that they are in place. As part of their on-going responsibility to support and encourage their colleagues Superintendents will work with a lay person in holding an annual review meeting, which will normally be in February. Before the meeting the minister will suggest and agree with the superintendent and lay person areas of their ministry which they will get feedback about and the people they will get it from. The process is necessarily confidential, but it will involve identifying plans for the next year and any training and development needs. A set of booklets that explain “Ministerial Development Review” in detail can be downloaded from <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=3558>

When things go wrong

Sometimes things go wrong and Circuit Stewards will often find themselves in a position where people share concerns and complaints with them. There is always a need to exercise judgement about which matters to take seriously and which simply to listen to patiently. Some issues should never be ignored including matters to do with the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults or where ministers have abused their position of trust.

The District Chair has the power to suspend ministers from some or all of their work when they are subject to very serious complaints. This power is only ever exercised in full consultation with legal officers in the Connexional Team, but it needs to be understood that for reasons of confidentiality the District Chair is not always able to fully explain what has led to the suspension.

In any matter to do with discipline of ministers you should consult the Superintendent (or the Circuit Complaints Officer if one has been appointed) or the District Chair if the matter concerns the Superintendent. The Methodist Church has well established procedures for dealing with formal complaints and grievances. Unless a complaint concerns a matter of such a serious nature that it might lead to legal action or automatically lead to Methodist disciplinary action, the first priority is to try to resolve it through a formal or informal process of mediation. The District has trained mediators available to support this.



Circuit Stewards should be aware of where to get advice on matters of property, employment, safeguarding, finance, charity law and disability rights. The list of resource people at the end of this handbook tells you who you can contact in the District for help and advice. There is also a lot of information on the Methodist website and the District website.

Two personal reflections

Pauline Newton

Senior Circuit Steward in the Redhill and East Grinstead Circuit.

One of three Circuit Stewards, jointly responsible for pastoral care, property and finance, I soon learned that we have to deal with the unexpected - the Superintendent who was coming in September was diverted elsewhere at Conference!

Since then life has revolved around selling a manse and buying a new one; ensuring everyone keeps within the maintenance budget for manses; the delights of property schedules and quinquennials; producing a leaflet on roles and responsibilities of a church council member; the consultation process leading to invitation of a Superintendent and reinvitation of three other ministers. I don't regret becoming a Circuit Steward two years ago but it does seem to have taken over my life! I'm about to hand over my property role to a new Steward and become Senior Circuit Steward, taking on different responsibilities as I get more involved with the pastoral support of our ministers and members of their families.

We are a Circuit of five large churches in five towns which makes it difficult to promote a strong Circuit identity. However, I look forward to exploring the way forward with our ministers and congregations – plenty to keep me occupied for the next four years!

Phil Mount

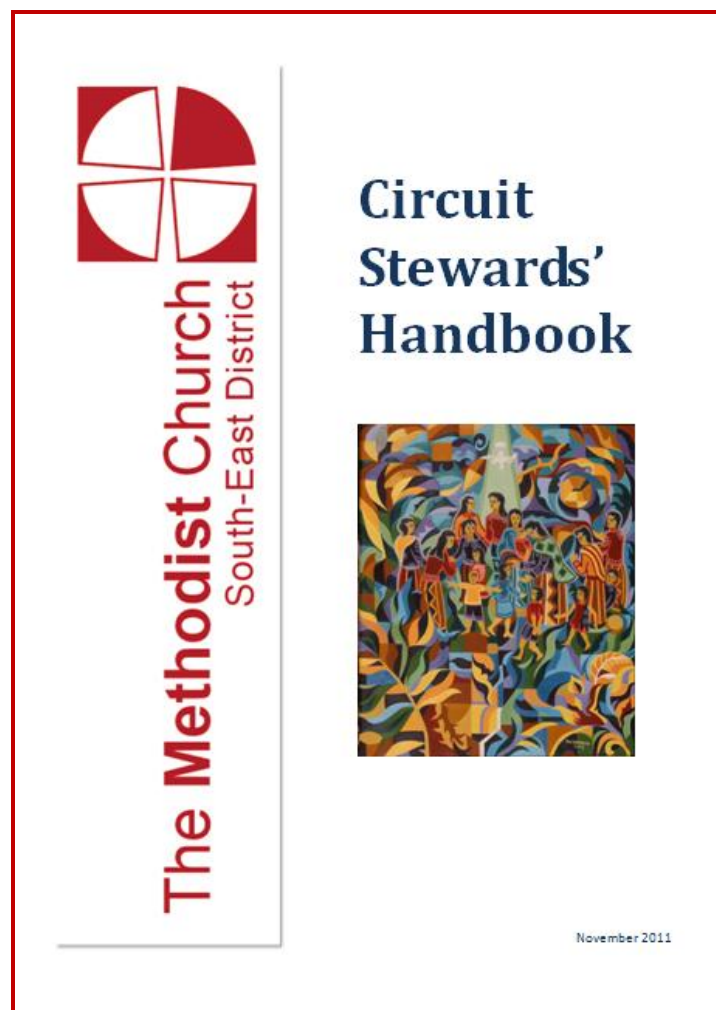
Senior Circuit Steward in the Thames Valley.

How did I become a Circuit Steward? I am convinced that part of a presbyter's training involves how to ask a question in such a way that the only possible answer is "Yes I will!"

Luckily I have had over 30 year's leadership experience as a Territorial Army officer (where leadership has to be more by consent otherwise no one turns up next time). This now stands me in good stead as it soon becomes apparent to a Circuit Steward that trying to lead 12 churches (13 congregations) in the same direction is very similar to trying to herd cats!

As I enter my fourth year (having been Senior Circuit Steward for the last two) I have “stationed” three presbyters, registered the Circuit as a charity with the Charity Commission, studied the Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 and 2005), the Data Protection Acts (1998 and 2003), the Child Protection Act, the Charities Acts (1993), (2006) and (2009) and several of the Landlord and Tenants Acts before advising churches on the contents thereof, and we are currently selling one manse and buying another.

I think that this qualifies me to say “I wish there had been a comprehensive Circuit Steward’s Handbook”, such as this, when I accepted the appointment. Would I still have accepted the “job” if I had known what it entailed? Most definitely; the “buzz” when it all comes together far outweighs the times when it all goes pear shaped: but then people have always thought of me as a bit mad!



The structure of the Methodist Church

Local churches (about 6,000 in England, Scotland and Wales, the Channel Islands, Malta and Gibraltar) are grouped into **Circuits** (600+), each having a **Circuit Superintendent**. Circuits are grouped into **Districts** (31) led by a **District Chair**.

The policy-making body of the Methodist Church is the annual **Conference** to which the Districts send elected representatives both lay and ordained. A **President** and **Vice President** are elected by the Conference and serve for one year as representative leaders of the whole Methodist Church.

The ongoing work of the Methodist Conference is undertaken throughout the year by the **Methodist Council**, which meets four times annually.

The Church is served by a group of lay and ordained people called the **Connexional Team** most of whom are based at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5JR (020 7486 5502). The Property and Resourcing Mission sections are currently based at Central Buildings, Oldham St, Manchester M1 1JQ (0161 236 5194).

Within the Connexional Team there are posts for the strategic development of various aspects of the work, such as youth work, children's work, mission and evangelism, Methodist Women in Britain, pastoral care, wellbeing, formation in ministry, etc.

The post of **General Secretary** and **Secretary of the Conference** are held by the same person who provides overall co-ordination and strategic direction to the Connexion's work, under the guidance of the **Methodist Council**, a representative body.

Appendix 1

District personnel

In the **District Directory**, issued each year for Synod in September, contact details can be found for:

The District staff

District Chair

Assistant Chairs

Training Officer

District Development Enabler

Lay Employment Consultant

District Administrator and Chair's PA

Principal District officers

Synod Secretary

District Treasurer

District Grants Officer

Lay Stationing Officer

Property Secretary

Safeguarding Group Convenor

Mediation/Reconciliation group convenor

A number of other officers and resource people

Extra copies of the **District Directory** can be obtained from the District Administrator.

An up to date list of these officers and contact details are found on the District website.

Appendix 2

Other resources:

The District Website

www.methodistsoutheast.org.uk

The Methodist Website

www.methodist.org.uk

The current issue of **CPD – The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church** (this is now available for free download as a searchable pdf from www.methodist.org.uk)

Publications and resources are available from Methodist Publishing: 17 Tresham Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 6SG. Phone: 01733 235962, Email: resources@methodistchurch.org.uk , Website: www.mph.org.uk

Information about the Wellbeing Toolkit is available from the Methodist Wellbeing Officer (contactable via Development and Personnel in the Connexional Team)

Appendix 3

Abbreviations and jargon buster

Circuit Assessment	Payment made by local church to Circuit to fund Circuit, District and Connexional activities and staffing
Conference	The annual meeting of representatives of Districts that governs the Methodist Church
Connexion	Included in the British Methodist Connexion are all the Districts of Scotland, Wales and England, along with the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Shetland, Malta and Gibraltar.
CPD	Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, the rule book
Curtailement	The term used when a minister leaves an appointment early
Deacon	An order of ministry with a rule of life which focuses on the servant role
Presbyter	A minister of word, sacrament and pastoral responsibility
SO	Standing Order refers to an individual rule in CPD
LEP	Local Ecumenical Partnership
Memorial	A suggestion or request sent by a Circuit to the Conference
Steward	A term used to describe a variety of different officers who share some aspect of oversight in the church