

The Skipton and Clitheroe Circuit?

I suspect there will be a number of reactions to this possible name for the new circuit that may come into being in September 2012. The possibility of a new circuit has been raised in Circuit Meetings and Church Councils and we now need to make some more definite decisions. Both existing circuits will meet in June to discuss and possibly vote on creating a new circuit. As the two ministers in Clitheroe are coming to the point where re-invitations will be discussed, we have to work with a tight timetable. September 14th is the last possible date when a choice can be made. However, we think it wise to act before then, so that the re-invitation or stationing process can be undertaken in good time.

So we need to make some choices. This could be done at the scheduled June meetings or, if desired, there is time to go away and reflect and the Circuit Meeting can reconvene.

Therefore we will be asked to vote on the following:

1. In principle, that a new Circuit will be created. Having said this, if either circuit wishes it can withdraw at any point before September 2012.
2. We need to decide on a name, or the process of choosing a name, for the new circuit. After much deliberation the two leadership teams feel that the Skipton and Clitheroe Circuit is the best option.
3. The establishment of a circuit executive, which would comprise the staff and 4 circuit stewards. It would also be to co-opt other members as appropriate (e.g. circuit members from District Committees and people with appropriate experience from the circuit). This group would have delegated powers from the circuit to allow it deal with most issues. Each Circuit Steward would have a specific area of responsibility. These would be Property, Finance, Personnel and Children and Youth Work. Alongside this they would be responsible for the pastoral care of individual members of staff. Minutes of the executive meeting would be sent to each church for display and to any member wishing to receive them by email. Church Councils would be encouraged to communicate with the executive through the normal channels - i.e. church council secretary, minister or circuit steward.
4. The creation of a Circuit Assembly in place of a Circuit Meeting. This would be an inspirational, teaching and celebration event held twice yearly. At this any necessary Circuit Meeting business would be dealt with, but kept to a minimum. So churches would still be represented and the executive held to account. This is a model based on what new circuits have done.
5. The creation of a Circuit Manse Committee. This would comprise a Manse Treasurer, a designated lay person per Manse and a staff representative.
6. The Circuit Invitation Committee. This would comprise of the Superintendent and the Circuit Stewards (except where the Super is being re-invited or sought - then it would be the Chair of District). This would make the decision after the prescribed process of consultation with the churches.
7. The appointment of 4 Circuit Stewards, 2 from each existing circuit, to be responsible for drawing up a specification for the Superintendent of the new Circuit and deciding whether the post will be filled from existing staff or by a new appointment. And to undertake the re-invitation process for Tim Thorpe and Katy Thomas and, where necessary, to create profiles for prospective new ministers. The Clitheroe Circuit will be responsible for any appointment.
8. A decision will need to be made as to which District to join. Both the Lancashire and West Yorkshire Districts have been asked for their thoughts and a proposal will come to the June meetings.

We know that this is not the most exciting of documents to read or to discuss, but it comes with the approval of both leadership teams as a way forward. It assumes that current staff levels will remain the same, as a minimum. Skipton and Grassington are committed to employing a Fresh Expressions worker and monies are being sought to help support ecumenical youth work in Upper Wharfedale. We are also looking at the possibility of acquiring a grant to employ a part time supernumerary minister. Clitheroe circuit is in the process of employing a new children's and family worker.

There will be more matters to decide but we hope that this will be the beginning of a relatively pain free journey to a new circuit.

Please continue to pray for this process and our collective hope that the new look will aid the outworking of the kingdom of God.

Richard Atkinson
Super
Skipton and Grassington

Tim Thorpe
Super
Clitheroe