

Joint Leadership Team Meetings of the Whitehaven and the Keswick and Cockermouth Circuits. Bulletin 3.



Haig Pit

1. A report was given on financial progress. Both Circuits in similar position. Mandy & Nigel working towards a conservative 5 year plan.
2. Draft information for the profiles has been collected. A first meeting of the invitation committee is being arranged with the District Rep to begin work on the presbyter and Deacon profiles.
3. We revisited the resolution about the name change. An amendment will be brought to the Whitehaven Circuit Meeting which will allow the resolution not to come into effect without any further action if the Keswick & Cockermouth Circuit does not agree to the merger. The amendment will take to form of adding the words **If the trustees of the Keswick and Cockermouth Methodist Circuit agree to the merger** to the start of the resolution.
4. We noted that the preaching plans started at different times. We agreed that the Whitehaven Circuit would produce a 2 month plan before September 2019 so that a joint plan can begin on 1 September 2019.
5. We looked at positives and negatives for the merger.
 - a. **Positives**
 - i. We believe God is leading us in this direction.
 - ii. We are being Christians supporting each other in difficult situations.
 - iii. The merger is innovative and forward thinking rather than just trying to hold our own or catch up.
 - iv. We would maximise the impact of our resources across the area and ecumenically.
 - v. Maximise the probability of successful stationing (16 people into ministerial training and 100 retiring means there is a massive shortage)
 - vi. The connexion encourages the cessation of single stations and therefore would look favourably upon this merger.
 - vii. An enlarged circuit could draw on resources not available to a smaller one.
 - viii. We would release human resources due to not having to duplicate Circuit Officers.
 - ix. The Circuit Administrator role would free up ministers to do the tasks they were trained to, and want to, do
 - x. There will be economies of scale.
 - b. **Minuses**
 - i. The amount of travelling needed would be problematic and we will need to be innovative about this.
 - ii. Whitehaven could be seen as losing a minister to Cockermouth but we are looking at all staffing across the circuit while planning for a Deacon to be part of the staff team.
 - iii. The plan could be more difficult to manage and fill but there are examples of good practice elsewhere which we could draw on.
 - iv. There is a danger that churches on the extreme edges may feel excluded and we will need to watch that doesn't happen.
 - v. Circuit Officer's jobs may seem to big so preventing people coming forward. This shouldn't be the case but we would have to carefully monitor that

- vi. There could be a loss of circuit identity but any new circuit would be working to build an identity.
 - vii. Some may feel that we don't need this and can manage without a minister. Experience says churches can manage without a minister for a short time but then the load on the lay leaders becomes too much. There is also a loss of visionary leadership which we need to ensure any incoming minister has.
6. Our next meeting is Tuesday 14 August if the decision is taken on 20 June that the Circuits will merge.

Both Circuit Meetings are meeting at the same time on 20 June when major decisions about the merger will be made. Please pray for those involved in these meetings that they might discern God's way forward for the future of the two circuits.