

Dear Friends,

At the last circuit meeting, I think we realised that the 'Three Town Strategy' we were working towards from 2012 had more or less come to an end. I am wondering if 'Networking' between the local churches might be a way forward. Most of us realise that local churches (perhaps different from former times) can no longer offer everything but that across the circuit we still have a wide variety of groups and events. Therefore, a local church that does not have a women's meeting might encourage a new lady who comes to attend the women's meeting at another circuit church. The same might be true of a parent and toddler group, or a choir, or a music group or Messy Church, or any of the great variety of things that we still offer across the circuit, as well as different styles and approaches to Sunday worship. If we can view these as complementary rather than competing I think it will be a step forward.

While it might be the case that 'mission statements' are now going out of fashion, I suggested to the circuit leadership team that the circuit adopt the following mission statement: 'Resourcing ministry and mission through local churches.' That will need to be confirmed at a future circuit meeting. If you would like to suggest an alternative statement then please let me know.

I am grateful to all those who have helped us set up the circuit office. The circuit meeting appointed an office management committee and from these a small group was appointed to interview applicants. I was not part of the interviewing group in the second round of applications in which Catherine Stead was appointed to be the Circuit Administrative Secretary. Details of the circuit office (office hours, Tuesday to Friday, 9.30 am-1.00 pm) are on the front of this plan. As with all offices staffed by one person, there will be times when you do not get an immediate answer to your email or telephone call. Holidays, training days, sickness, or just being out of the office for five minutes, can all be reasons why there is no immediate answer. If you do not get an answer after two working days, please refer your enquiry to me or to the appropriate person in the circuit.

This quarter we are welcoming two new local preachers on trial. Most of us already know Jonathan Oliverio and Jo Simpson. I am sure everyone will want to make them welcome and encourage them in their training to become local preachers. If you feel that God might be calling you to be a local preacher or worship leader please speak to your minister.

Finally, Christmas and New Year will soon be upon us. These are good opportunities to talk about our faith in Jesus and to invite people to special services and events in our churches. Having a leaflet or Gospel to pass on is also a way of sharing the Good News.

*John Haley*