**Group Reports for Autumn 2025 Synod.**

**DPC Report**

The District Policy Committee met twice since the last synod, in June and July 2025, carrying out the business of the East Anglia District, reviewing the finances, approving sundry grants, receiving feedback from the recipients of grants and from District Groups where appropriate. This enables us to share the good things happening and being planned in the District. The July meeting was an Away Day when the District Mission Statement was reviewed.

The District Property secretary advised that he had visited 7 circuits to discuss property matters with circuit and property stewards which had proven very worthwhile. The committee received reports and agreed that 7 churches be signed off as ceasing to meet.

From the worship group we heard of a successful Local Preachers and Worship Leaders event and received a request that more Local Preacher tutors are needed. A District Event is being planned to help equip those with the responsibility of leading Local Arrangements.

Our District Safeguarding Officer brought the District Safeguarding Policy to the Committee for agreement and advised that his role will be administered by Connexion from August 2025 but he will still serve East Anglia District as before.

Our District Mission Enabler reported on the New Places for New People, (NPNP), projects that were being set up the 3 live projects plus some others in very early stages but it was encouraging to hear. In the 2025-6 year Connexion will be releasing funds for a District NPNP Lead and a Faith Rooted Community Organiser to be employed part time and these are being recruited.

The Youth Development Group brought plans for recruiting a part-time Youth Enabler and our District Fundraiser was working on finding grants to help fund this.

The Sign of the Cross Church for those with hearing loss, who so ably led the opening worship at our Spring synod, are keen to continue after their co-ordinator leaves and ways are being explored to enable this to happen, possibly with ecumenical partners.

There are some positive initiatives going on in our District and we are very grateful to those who are committing time and energy to these.

Judy Read

**EDI Report**

The link to the EDI home page on our District website is [EA District Website - EDI home page](https://eangliamethodist.org.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion). From here you can navigate to the other pages referred to below and may discover other useful information on the way!

Since the last Synod we have issued two EDI newsletters and the next one is planned to coincide with the September Synod. The first one explains about our revamped EDI pages on the District website and has information about the Affirmation Scheme. The second one encourages larger churches, in particular, to engage with AccessAble (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/>). The newsletters can be found on the EDI Communications page.

We work with the Beds, Essex and Herts (BEH) District EDI Committee and have held the following Zooms:

* Stuart Watkin led one on Equality Impact Assessments and information from this can be found on the Equality Impact Assessments page.
* Revd Andrew Brazier (BEH District EDI Officer) organised an inter-faith conversation and the link to the recording can be found on the Awareness Sessions page.
* Revd Jonny Bell led a neurodiversity follow-up Zoom and will hopefully provide some tools from this in due course.

Many of our Circuits now have an EDI Officer or EDI contact which is great news. Some of these have joined the District EDI Committee which meets about three times a year in conjunction with the BEH District. The next meeting is planned for 25th September.

Connexion are also now producing an EDI newsletter for Districts/Circuits/Churches to share things that have worked well. I circulated the first one on my EDI distribution list in early June. The next one should be available to circulate in September. At the most recent Connexional meeting for EDI Officers there was a low attendance but those present included three from East Anglia and one from BEH, which was very encouraging.

One point from the Connexional meeting is that Connexion are looking for examples of inclusive church icons/symbols with the aim of developing a standardised set of

these for use by local churches across the country. These would signify welcome and inclusivity and could be displayed both inside and outside local church buildings.

A reminder to please ensure that all in your Circuit who need to do the mandatory EDI training have done so (don’t forget those new to their roles) and also to encourage those who have done the training to continue their personal learning, perhaps by using the resources on our website.

If you have any EDI thoughts or concerns please speak to Revd Jonny Bell, District EDI Champion, or to me.

Jonny has been asked by the Learning Network to run the Neurodiversity awareness session he did for us last year. This will be on 13th November at 7pm on Zoom. Stuart Watkin has created an Eventbrite link for it: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/neurodiversity-awareness-registration-1576251002179?aff=oddtdtcreator>

Susan Eldridge

District EDI Officer

**District Property Secretary Report**

I’ve been working with Ministers and Circuit Stewards to arrange visits to circuits, and so far this year I’ve been to Felixstowe, North Norfolk, St Neots and Huntingdon, Holt, Thetford Diss and Mildenhall, Christchurch Great Yarmouth, and Central Norfolk. These trips have been very worthwhile and we have shared ideas and experiences. A concern that has come up regularly is how to balance people’s commitment to ministry in their local area with the stretched resources of the whole circuit. As we probably all know, circuits are having to make uncomfortable choices about the work and buildings that can be supported, and what we can no longer sustain.

The circuits I’ve visited are doing what they can to take up opportunities for new and reimagined ministry, at the same time as recognising where it is best to leave the work of God to others, or for another time. There are places where our buildings are an asset for ministry, and others where the demand on resources of funds and personal effort is too much. There are a few places where the building is a concern, and it is hard to see how it can be sustained. The Norfolk Broads Circuit has just appointed an employed part-time circuit property officer to support trustees in their responsibilities, and I would

commend this idea to other circuits as a valuable use of funds as we cope with this time of rapid change.

It was a pleasure to hold a property workshop at the previous Synod in April and most of the time was spent discussing the most important issues for those who were there. By far the biggest interest was in how to manage tenancies well, especially in the light of the Renters’ Rights Bill expected to become law soon. The change in law is likely to make it more demanding for trustees to run tenancies in vacant manses and other houses. The new law will allow less flexibility in the length of tenancy, and make rent increases smaller and easier for tenants to challenge, so income from tenancies will probably become less valuable over time. This is one area where the employment of a circuit property officer could be helpful to circuit trustees. Many circuits have an understandable desire to be generous with their tenants, and we often feel a tension between this and the charity law requirement for us to gain the best income possible, for the sake of our charitable purposes. Of course, part of being a responsible owner is keeping the premises in good condition, and the rent must be sufficient to budget for this. The law is expected to be in operation this autumn, and as soon as possible afterwards TMCP will provide new guidance and methods for managing tenancies. I have the impression that much will hinge on what our professional advisers will say is ‘reasonable’ in each situation.

Please do get in touch for advice before arranging anything other than the usual Methodist Church use of any property or premises. I will be happy to hear from you if you have any queries or questions about buildings and land and their use and maintenance.

Roy Hollands

DPS@eangliamethodist.org.uk

**Safeguarding Report**

Since the previous Synod it has been a huge time of change for the Safeguarding Service across the Connexion with DSO roles changing from being District led to regionally led.

On the 1st of August my role changed from being District Safeguarding Officer for the East Anglia Methodist District to being a Regional Officer for Safeguarding for the South East aligned to East Anglia.

What does that mean is a question that is naturally asked?

What does it mean for me? I have had to learn a number of new Connexional HR systems, and change a variety of things; Laptop, phone, email signatures, and some of it has been challenging and time consuming.

What does it mean for the District and individuals within however? I don’t believe a great deal. I will continue to be available in the same way I have previously been to everyone who needs to reach out, and intend to provide the same levels of service with regard to Safeguarding Training, DBS support, managing the assortment of safeguarding concerns and all the other things you may need me for. Will some small things change along the way; quite possibly. Would some of these things naturally have evolved anyway; more than likely.

The District Safeguarding training team have provided a large number of courses across the summer. We largely plan the courses 2-6 months in advance. If you have people in the circuit that are due for renewal training it is beneficial to be looking ahead so as not to miss a course that is close by and fits other lifestyle commitments.

We continue to be spoken about well as a District in terms of NPNP projects, and it is exciting to be inputting into so many great projects. What they can bring however is some very bespoke Safeguarding considerations. I am happy to venture out and meet with any projects in the early stages to ensure that we are giving due consideration to these individual considerations.

**Neil van Holland**

**Regional Officer for Safeguarding**

Sabbatical Officer’s report

As district sabbatical officer, I often feel I am in a privileged position. I get to hear about the wide ranging interests of ministers, and often feel very enriched by the discoveries that they make and insights that they gain. I hope that circuits whose ministers go on sabbatical find opportunities to benefit in a similar way. I would encourage all those involved in sabbaticals to try to see that such sharing takes place.

 Autumn is the season when we have ministers joining us as they take up new appointments. They will not be able to take sabbaticals in this Connexional year, but I will be contacting them to see when their next sabbatical may be due. In the meantime, if any minister thinks that they are due a sabbatical, and have not heard from me, will they please get in touch?

Ann Bossingham

Learning and Caring Report

Dear friends this is not the usual kind of report I write, or would want to in the circumstances. However I have been out of the loop long enough and want to start to get involved again.

Many of you, if not all, will know by now that my wife, Joy, the proprietor of Soham Books, died in May after a short illness. You will have had contact with her at Synod bookstalls and elsewhere and for a long time she served on the former Under 19s group in the District.

I have decided not to try to run the business, although I have been proud to support this ministry of hers, and so am closing it. Sadly a buyer could not be found for the business, though a number of people have been able to take items from the shop. I am delighted to say that a church with a big outreach programme has come forward to take most of the stock and shelving etc. Truly this is God at work and I am sure Joy would be as delighted at this as I am.

I have learned anew of the great esteem and affection in which Joy was held in the District; I am immensely grateful for the large number of messages of support and condolence I have received, the District has shown me again how much it cares.

I am now on a new learning curve; I still care about the work of God in the District and need to discern my future role – your prayers would be most welcome please.

I am hugely grateful to the team who have taken up the baton regarding the employment of someone to champion the work among children and young people and run with it, I pray it may go forward successfully.

My thanks as ever to everyone who has been involved in any aspect of learning and caring, I am not yet done with it myself.

God bless you all,

Richard Dean, Learning and Caring Advocate.

**District Training Fund Report**

1. The District Training fund exists to support minister’s professional development.
2. All ministers are entitled to £200 per annum from the District for explicitly training and development needs, with the minister’s Circuit encouraged to provide an additional £100. Each presbyter or deacon will normally make one application each connexional year unless there are exceptional circumstances or alternatively make a fresh application if the annual sum of £300 has not been exceeded on the first occasion.
3. For applications that exceed the sum of £300 the presbyter / deacon is encouraged to make an application to the District Grants & Personnel Committee and contact the Revd. Dr. Mike Wilson.
4. In order to seek support from this fund the applicant will be expected to provide receipts or documentary evidence of booking and payment for the event concerned, included with the application.
5. In the year under review, we have seen more uptake of the fund and this is encouraging. Encouragement is made for ministers to use this facility. Please feel free to consult me if you have any question.

 Rev Dr Richman Ncube (richie.ncube@methodist.org.uk. richiemncube@gmail.com)

**MWIB Report for Autumn Synod 2025**

Since the last Synod we held our Spring District Day at Dereham, where we were looked after very well. Our speaker was Lizzie Zukiewiczwho told us about the interesting life she has led including as a VSO volunteer in Tanzania and Namibia.

I am delighted that at our Autumn District Day, which will be held on Saturday 25th October at Ely Methodist Church, we will have Revd Graham Thompson (a former Chair of our District who needs no introduction to most of you) as our speaker. The morning will comprise a service led by Graham and include my official induction as the new East Anglia District MWiB President. In the afternoon Graham, possibly helped by his wife, Alison, will give highlights from his Presidential year. So it should be a great day and I hope to see some of you there. Everyone is welcome, including men!

Peter Sorrell plans to bring information about the PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) Association, the Charity we are currently supporting, to our Autumn Synod so please visit the combined MWiB/PSP stall.

The Spring 2026 District Day is planned to be on Wednesday 13th May at Diss. We have not arranged a speaker yet but please save the date.

The MWiB national weekend at Swanwick was as good as ever. The next one will be from 10th to 12th April 2026. If you have never been and fancy going next year, please remember that we offer a generous subsidy to those attending for the first time. I thoroughly recommend it.

As well as our District Days, some of our Circuits hold local MWiB events. I led a reflective day in the Norwich Circuit for a small group of ladies in August looking at being “rooted in God” and how nature can help with this. Please look out for any events that may be taking place in your Circuit and support them if you can.

If you would like to hear more about MWiB, please ask to be added to my distribution list for our MWiB newsletter, which is issued (largely electronically) twice a year. A few copies of the last one will be available at Synod.

Our District MWiB Executive Committee would love to receive some new blood so if you are interested, especially those new to the District, please speak to me. The official aims of MWiB nationally are set out below. As I said earlier, we welcome everyone to our local events.

* To bring women together, encouraging one another to know Christ and to make him known, as Methodist women and as part of the wider Church in the world.
* To encourage, resource and train women members of the Methodist Church, equipping them to participate more fully in the wider church and society.
* To connect women in Britain with women overseas, working in partnership with others to raise awareness of, and act upon, issues of social justice around the world.

Susan Eldridge

East Anglia District MWiB (almost!) President