

Leadership at High Street

A Guide to How we do things

by Rev Mark Hammond

I am often asked to explain how the leadership structures at High Street work, so I have written this leaflet to explain the way we do things.

We are a remarkably busy church and the full spread of all we do requires not only the passionate commitment of many individuals but also the very careful stewardship and coordination of our finite resources of people, property and finances. To this end, in recent years we have strengthened our governance and leadership structures and procedures in a way that is encouraged within the rule book of the Methodist Church, and consistent with good practice elsewhere.

The Presbyteral Minister - Rev Mark Hammond

As the Presbyteral Minister appointed to High Street, I am responsible for upholding Methodist discipline and for exercising oversight of this church's worship, pastoral care and mission policy. All this I do in conjunction with the Church Council, Church Stewards and others, not least my ministerial colleague Deacon Sarah Wickett.

The Diaconal Minister - Deacon Sarah Wickett

As our Diaconal Minister, Sarah's role focuses on bridging the gap between the church and the world. The ministry of a Deacon has been described as 'standing in the doorway of the church', keeping the door open both ways.

The Church Council - our quarterly trustees meeting

The general oversight of High Street is the responsibility of our church council. In the average Methodist church today the church council will consist of maybe a dozen people meeting twice a year. The size, diversity and sheer workload at High Street is such that our church council is forty strong and meets at least four times a year.

Many serve on church council because they hold a particular position of responsibility within the life of our church, but in addition up to fifteen representatives of the wider church membership are elected by our annual General Church Meeting which meets in March each year. Ultimately, it is the church council that makes the decisions and policies that shape all we do for God, and as Chair of

the council I seek to ensure that our business is always done in a positive and prayerful way.

We seek to ensure that all we do is consistent with our church Vision and Strategy, which was adopted by a unanimous vote of the church council on 15 May 2014.

Our Vision is to see:

**Lives, relationships and communities in this world transformed
by the love of God in Jesus Christ.**

Our threefold **Strategy** for sharing in this work of God is to:

**Encounter God;
Equip God's People;
Extend God's Kingdom.**

These are not empty words. They now shape all we do at High Street, and inform the way that we seek to do it.

The Church Stewards - serving week-by-week alongside our Ministers

The church stewards are corporately responsible with me for giving leadership and help over the whole range of the church's life and activity, and are particularly charged with holding together in unity the great variety of concerns that are contained within the one ministry of this church.

The stewards are appointed annually by our General Church Meeting in March. Our current team of church stewards meets monthly with me and Deacon Sarah to talk and pray together.

These meetings are always chaired by one of the longest-standing stewards, the "Senior Steward". For the year to May 2023 this is Alex Schlich.

The church stewards are jointly responsible with me for ensuring that the decisions and policies of the church council are upheld and acted upon. In practice our stewards' time and energy is almost entirely taken up with the very practical business of ensuring that our various worship services run smoothly and safely, but each steward also sits on at least one of the many teams or committees of the church to ensure that as a group we are fully aware of all that is going on at High Street and any specific concerns that have been raised among the members.

The Leadership Team - enacting Church Council decisions & policies

A few years ago we recognised that far too much of the burden of upholding and acting upon church council decisions and policies was in practice falling upon the shoulders of a very few rather over-worked individuals. Furthermore, we recognised that there was no proper mechanism for coordinating the ongoing development of the ever growing variety of work being developed by the different groups and individuals who do so much of the work at High Street. So, as recommended in our Methodist rule book, our church stewards gathered members with the appropriate gifts and skills into a leadership team who were then appointed by the Church Council on 15 October 2015.

There are twelve positions on our leadership team, and broadly speaking these can be divided into the following three categories:

Chair (Pameel Crowther-Newman)
Deputy Chair (Claire Wollaston)

Six key office holders
Presbyteral Minister (Rev Mark Hammond)
Diaconal Minister (Deacon Sarah Wickett)
Senior Church Steward (Alex Schlich)
Church Treasurer (Margaret Woods)
Church Property Steward (Peter Black)
Communications (Lewis Cox)

Four Mission Co-ordinators
Encounter God (Lewis Cox)
Equip God's People (Sally Hammond)
Extend God's Kingdom (Louise Schlich)
Children and Youth (Pamela Atkins)

This leadership team meets monthly to ensure not only that the decisions and policies of the church council are upheld and acted upon, but that whenever the church council meets it has all the information it needs to ensure it can progress God's work among us in a fully consistent and well coordinated way.

Each church council meeting receives a full report from the leadership team, and minutes of all leadership team's meetings are readily available to church members through the church office.

Our Six Key Office Holders

Much of the mountain of work carried out by our key office holders is done behind the scenes, but without their commitment and diligence in caring for our people, property, finances and communications High Street could not operate at all. Nevertheless, their work is not an end in itself but to serve the greater purpose of supporting the mission of High Street, which is where the mission co-ordinators come in.

Our Four Mission Co-ordinators

As their title suggests, the purpose of our Mission Coordinators is neither to take over nor to direct the wonderful work already being done by our various church teams, committees and volunteers. Rather their purpose is to ensure that all the work we do is well co-ordinated and enabled to continue developing in a way that is fully consistent with our church Vision and Strategy. Their work is one of ensuring the support and coordination of all that goes on through High Street. It is, however, clearly very good that those who fulfil these co-ordinator roles have ongoing hands-on experience of being actively involved in leading some of the work they now help to co-ordinate.

Our Chair and Deputy Chair

The administration of the leadership team is no easy task, so we are very blessed to be served in this respect by two very experienced and unflappable lawyers. Pameel keeps our meetings on track (and sometimes even on time) and Claire deals with the day-to-day work of organising meetings, keeping paperwork up to date, and ensuring that all agreed actions are indeed enacted.

Our Annual Executive Plan - setting our priorities for the next 12 months

The Methodist Church year runs from 1 September to 31 August, so each summer it is the responsibility of the leadership team to prepare a draft executive plan setting out our work and priorities for the forthcoming year. This enables us to ensure that we know what resources will be required and to plan accordingly.

As part of this annual process our mission co-ordinators consult our various teams, committees and volunteers to find out how their individual ministries are developing, and work closely with the treasurer to agree budgets. The executive plan is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything we do, but it does enable the church council both to set our direction of travel and to be confident that we are not overreaching.

Once the annual executive plan is agreed by church council, it will be published for the members, and will drive much of the ongoing work of the leadership team and church council for the forthcoming year. This transparent and open process is designed to enable those who serve us on the church council and leadership team to feel fully supported by the whole church in the work they do on our behalf.

A Prayer for those who share in leadership at High Street

Loving God, we thank you for those who share responsibility
for leading this wonderful, large, diverse church.
As they work for you and for us give guidance, wisdom and strength
to our ministers and church stewards, to the members of our
church council and leadership team, and to all others who lead among us.
May our words to and about them be driven by a
harmonious spirit of love and encouragement.
Equip, enable and empower them that all they do in leading us
might bring us ever closer to your kingdom.
We ask all this for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

Rev Mark Hammond