**Requests to Cease Public Worship**

**Reasoned Statements**

The following have submitted requests to Cease to Meet for Worship. All requests are supported by the District Executive.

**Adderbury Methodist Church (Banbury circuit)**

The church’s rapidly declining finances, coupled with the huge challenge of the lack of human resource, means that church is unable to invest in any significant missional opportunities and would also be unable to meet its fiduciary responsibilities beyond this Connexional Year. Pastoral gatherings have taken place and will continue to ensure preparations to transfer the current membership to other churches. However, the growth of new housing estates opportunities in West Adderbury offers new missional opportunities. Proceeds from the sale of the church building could be used to fund a Community Chaplain or similar, in a *New Places for New People* initiative.

Church Council meeting: 12th February 2024.

Members present: 8; Voting for: 6 Voting against: 0

Banbury Circuit meeting proposes:

1. The cessation of public worship from 31st August 2024 under SO 943 (1)

Those in favour: 23 Against: 0

1. Members of the Circuit Leadership Team be appointed as Successor Managing Trustees (MT Part II 2 (1)

Those in favour: 22 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

1. The building is sold under SO 918 and recommends the proceeds be used to fund the work of a *New Places for New People* through a Community Chaplain or similar.

Those in favour: 19 Against: 1 Abstentions: 3

**Childrey Methodist Chapel (Wantage and Abingdon circuit)**

Childrey Methodist Chapel has been a class of Wantage Methodist Church for some while, and currently has four members, only one of whom lives in the village. It has become impractical to continue to worship at the chapel. Two of the church members plan to attend Wantage Methodist Church, whilst the other two will worship at Methodist churches they currently pass on their way to Childrey. The building is only 30 years old and in very good repair, and is used by some community groups. It is not proposed to sell it at this stage. It was the hope of a number of stalwarts who have recently died that if a time came when worship at the chapel was no longer possible, then new ways of using the building as a witness would be explored. The District Mission team will join the Circuit in exploring options. The vote for the cessation of public worship was

Wantage Church Council meeting

Members present: 16; Voting for: 15 Voting against: 0 Abstaining: 1

Circuit meeting

Members present: 27; Voting for: 27 Voting against: 0

**Cowley Road Methodist Church (Oxford circuit)**

Across the last 120 years, the congregation have faithfully served an ever-changing transient and fast-changing community. However, membership has fallen to 18, and average adult attendance at worship to 10. The now small and aging congregation have struggled to ‘keep the show on the road’ and the stress of this has affected their own discipleship and ability to worship. So there is considerable sadness that this decision needs to be taken, but the membership does consider that their mission is complete in this building. The building is extremely large, dated, and in a state of disrepair; a significant amount of work would be needed to make it useable. Responsibility for the building will be transferred to the Circuit Leadership Team. The majority of the congregation propose to transfer their memberships to Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in central Oxford. A Punjabi language congregation linked with the Methodist Circuit meets on a Sunday afternoon, with preaching resourced by the Circuit, and this will continue until the future of the building is determined.

The vote for the cessation of public worship was:

Church Council meeting on 12th May 2024

Members present: 11; Voting for: 8 Voting against: 2 Abstaining: 1

Circuit meeting on 1st August 2024

Members present: 22; Voting for: 22 Voting against: 0

**Elton Methodist Church (Peterborough circuit)**

Membership has fallen to 10, and the average adult attendance at worship is 8. In February 2023, the Circuit Leadership Team (Circuit Stewards and the Circuit Ministers) became the Church Council for this Church, under SO 611A. The existing membership value the building, and their feeling is that they wish to remain. However, the position of the Circuit Leadership Team, and the wider Circuit, is that there is not the membership required by Methodist polity, or the breadth of people with the skill, energy, and time, to take responsibility for the chapel. The costs of bringing the building up to modern standards is well beyond the remedial work required. The District Mission Team has been invited to explore whether Elton village might host a New Places for New People project.

The vote for the cessation of public worship was:

Church Council meeting on 22nd April 2024

Members present: 7; Voting for: 5 Voting against: 0 Abstaining: 2

Circuit meeting on 2nd May 2024

Members present: 23; Voting for: 23 Voting against: 0

**Queensgrove Methodist Church (Northampton)**

The Synod’s permission is sought to cease public worship at Queensgrove Methodist Church because the congregation are joining in a new community with the nearby Park Avenue Church.

The vote for the cessation of public worship was:

Church Council meeting on

Members present: ; Voting for: Voting against: Abstaining:

Circuit meeting on

Members present: ; Voting for: Voting against: Abstaining:

**Kingsthorpe Methodist Church (Northampton Circuit)**

As Synod members will know from other papers, a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) is in formation at Kingsthorpe. Therefore the former Kingsthorpe Methodist Church needs to cease to meet so that its LEP successor can take over.

The vote for the cessation of public worship was:

Church Council meeting on

Members present: ; Voting for: Voting against: Abstaining:

Circuit meeting on

Members present: ; Voting for: Voting against: Abstaining:

Paul Spray

Synod Secretary