Minutes of the Circuit meeting of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Circuit held on Monday 8th September at Alcester

REDACTED VERSION FOR PUBLICATION ON CIRCUIT WEBSITE – full version provided to members of the Circuit Meeting

Preliminaries: Brief Devotion given by Rev Steve Levett. Including a celebration with Alcester on the recent completion of the 2nd major phase of their building renewal development.

Apologies: received from a number of members of the meeting.

Confirmation of meeting membership: Meeting welcomed Rev Ruth Fry to the meeting. Reminder to notify meeting secretary of new members and contact changes.

1/34 confirmation of previous meeting minutes held on Monday 16th June: No corrections or updates needed

2/34 Matters arising not appearing later on agenda:

a. Potential Circuit merger with Kidderminster and Stourport – The initial response from K&S CLT is that they are not enthusiastic, so no talks are currently planned.
b. Sale of 26 Beechcroft Drive – Full explanation was given is report sent with meeting agenda. Tenants have been given a statutory notice informing them that the tenancy will end in two months by which time they should quit the property. The property will be marketed from that point from around the beginning of November.
c. Live Streaming subgroup consultation – Other pressing matters have had to take precedence. Will wait for the full staff team to be back and see if the conversation can be taken forward as of then.
d. Seeking new Circuit Stewards – two people have been approached but have decided that it isn't the right fit for them at this time.

3/34 Circuit Stewards/ Circuit Invitations Committee – Copy of Profile sent out with agenda. District are happy with the profile, having only suggested a few adjustments to improve the profile which were incorporated accordingly. The manse that has been offered is 7 Sandygate Close, Redditch. The profiles will be circulated to Presbyters seeking stationing on the 17th of October. The stationing process continues from that date, with Circuits and Presbyters being asked to create their indicative lists of the Ministers/Circuits they are interested in. This information is used to inform conversations at the first Stationing Matching Group (attended by District Chairs and District Lay Stationing Representative) meeting from 10th -13th November. We will be notified whether or not we have been matched 14th November, with visits to circuits to take place between 14th and 30th November. Given the station is for a Superintendent every Church will be affected and will need to be involved in the visit, so all CIC reps will need to be available for the visit.

**Is the meeting happy for the profile to be submitted to Stationing? Unanimous vote for the profile to be sent to Stationing.**

Each Church needs to check their mini–Mission Action Plan's and short description of their Church. These will then be updated on the Circuit website. These need to be actioned and updated by the 6th of October. Please send your revised to Lucy or Steve by this date.

4/34 Peckwood Forrest Space: Draft role description for a lay pioneer worker

A copy of the role description was sent out with the agenda reports.

The Circuit have funding for 4 years from Connexion and District totalling £20,000 per year, with the Circuit contributing £10,000 a year, which currently runs until August 31st, 2027. Underspending in the budget leading to a surplus being carried forward, plus the hope that with the help of the District Missions Enabler Adam Sanders we will obtain a further year's funding of £20,000 from Connexion and District taking the funding period from outside the circuit to five years, plus the use of the funding in the Circuit budget becoming available due to not seeking to fill the half time appointment being vacated by Rev Stephen Levett when he retires, indicates the Circuit could fund the position for three years from September 2026 to August 2029. The exact number of hours per week of the appointment would be worked out in the detail.

**Permission was asked of the meeting to give CLT and the Circuit Stewards permission to get the lay pioneer role description fine tuned and bring the final proposal to the Circuit meeting in January 2026. Unanimous agreement.**

5/34 Circuit Mission Action Plan (CMAP) – Time did not allow discussion and revision of the CMAP, which was last revised and adopted in September 2024. Encouragingly we had taken action and made significant progress on at least the first four of the seven items in the CMAP. The CMAP will be given significant time at the January 2026 Circuit meeting.

6/34 Circuit Level Volunteer Officers:

a. Celebrating Faithful Service: There have been a few people that have retired from serving at Circuit level recently, including John Wyatt, Maureen Brown, Laura Hodges, to name a few. The meeting is immensely thankful for their service. CLT will consider a way to suitably mark their commitment and contributions.
b. Recognising Current Commitment: In terms of contribution to ministry at the Circuit level, we currently have sixteen active Local Preachers, Circuit Stewards – Pam Rose & Sue Watson, Safeguarding Officer – Sue Pinfield, Local Preachers Secretary – Sarah Leeson, Treasurer – Lyn Gennoe, plus employed workers and stipendiary ministers as well as a number of active supernumeraries. We are thankful for their many and varied contributions.
c. Who and where are we lacking? – We are in need of Circuit Stewards and a Property Steward. Conversations need to be had with people, as these responsibilities at Circuit level need to be covered. An enhanced CLT meeting will be held to explore how we can best cover these responsibilities might be covered. District will be approached to explore what help and guidance they might offer.
   A suggestion of offering to serve for 1-2 years instead of having to commit to 6 years might be an avenue to look at.
   **Proposal put forward to hold a special enhanced CLT meeting to look at filling the roles and get support from District? Unanimous Yes**

   CLT will consider who else besides themselves will be invited to the enhanced CLT meeting and invite them accordingly. Members of the circuit meeting were asked to be as supportive as possible of getting involved should they receive an invite.

7/34 Safeguarding: Report sent out with agenda

Advanced training being held at Lickey end on Saturday 13th September.

Sally Meredith mentioned a possibility of a Christian lady who is not a member of the Circuit or its churches offering counselling sessions, which could possibly be held at Emmanuel or St Andrews. Sue Pinfield confirmed this is still something that is being looked into in terms of how we would be facilitated in a way that best ensures we follow good safeguarding oversight and practice.

8/34 Other Oversight and Compliance:

Annual returns and Statistics for Mission will be open soon, so Churches need to be aware of this and to make sure that these are completed.

9/34 Any other business:

a. Property – Spoken about previously in meeting under item 2 b.

b. Finance

1. Other things being equal Circuit liquid financial assets will run out in the early part of 2026. Consideration is ongoing as to how to provide financial support to the circuit in the short term, in terms of loans and gifts. These include: a request that Church Councils of the churches and church members consider if they could loan or donate money to the Circuit; approaching the District to explore if they are in a position to provide a loan from District resources; Considering applying to Chapel Aid for a loan which is approximately 5-7% APR.
   Once the house at Beechcroft Drive is sold and proceeds received will be used to repay any loans, replenish Circuit reserves and ensure sufficient financial underpinning of the Circuit for the next three to four years.
   Actions and decisions arising from this conversation were:

i.) Ask Church Councils to see what Churches can loan or gift. If the Churches can look at paying back any outstanding loans to the Circuit that will also help.

ii.) Approach District about a bridging loan. **Permission requested to see if we can borrow funds from the Methodist District? Unanimously supported by vote.**

**iii.) Permission requested for applying to Chapel Aid for a loan at 5-7% APR should the need arise? Vote was unanimous (23 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained)**

**2.** The Circuit holds a number of TMCP Trusts for relatively small amounts that are restricted. These funds can be closed and the funds received into the general accounts in most circumstances. The Circuit meeting needs to formally agree this for progress to be made in this regard. Where such trusts are held at local church level their church councils will also need to be involved. TMCP also needs to be involved in the process, whereby they apply on our behalf to the Charity Commission to dissolve the trusts. Three such trusts that the treasurer considers we could be seeking to close are: Mappleborough Green, Feckenham Church and Redditch Methodist Church. **The total for these accounts is £1300. Permission was requested from the meeting for the Treasurer to begin taking the steps necessary to close these down? Unanimous vote of agreement to close these down was given. (23 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained)**

In addition, the treasurer requested that individual churches look at their TMCP held restricted funds to see if they are worth closing them down. If they decide to take this step Lyn is able to

advise them in the process. Lyn explained that it is easier to do so while the Churches are still open; if it is left until churches have ceased to meet it can be more challenging.

c. Worship including Local Preachers meeting:
   Local Preachers report was sent out with meeting agenda.
   Lickey End are looking at starting an Alpha course soon.

10/34 Date of next Circuit meetings: Thursday 22nd January 2026 will be held at Studley