Starting New Christian Communities:

A practical guide for circuit-based New Places for New People

The **Methodist** Church

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Welcome

The Methodist Church sees starting New Places for New People (NPNP) in every circuit as a vital part of responding to the gospel of God's love, revealed to us in Christ. Creating a movement of NPNPs will require listening deeply and responding to God with and alongside our local communities.

Our aim is to see new people becoming disciples of Jesus and forming new Christian communities in rural, estate, urban, suburban and village contexts. In doing so, we believe we will see lives and communities transformed by the love of God.

As part of equipping circuits and local churches to begin NPNPs (including Church at the Margins), we have written this practical guide for circuit NPNPs. Adapted from the larger document focused on district NPNPs, it contains a similar range of materials including a Methodist theological foundation of NPNPs and the core NPNP practices which we believe are crucial to developing an NPNP. The District NPNP Team (or its equivalent) will oversee the circuit NPNP process in each district.

While some funding is available not every NPNP will require funding – indeed vision and a passion for a new community are often more important than money.

Training resources are available to all pioneering Christian communities – funded or non-funded. Additional training resources and focused webinars will be available to support pioneers and pioneering teams as they embed the practices identified.

These resources are not intended to be exhaustive and will be developed as we learn from the NPNPs – please ensure you're using the latest version of this guide by downloading it directly from methodist.org.uk/FundingNPNP. (Version numbers and dates are given in the footer information at the bottom of the page.)

We hope you find this guide useful, and welcome any feedback or questions you may have – our contact details are below. It is our joy and delight to be working alongside you, and we look forward to all God will do among us, as we continue our partnership in the gospel.

With every blessing,

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The Methodist Church

Important Information

District NPNPs Every district has been given £140,000 of NPNP funding which is to be match-funded to begin an NPNP.

Circuit NPNPs Every district has also been given money (the specific amount is dependent on the size of the district) to support circuits to vision new Christian communities. Some districts have blended the district/circuit process, so please **consult your District NPNP Team, or district missioner of chair of district,** to discover how they intend to discern NPNPs and distribute the funding in your area.

Why are we doing this? We know that starting new communities is an extremely fruitful way of connecting and journeying with new people to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

How will we do this? By getting out of our buildings, listening to God and each other, experimenting, taking risks, learning together, becoming deeply rooted in our communities and creating spaces for people to meet.

Who are 'new people'? People who are not connected to religious traditions or communities. They can be very diverse and may self-identify as secular, not religious, spiritual-but-not-religious, agnostic, atheist, 'nothing in particular', or in many other ways.

Where will these new communities emerge? In every Methodist district and every circuit in different kinds of places – rural, urban, and coastal – as we respond to God's love. A 'place' can be anywhere – a school, a park, a pub, someone's dining room. They could be in new towns or new housing developments, among students/young adults, families with children, a replant within an existing church building or a Church at the Margins. NPNPs might also be digital (online) spaces.

What changes are we hoping to see? Starting new communities will become a normal and natural part of what we do as a Church. Every district and circuit will include NPNPs as part of their mission action plans. These new communities, alongside existing churches, will offer a rich variety of places for people to become and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Have we done this before? Yes, pioneering and church planting is a rich part of the Methodist story, the roots of where we've come from and the DNA of who we are.

Executive Summary

What are New Places for New People?

New Places for New People (NPNP) are focused on forming new Christian communities for those not yet part of an existing church. NPNPs are an extremely effective means of connecting new people, new people groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community. In addition, NPNPs bring learning from experimental 'research and development', identify and strengthen emerging leaders, and help the whole Church reflect on and examine its calling. NPNPs can be started anywhere, in diverse contexts. The Methodist Church has suggested the following contexts and people groups as priorities for NPNPs in the next five years:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place, or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins (CaM)
- or another context where an NPNP vision has arisen.

How do I begin a local NPNP?

Circuits are invited to establish an NPNP team to inspire, encourage and oversee new NPNPs. Creating a culture of pioneering and planting to energise and guide the NPNP movement across the district is a vital role of the District NPNP Team, alongside prayerful discernment of where to locate an NPNP.

The first three fruitfulness markers are vital to begin a new community and will be the priority in the first 2 years.

- **Vision:** Discovering God's vision for a new community
- **Contextually relevant:** Listen, learn, and make new friends.
- **Gathered community:** Discovering how the new community will experience God together.

How do I put together a team?

This circuit NPNP team will have the following three functions:

1. Initiating the NPNPs by discerning their context, vision, and focus; playing a role in submission for funding; and leading on any necessary recruitment.
2. Creating a culture of pioneering that inspires the starting of NPNPs.
3. Overseeing and managing the funding of circuit-led or local-church-led NPNPs.

The growing number of pioneers in the Church is supported by the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP). We encourage every pioneer involved in an NPNP to become a member of the MPP to access its resources and join the network of support. Pioneers in funded district NPNPs will be expected to join.

What do I need to do to connect with people well?

It is essential for your NPNP/CaM to be rooted, sustained and grown in prayer. As we listen to God together, we discern God's will and purpose for God's people. Listening is a vital skill and a core practice in forming relationships as the NPNP develops. As you listen, always be clear and honest about who you are as an NPNP and share how and why listening is an important and consistent part of your practice. From the beginning, plan how you will listen to the wider community as a regular part of your activities.

How are NPNPs funded?

Circuits have been allocated funding for circuit NPNPs, contact your District NPNP Team to find out how this funding is being coordinated. Across the Connexion, at least 60 per cent of NPNP funding should be used for CaM.

Chapter 1 New Places for New People (NPNP)

NPNPs are new Christian communities in new places for those not yet part of an existing church. NPNPs are the most effective means of connecting new people, new people groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community. NPNPs bring learning from experimental 'research and development', and identify and strengthen emerging leaders. NPNPs can be started anywhere. The Methodist Church suggests these priorities:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins
- or another context where an NPNP vision has arisen.

NPNP theological foundations

Beginning and ending with God: We are joining in with God's invitation to reconnect people to the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

Incarnation is key: NPNPs involve being with and alongside others – discovering God together by sharing the reality of human life with its pain, struggles, and joys.

Developing new Christian communities: We believe God is at work in God's world and is not dependent on the actions of the Church or individual Christians.

Nurturing new Christians: An NPNP is for new people in new places, is rooted in our response to God's love, and aims for all people to know and experience the love of God.

Open to transformation: At the heart of NPNP is an invitation into a transforming relationship with God and a willingness to be shaped, challenged, and transformed.

NPNP core values

Be pioneering: NPNPs affirm and enable people from diverse backgrounds and ages who are called by God to see new opportunities and respond to God's Spirit.

Develop a 'mixed ecology': We value a diverse range of missional approaches which will produce a variety of new Christian communities among unaffiliated people.

Be committed to risk-taking mission: NPNP is the work of the whole Church, we are committed to experimenting and taking risks in mission.

Ensure contextual relevance: New communities will arise out of careful listening and will always remain connected to the wider community and aware of its needs.

Nurture discipleship in gathered community: Though an individual chooses to become a disciple, faith is nurtured in community with others.

Chapter 2 Church at the Margins (CaM)

Alongside building on NPNP beliefs and core values, the CaM vision is of new Christian communities among economically marginalised people.

Definition of Church at the Margins

Church: A gathered community of people being transformed by the gospel.

At: People at the margins, on the margins, of the margins – not to or for the margins. We are not taking God to the margins; God is present with and in all people.

Margins: People can be marginalised in many, often interconnected, ways. We will focus on people who are experiencing poverty.

Theological foundations

God's preferential option for people in poverty: God's character reveals a God of justice and an emphasis on our need to care for the vulnerable, the stranger and those who are living in poverty.

The good news of Jesus Christ: We hold that to abandon people in economic hardship is to abandon the central theme of the liberating, life-giving message of the gospel for us all.

Evangelism and social justice: Evangelism and social justice are inseparable aspects of our Christian discipleship.

Interdependence: We recognise our shared brokenness and our capacity and need to receive from one another.

Inclusion: Whenever we 'other' people because of their economic circumstances, we cannot see the image of God in them and ourselves.

Core values

Seek justice: We will seek opportunities to enable the voices of the economically vulnerable to be heard by those with power to instigate change.

Prioritise the lived experience of people at the economic margins: We believe people with lived experience are the experts and are essential partners in co-designing, co-creating, co-delivering and co-leading any community.

Share power: We will share power and recognise the dynamics and potential misuse of power.

Celebrate inclusion and participation: We will resist service-provider models of community engagement based on the rich doing something for the poor.

Enable leadership communities: We will nurture, enable, and develop local leadership within people already present and invested in their local context.

Chapter 3 How to Discern a Vision for a New Community

Discerning where to locate a community is key. Keep returning to important questions like:

- Why do you feel God is leading you to choose this community/context?
- Who are you orienting toward?
- What is God saying to you through your relationships with local people?
- In one sentence, can you describe your vision for what you are doing?
- What will it look like in a few years' time?
- How does the vision relate to the NPNP/CaM values?

It is important to consider the community's wider influence and potential shared learning. All NPNPs begin with listening – to the community, God and to each other – to discern the call of God.

Listening to the community

This is hard and challenging, but also an opportunity to get to know people and form new and creative relationships. It is from this initial deep listening that a clear vision for a new Christian community will emerge.

Listening to God

In the busyness and enthusiasm of starting something, it is easy to forget to pause and listen to where God might be leading. At every stage of the discerning process, it is important to set aside time for prayer.

Listening to each other

Listening together as a team will bring different perspectives and understandings of the community. Placing collaboration at the heart of your community will build relationships within the team and enable each person to feel valued.

Meet local people, listen and learn

Discover what people enjoy about their community. What are their hopes and dreams? Where do they go if they need help? What would they like to change? Consider factors which have shaped community identity by talking to local people about the impact of its history, geography, cultural, and religious influences.

Experiment, test and learn

It is better to test ideas at an early stage, in several places, to see if your listening, hunches, and discernment resonate with a real community. It's okay to make mistakes, change ideas, or explore elsewhere.

Chapter 4 Case Studies of New Places for New People

Across the Connexion, there are people beginning NPNPs. There are a few case studies below that illustrate the wide variety of leaders and contexts that can birth an NPNP. We have chosen these stories as they illustrate some of the contexts and people groups that the Methodist Church is currently prioritising:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins
- or another context where an NPNP vision has arisen.

Derbyshire North East Circuit launched in 2020, bringing together two smaller circuits. One of the key drivers behind its creation was creating capacity for new mission. Their vision to reach out to the post-industrial village of Barrow Hill and a group of interconnected estates in south Chesterfield emerged from extensive consultations with members across the former circuits. These are both "left behind" places, facing economic deprivation and isolation.

Street Ecclesial Community, Birmingham. The vision for this community is based on The Parable of the Great Banquet recorded in Luke 14:15-24. The vision of a table where people experiencing poverty, the disabled, the blind and the lame are all invited and welcomed is key, but also the way in which the parable challenges social norms, breaks down barriers and turns traditional roles upside-down. The Street Ecclesial Community is a place where hosts become guests and guests become hosts. View the video here: youtu.be/vQ21ibPQHIA

Building relationships in order to share the love of Jesus on a new housing estate at **Overstone** in Northampton. Melvina Brown, Pioneer Community Chaplain, works collaboratively with ecumenical partners and the developers of the community to build caring relationships and to share the love of Jesus. View the video here: youtu.be/-ooE98_fMJc

Chapter 5 Connecting with the Wider Community

Characteristics of a pioneering/core NPNP team

The NPNP will form out of real relationships – the pioneering team itself needs to be the community that new people from the wider community want to be part of. As a team you will work incredibly hard together: planning meetings, designing publicity, running events and tidying up afterwards, so it is important that the team has a purpose and a life beyond the hard work. Make sure you have time together to get to know each other. Exploring faith and God together will be a vital part of growing together as a team.

Connecting with the wider community

It can be tempting, in the early stages of pioneering, to invest all your time in building the team, assuming that wider community engagement can come later. However, the small steps of testing ideas and connecting with your community are essential in the early stages of your community as you develop your practices and rhythm of meeting, and cement a culture of being outward-looking, welcoming, evangelistic people.

Serving your community

If you want to get to know new people unaffiliated to the church, you need to meet them – join in with wider community group activities in your local context. And if you want new people to join your community, then they need to feel they know you. Serving your wider community without expecting anything in return will build trusting relationships for the long-term future, and possible future partnerships.

Listening to and praying in your community

Listening to your community will strengthen relationships and enable you to better serve others. Being physically present in the community that is the subject of your prayers will bring fresh perspective and insight, compared to praying in a church or meeting room.

Sharing testimony

As you become known in your community, and people encounter your love and service, there will be times when people want to know why you are doing it. It is at this point that, in a gentle way, testimony can be sensitively shared. It is not about a polished presentation, but a natural account of how God is working in, moving in, and changing your life.

Digital presence, communication and evangelism

Every NPNP must take digital presence and communication seriously. It is now a part of everyone's life and a big part of how we experience the world. You can serve, join, pray and share testimony in the digital world, as well as 'in real life'.

Chapter 6 The Circuit NPNP Discernment Team[1]

Depending on context, a circuit may decide to form one team to fulfil all the functions below, divide the work between two or more teams, or create working parties for specific tasks. Different models will work for different contexts (there may also be one team across more than one circuit, or the District NPNP Team may be made available to the local circuits). However, for ease of reference, we will refer to the 'circuit NPNP team' throughout this resource.

The functions of the circuit NPNP team are:

1. To initiate the circuit-based NPNP community(s), by discerning a context, vision and focus and playing a role in claiming seed funding (see Chapter 19) and leading on any necessary recruitment.
2. To create a culture of pioneering within the circuit that inspires the starting of NPNPs. In particular:
    a. To act as advocates for the values (see chapters 1 and 2) of the Methodist Church in relation to pioneering and planting, and to show a preferential bias for CaM.
    b. To encourage and equip local churches to launch NPNPs.
    c. To shape, guide and champion the NPNP movement across the circuit.
    d. To embed NPNP/CaM as a top priority in the circuit mission plan/strategy.
    e. To model best practice in discernment, prayer and decision-making for pioneering teams to emulate.
3. To oversee and manage the resourcing of circuit-led, or local-church-led NPNPs.

The circuit NPNP discernment team members

It is important to form this team out of prayer and conversations with people who may feel called to be a part of it and share the values of NPNP/CaM. Some suggested members of the Circuit NPNP team can be found in the table on the following page.

Ways of working

Remember that the team can work in varied ways, beyond video calls or formal meeting-rooms. Think about where you could gather to inspire creativity, for example in coffee shops, on a walk, by prayer-walking the streets of potential new communities, or by discussing ideas over a meal together.

1 In some contexts the District NPNP Team may take this role.

Strategic planning

A crucial role of the circuit NPNP team is to strategically oversee the visioning for local churches to begin an NPNP as part of every church mission plan. This will require analysing the readiness of local churches to begin an NPNP; supporting, encouraging and enabling the emerging vision for the NPNP communities; setting realistic goals for the number of new communities that will begin and keeping a database of new communities and their progress.

Circuit NPNP discernment team members	
The Superintendent	The Superintendent's role is both to support the contexts where new communities are beginning and to enable local churches to imagine what is possible in their communities.
District Mission Enabler (or equivalent)	The Enabler's voice will be key to identifying the places where there is capacity to begin a fruitful project. If the circuit does not have an Enabler, consider involving someone, lay or ordained, who is a recognised leader and is passionate about mission.
Learning Network MPP lead	The Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP) lead brings knowledge of the pioneer community in your area. They can also advocate and share the circuit's NPNP vision with the pioneer community and invite pioneers to integrate their work into that vision.
Planter or pioneer	Someone with first-hand experience of beginning an NPNP. Involving them in shaping the vision helps to avoid unnecessary pitfalls and builds in best practice early on.
Person with financial experience	Someone with experience in budgeting, accounting and/or financial planning, who is not afraid to talk about money as a gift, both in the short-term to begin a project and in the long-term strategic use of resources.
Key influencers and advocates	People with knowledge of circuit structures and the ability to navigate, eg circuit stewards. People who can advocate for the importance of NPNPs in the life and future of the Church.
A person who will model deep trusting faith	A person who will always remind the team in the midst of shaping the vision that it is God's work not ours, be that when it is easy or hard. They will remind everyone to keep praying and to listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings.
An organiser	Every team needs someone who will keep the process on track, collate information and establish the next steps.

Chapter 7 Pioneer Job/Role Description

Discerning, appointing or selecting the right pioneer(s) is crucial to success

Your context may need two paid part-time pioneers, one paid full-time pioneer or an unpaid pioneering team. There is a diversity of gifts, core skills and orientations in the pioneering community and not every community is right for every pioneer. When writing your role description, it is important to identify the focus of the role and the skills of the person you are seeking to appoint.

Here are some pointers on the best ways to shape the role description to find the right person:

- Be focused, not general. Let the role description flow from your community vision.
- Enthusiastically share your vision so that potential applicants respond to your passion.
- Be clear about key areas of work (eg forming a new Christian community, leadership).
- Resist the temptation to download a template or copy a document you have seen elsewhere; it won't express the uniqueness of your community.
- Be realistic about expectations. It is easy to list everything you think might be a part of the role, but this could de-prioritise important aspects or make the role too demanding.
- In your description, demonstrate the collaborative nature of the work and the team.
- Appeal to pioneers from diverse backgrounds and educational experience, and with *lived experience of the context* in which the community is based.

Finding a pioneer(s) with the gifts and skills for your NPNP

We celebrate the diversity of pioneers that God is calling to the Church: some will work in traditional contexts, others in contexts beyond the fringes of existing churches. To help identify a pioneer's natural leanings and relationship to the wider Church, the Church Mission Society has designed the Pioneer Spectrum.[2] The spectrum identifies four different types of pioneers, recognising that each type is naturally inclined to work towards a different outcome.

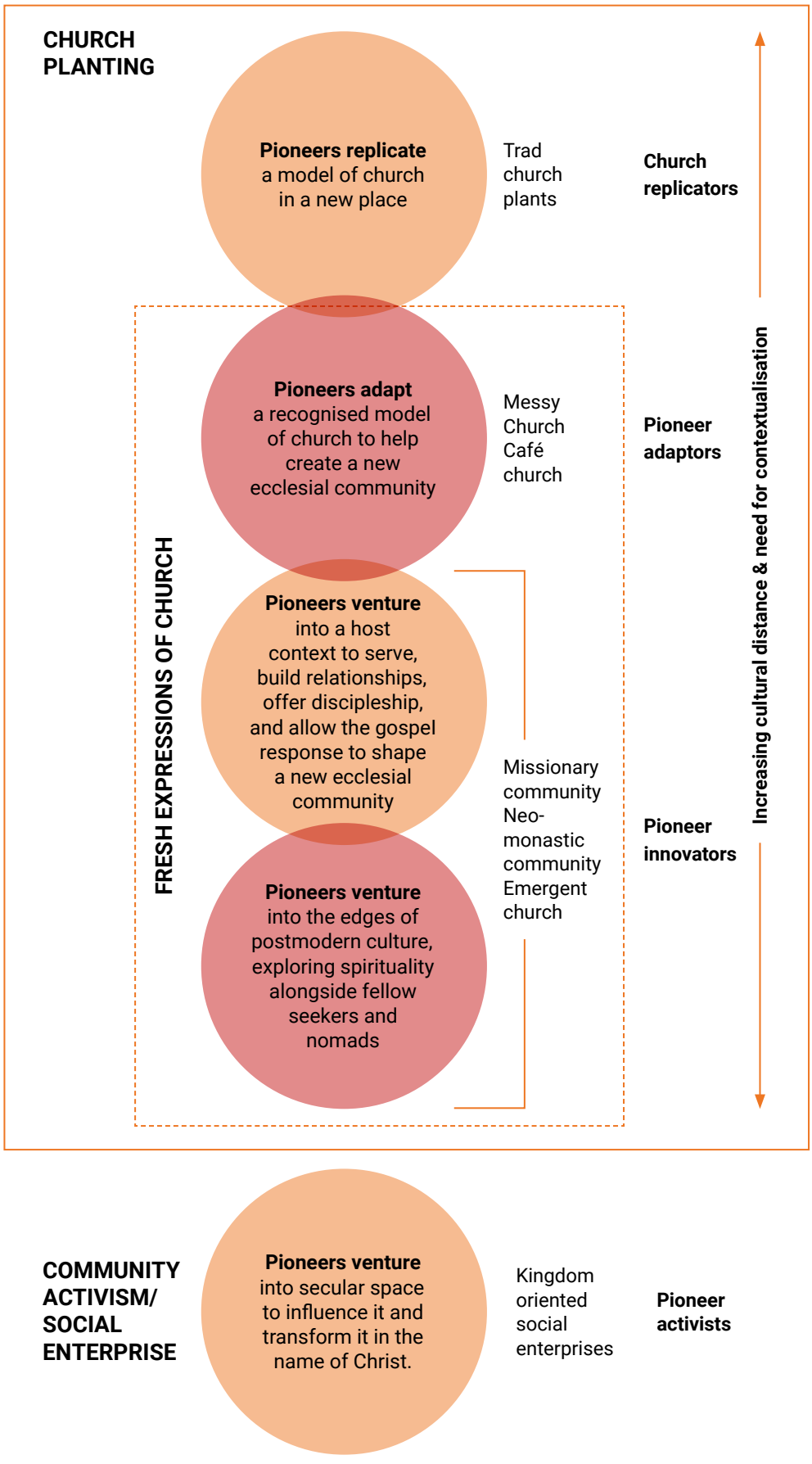
- **Church replicators** are those who will identify a new community and seek to reproduce the same church model as the context they have come from.
- **Pioneer innovators** are leaders who, with their teams, venture beyond the edges of the church's structures to create faithful expressions of Christian community among people of a new context.
- **Pioneer adaptors** have the gift of adapting innovative ideas developed elsewhere into their own contexts.
- **Pioneer activists** are those whose gift and vocation is to shape places in order to align a community, network or industry with the values of the kingdom. They see themselves as missionaries, but without the express intention of planting a church. Please note, while this kind of pioneering is to be celebrated, it would not be suitable for establishing an NPNP community.

If a pioneer is being employed, we suggest all members of the interview panel take time to watch the video (youtu.be/rwwAc5sTr5M) and look at the diagram below to understand the type of pioneer you are seeking to recruit.

As part of the recruitment process, it may be helpful to ask those shortlisted to use the Pioneer Spectrum cards to discern their pioneer calling in relation to the community: churchmissionsociety.org/files/pioneer-spectrum-cards

2 We are grateful to Tina Hodgett and Paul Bradbury for this resource and to the Church Mission Society for making it freely available.

Pioneer Spectrum



What kind of pioneer(s) are you seeking?

Self-starter	In a variety of settings, be it church, community, artistic or business, a pioneer is motivated to initiate a new community from very little or nothing.
Visionary	Pioneers are gifted to imagine how Christian community might be for new people and will envision others to work towards its creation.
Team-builder	Effective pioneers build teams of people around a vision.
Connected to others	Creative connections to their community, to God and to individuals is the passion of pioneers
Called to the edge	Though committed to the Church, pioneers often find themselves called to and happiest at the edge.
Natural evangelist	At ease speaking about their faith sensitively in every situation, a pioneer is always open to sharing the gospel in relevant ways.
Committed to diversity	Being called to the edge, a pioneer notices those who are missing or excluded from Christian communities.
Risk-taking and willing to learn	A pioneer has a willingness to take healthy risks and learn in the pursuit of finding out where God is leading.
Responsive to changing contexts	A pioneer is able to pivot quickly to changes around them and turn them into fruitful opportunities for faith to be shared.
Desiring faith community	Essential to pioneers is the desire to form new Christian communities where people can become followers of Jesus for the first time.

Chapter 8 How to Manage a Pioneer

Good management and oversight of a pioneer (lay or ordained, paid or unpaid) is **essential** for the success of the pioneer and the community. Clarifying how this will be done, and by whom, is an important decision for your team to make **before** the community commences.

Oversight and support models

Single line manager: Essential for lay and ordained pioneers	Who: Someone who understands the work, has a passion for mission, and has the capacity and skills to manage the pioneer.
	Role: To be part of the circuit NPNP team, ensure the work is carried out, to set goals and targets, to conduct regular meetings and the annual appraisal. *The sustained and consistent presence of a **good, single line manager** for the pioneer is essential for the community to succeed. For lay employees, please consult this advisory pack: methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment*
Coach: Essential	Who: A coach will be matched with the pioneer via the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP).
	Role: To ask great questions, listen well, and help the pioneer determine the steps they should take. Coaches should not be part of line management structures, but we recommend they communicate with those who are. (They will, of course, need the pioneer's permission to communicate and share information with the line manager). For more information, see: methodist.org.uk/Coaching
Reflective Supervision: Essential	Who: All ordained and (paid) lay pioneer roles are required to have reflective supervision, coordinated by the Connexional Director of Supervision (methodist.org.uk/Supervision)
	Role: Good supervision helps the supervisee pay attention to their practice including ethical and healthy ways of working. Supervisors should not be part of line management structures.
Management/ Oversight group: Essential	Who: People with a range of expertise including mission/ financial/communication (ideally a maximum of six people).
	Role: To oversee and manage the key aims and objectives of the community by receiving reports from and meeting with the pioneering team. Responsible for decision-making on key issues and giving overall guidance.
Reference group/ Stakeholder forum: As appropriate for context	Who: People with specific knowledge and expertise, including members of other voluntary groups, agencies and ecumenical partners.
	Role: Acts as a 'think tank' to discuss the issues arising from different perspectives.

Key questions for the team

The following questions may help the team decide how to oversee/manage the pioneer.

- What is the chain of accountability for the pioneer? One example would be: the pioneer is accountable to their line manager, who is accountable to the management group or, circuit/district NPNP team (as appropriate in the local context). The stakeholder forum and the pioneer's coach can feed in their reflections but are not part of the chain of accountability.
- How will the pioneer regularly share updates and report learnings? For example, the pioneer could produce a monthly report on their activities (one-to-ones, new pioneering team members, strategic formation, etc) for the management group.
- Where and how will decisions be made? This might be in different places and with different people, depending on the subject matter.
- Who needs to be involved in review and evaluation?
- How will the voices of people within the new community be included in the management structure?

Line management responsibilities

The line manager will be responsible for the initial induction of the new pioneer (see Chapter 9). Furthermore the line manager will also be responsible for:

- supporting, directing and challenging the pioneer to perform their best, holding them accountable for the delivery of work to a high standard.
- encouraging the pioneer to respond to new challenges and opportunities, in order to meet the vision and aims for the community.
- offering feedback on individual performance and community progress via fortnightly or monthly meetings and an annual formal appraisal. (We recommend a minimum of fortnightly one-hour meetings for the first three months and monthly one-hour meetings thereafter.)
- ensuring and enabling good communications and collaborative working between all the various individuals, groups and networks involved in the community.
- acting as a 'sounding board' to the pioneer.
- overseeing HR-related functions (such as flexible working, TOIL, annual leave, sick leave, complaints and discipline processes, etc) as necessary.

Further resources

All line managers of lay employees must attend this line management training, please visit methodist.org.uk/LeadershipDevelopment

Chapter 9 How to Induct a New Pioneer

Experience shows that an important factor in the flourishing of pioneers and communities is good working relationships with the wider church community and its key leadership. A positive induction period will establish healthy working practices. The following considerations are essential in a well-run induction:

- An environment of welcome encourages the building of trusting and supportive relationships.
- All relevant paperwork is understood and completed.
- Aims of the role and expectations of outcomes are clearly explained, agreed and documented.
- Good lines of communication between key stakeholders are detailed and established.
- The new pioneer is regularly given space to ask questions and express any concerns.

Before the start Regular communication before the pioneer begins is an opportunity to get to know one another, enable questions to be answered and issues to be resolved. It is wise to appoint one person, usually the line manager, to be the point of contact.

At the start Good communication before the pioneer starts means many questions will already have been addressed and paperwork completed. Avoid assuming knowledge; rather share what may seem to you the most obvious pieces of information. Clarify expectations, roles and day-to-day working practice.

First day The first day is an opportunity to welcome a new colleague well. We recommend keeping it spiritual, hold the day in prayer and keep sharing the story of the community. Introduce the wider team.

The following weeks Continue to support the pioneer as they orientate themselves in the role. It is particularly important that one-to-ones with key stakeholders are made a priority. Networking with the wider community is also essential, with reassurance given that not everything might go as planned and that's fine, as you want to encourage experimenting and learning.

Well-being

It is important for line mangers to take time to reflect with the pioneer about what helps them to stay well and flourish. Encourage the pioneer to prioritise their well-being by:

- establishing a regular pattern of days off
- accessing pastoral supervision and developing healthy spiritual practices
- nurturing and sustaining a support network beyond the ministry context.
- pursuing interests and passions that bring life.

Chapter 10 Methodist Pioneering Pathways

The growing number of pioneers in the Church is supported by the Methodist Pioneering Pathways (MPP). Every pioneer involved in a funded (NPNP) is expected to be a member of the MPP to access its resources and join the network of support. At the heart of MPP is the community of pioneers – diverse in outlook, background, and context; all deeply committed to forming new places that connect new people to the transforming love of God.

The MPP offers support in the following ways:

Connecting: The monthly 'Third Thursday' online gatherings, along with communities of practice facilitated by the Learning Network, are an opportunities to connect with pioneers across the Connexion and to share stories and wisdom. Retreats are also offered as a time to be together and deepen an understanding of the pioneer call.

Calling: The MPP is there to support those initially discerning a call to become a pioneer and to help them in those first steps. It supports experienced pioneers to deepen their call and develop their leadership potential within their district and the connexional pioneering picture.

Equipping: Pioneering, like every call, needs to be nurtured through reflective practice and learning. Every pioneer on the MPP is offered a free place on either the Church Planting Intensive or the Pioneer Ministry Short Course at Cliff College. In subsequent years there is opportunity to apply for funding of other learning and training relevant to their planting context. This could be further study, such as a short course, or practical training to upskill and be better equipped.

For pioneers leading funded NPNPs, the **Church Planting Intensive** is a *required course* designed to give additional support and training to enable NPNPs to have the best opportunity to be fruitful and influence wider cultural change. There is also opportunity for ongoing learning within the MPP via a monthly webinar. This session, gathers the MPP community for an in-depth webinar with a key pioneer/planter, thinker, writer, or practitioner – providing an opportunity to engage with those shaping the national and global pioneer movement.

Planting: The MPP offers support to put good practices in place which will give the best opportunity for fruitfulness. Areas include models of good accountability, systems for evaluating fruitfulness, planning for long-term sustainability, and fostering good relationships with the wider Church.

Coaching: Most fruitful new ecclesial communities have a culture of coaching their leaders. The MPP pairs every pioneer in an active community with a coach who will help them develop personally as well as make progress in the community they are leading.

Apply to join Methodist Pioneering Pathways:
methodist.org.uk/mpp-apply

Chapter 11 Safeguarding

NPNPs and communities will be varied in their approach and contexts. The principles and practices of the Methodist Church safeguarding policy must be followed at all times. The NPNP safeguarding policy should be written in consultation with the District Safeguarding Officer and reviewed annually. The safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance of the Methodist Church have been created in order to:

- **Promote** the well-being of children, young people and adults through a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding, within clearly assigned roles.
- **Prevent** harm through best practice in work with children, young people and adults and the creation of a culture of informed vigilance.
- **Protect** through responding effectively when safeguarding concerns arise.

Questions to ask yourself

- The following list is not exhaustive and is intended as a starting point for your work on safeguarding in your context.
- Which trustee body holds responsibility for this NPNP in terms of safeguarding, eg district/circuit meeting/church council?
- Who is the designated safeguarding lead for the NPNP? What roles in the NPNP require a DBS check?
- Which roles need to complete Foundation/Advanced safeguarding training?
- What risk assessments for gatherings/activities are required (eg children and young people, gatherings/meetings, health and safety)?
- What policies and procedures are needed for digital communication?
- Are you aware of the impact of abuse, and good practice in responding well to survivors of abuse?
- Do people know how to respond to a safeguarding complaint, and the process for making a referral if necessary?
- Are you aware of the process for managing someone with a safeguarding contract if needed?
- How will you meet the criteria for data protection and GDPR (including use of photography and video recordings)?
- How will you enable the NPNP safeguarding policy to be easily accessible to all participants?
- How are you ensuring safe practice in regard to funding and finances?

Further resources

Methodist Church safeguarding policies and procedure guidance, as well as templates, are available at methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding

Chapter 12 How to Begin Pioneering and Recognise Fruitfulness

Whether you are 'starting from scratch' to form an NPNP and are unsure how to begin, or starting with an existing group or community and want to be more intentional in your pioneering, this chapter is an essential read. It will guide you through your first year, teach you the core practices of pioneering, and enable you to recognise, celebrate and increase the fruitfulness of your work.

Often in the Bible, we read of 'fruitfulness'. In Genesis, God blesses humanity and says, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). We want to build fruitful NPNPs, and so we need to understand the hallmarks of a fruitful Christian community, and what core practices will lead to this fruit. The 'fruitfulness markers' and core practices presented in this chapter are the result of consultations with ministers, lay people and pioneers across the Connexion, and are rooted in tried-and-tested best practice that works in all contexts.

The review process described in this chapter is linked to these markers of fruitfulness, to ensure that we're recognising, celebrating, and building on the things that are essential to the flourishing of Christian communities. We recommend that all NPNPs follow this review process, and this is a conditional requirement for funded NPNPs.

Beginning to pioneer

In the first year of a community, it is vital to:

1. clarify your vision
2. connect with new people
3. build a team and begin gathering together.

For this reason, we recommend focusing on the first three fruitfulness markers and core practices (see below). These are the essentials that will lay strong foundations for future work on the other markers of fruitfulness.

Ways of measuring fruitfulness

In reviewing NPNPs, we want to encourage a breadth and depth of reflection, which is why our review questions encompass three different ways of measuring fruitfulness.

Firstly, we want to consider what can be measured, ie the aspects of community life which are quantifiable, such as number of people contacted, adherence to safeguarding policy, and community service offered. These quantifiable aspects are known as 'hard metrics'.

Secondly, we want to consider experience and characteristics, ie things which are qualitative, such as emerging themes and patterns, how inclusive the community is, and where we have seen signs of God. These qualitative aspects are known as 'soft metrics'.

Thirdly, we want to gather the emerging stories of community life, which offer rich and varied insights. These stories are sometimes known as 'testimony'. Remember that not all stories have to have a 'happy ending' – God is present in all of life, and we can learn much from stories of conflict and difficulty.

Fruitfulness markers, core practices and review questions

There are nine fruitfulness markers and each has associated core practices that support them. We have also included review questions that can help you recognise, celebrate, and increase your fruitfulness.

1. VISION

Fruitfulness marker: A focused vision of who the NPNP is seeking to reach and the context in which a new ecclesial community will emerge.

Core practice: Clarifying and communicating the vision of the NPNP.

Summarise the vision in one sentence and plan how you will communicate this vision with other people as the NPNP is initiated and developed. Use 'non-churchy' language that makes sense to different people, for example:

- *Coffee Shop Sunday:* Meeting God in ordinary places.
- *Starting Point:* We're a community that holds on to the essentials so that people will meet Jesus through the gospel, conversation, and prayer.
- *Inclusive Gathering Birmingham:* We're a church committed to pursuing God's radical inclusion.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

What context are we focusing on? Who and how many people are we reaching? How will we communicate our vision to others?

- *Soft metrics*

Is our vision clear and focused? Are we communicating our vision effectively to others?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they clarified, understood, shaped, or communicated the vision for our NPNP? What is that story, and where is God in it?

2. CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT

Fruitfulness marker: Any new ecclesial community will arise out of careful listening and will always remain connected to the wider community and aware of its needs.

Core practice: Connecting with new people and building the pioneering team.

Finding the first six to eight people to join the pioneering team is one of the key priorities of the six to twelve months prior to the launch of the new community. Pioneering alongside others not only increases your capacity, but also sets a pattern for diverse leadership, creates a culture of invitation, and ensures the NPNP is firmly rooted in the local community. Building the team will flow from connecting with the wider community, one-to-one meetings, and clear planning.

Create a rhythm of regularly connecting with new people in the wider community. In connecting with new people, ensure you are intentionally listening to other people's stories and looking to invite people to one-to-one meetings.

Establish a pattern of weekly one-to-one meetings to build relationships with new people. For employed full-time pioneers, between eight and ten one-to-one conversations should be scheduled every week. For employed part-time pioneers, this should be four to five conversations. Invite the interested people from your one-to-ones to gather informally (eg at a coffee shop) to begin to create community. Encourage those attending to invite others, in order to create an invitational culture from the beginning. At the end of every week, pray over the names of the people you've had one-to-ones with during the week and consider who might be invited to join the pioneering team. No doubt, some people will decline the invitation, but don't let that discourage you from inviting people to join in.

Stronger together

The pioneering team members can each independently connect with the wider community and undertake one-to-ones, but you should also aim to practice evangelism as a group, which will build trust and friendship. Group evangelism will also raise the profile of your NPNP, drawing more people in. Regular group evangelism will forge deeper bonds with the wider community and you will learn more about the community's character and needs. Think about how you can easily be recognised as a team (eg lanyards, badges, matching T-shirts). Practising evangelism together will help build the team's confidence – soon you will be seen as a natural and integral part of the neighbourhood. Group evangelism ideas include:

- Host a listening event.
- Do a litter-pick or offer bag packing at a store.
- Take a stall at a market, fête or fair (you could do a bring-and-buy, a swap shop, a tea stand, give away balloons with messages on, offer an 'everything is free' stall, or anything else that plays to the team's strengths).
- Celebrate the festivals of the Christian year publicly (eg carol singing at Christmas, giving out pancakes or donuts on Shrove Tuesday, offering ashing on Ash Wednesday, organising an Easter egg hunt in a local park, collecting for a food bank at Harvest).
- Attend a big public event as a group (eg a Pride parade, bonfire night or carnival).

Sponsor a concert series, host an exhibition, or have an open-mic poetry or music night.

See methodist.org.uk/evangelismlibrary for more ideas.

Plan it out

Make a plan for how you will connect with new people, undertake one-to-ones, gather a community and invite people to join the pioneering team. Set clear goals related to these for each month (you may want to attend three different community events each month, or have three people in the pioneering team by month five, for example). Ensure you are systematically recording information related to your goals, such as which community events you have attended, the number of one-to-ones you have done, contact details for people who have expressed an interest, etc.

Further training and support on connecting with new people, conducting one-to-ones, and planning is offered through the Methodist Pioneering Pathways.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

How many people have we contacted? How many one-to-one meetings have we done? Who are we listening to? What community activities have we joined in with? In what ways have we served our community? What networks and partnerships have we established?

- *Soft metrics*

What themes and patterns are we noticing about the wider community from our listening? How will this listening influence our NPNP?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about connecting with the wider community, a powerful one-to-one meeting, or inviting someone to join in? What is that story, and where is God in it?

3. GATHERED COMMUNITY

Fruitfulness marker: There will be moments of gathering the many individuals connected to the pioneer. From these gatherings, new patterns of worship will emerge that resonate with new people, and events will take place that build bridges to the wider community.

Core practice: Establishing regular patterns of meeting together as a pioneering team to develop the NPNP community.

In the first year the pioneering team should meet regularly (at least fortnightly) and activities should include:

- Reflecting on the vision and core values (use the NPNP theological underpinning and core values). What values will root your community?
- Building relationships by praying/reflecting on the Bible together. Sharing one another's passions and gifts.
- Identifying who has the potential to lead particular aspects of the work eg prayer, hospitality.
- Reflecting on how you develop a culture of invitation to expand beyond the pioneering team (how will you gather people and where, eg informal group coffee meetings, joining in with an activity together or planning an activity to which others can be invited?)
- Discerning how the pioneering team can continue to develop. For example, the pioneering team could meet with the pioneer's coach or a critical friend every quarter.
- Having honest, transparent conversations about financial generosity, long-term funding, and sustainability plans, as well as budgeting for the NPNP. This should involve inviting and making personal commitments to support the NPNP by giving time, money, or talents.
- Discerning what other teams are needed. Depending on the model, the pioneering team could be capped at 12-15 (or another smaller number) or could simply grow as large as possible in the first year in order to build a sense of momentum. As you grow, multiple 'working' teams may need to be set up depending on the nature of the NPNP: greeting/welcoming/follow-up/discipleship, evangelism, finance, hospitality, etc.
- Identifying what will need to be in place before you launch the new community.
- Engaging with the review process – the pioneering team should be involved with the review process (see more below).

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

Have we identified people to join the pioneering team? Have we established a rhythm of meeting as a pioneering team? Have we secured our core values? What events and activities have we held? How are we exploring faith together? Are we effectively safeguarding one another? Do we have a basic budget and have we made personal commitments (giving time, money, talents) to support the mission?

- *Soft metrics*

Are we discovering the gifts, skills and needs of our community? Is our rhythm of meeting enabling us to become a community? Do our core values shape our life together? What has gone well? What have we learnt? When we meet are we celebrating, learning, and exploring faith effectively? How diverse and inclusive are we as a community? Are we developing healthy patterns of relating? Are we managing conflict in a healthy way?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about joining the pioneering team, helping shape patterns of worship, or an event that built bridges with the wider community? What is that story, and where is God in it?

4. NEW PEOPLE

Fruitfulness marker: There will be new people making a profession of faith through baptism, confirmation, and membership.

Core practice: Nurturing testimony and faith development. For more on nurturing testimony, visit thestoryproject.org.uk

All This for You is a short book, available from Methodist Publishing, which unpacks the meaning of baptism using vivid images and thoughtful text. It is easy to read for those not familiar with church vocabulary and it provides the opportunity to reflect deeply on the lasting significance of the sacrament.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

How many previously unaffiliated people are attending? How many people regard the NPNP as their faith community? How are we encouraging testimony and story-sharing? How many people are exploring faith? Are we explaining the journey of faith to baptism? Do people know how to connect through membership?

- *Soft metrics*

Are we developing an invitational culture? Where have we seen signs of God at work? Are we encouraging people to speak about their faith journey?

- Story

Who in our community or network could tell a story about baptism or new membership? What is that story, and where is God in it?

5. DEEPENING DISCIPLESHIP

Fruitfulness marker: There will be creative ways for those new people finding faith to move beyond profession, into lives shaped by following Jesus.

Core practice: Developing discipleship pathways. For more on creating discipleship pathways, see methodist.org.uk/TravellingTogether

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

How are we introducing new people to faith? Have we established discipleship pathways? How many people are in small groups? How are we exploring the Bible together? How are we encouraging and practising prayer?

- *Soft metrics*

Are we open to the questions of others? Is our discipleship programme effective in enabling people to explore and deepen their faith? Are new people experiencing God? Is our faith in God impacting our lives? How are we practising our faith as a community?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about changes in their life due to their new faith, or about joining a small group, or about deepening/exploring/living their faith? What is that story, and where is God in it?

6. SOCIAL JUSTICE

Fruitfulness marker: Communities contributing to the transformation of society by offering loving acts of justice and service, and challenging injustice.

Core practice: Challenging and responding to injustice by listening to, amplifying and being changed by people experiencing injustice and marginalisation (both locally and globally). Offering acts of loving service within the local and global community.

For more on engaging with issues of justice and peace, see methodist.org.uk/SocialJustice

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

What acts of service have we offered to our wider community? What injustices are present amongst us and the wider community? What other partners and networks are challenging injustice that we could/should join in with? What kinds of transformation are we seeking?

- *Soft metrics*

Are we challenging injustice effectively within our community and the wider community – what's changed? Who are we listening to and being challenged and transformed by?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have served or been served by others, or how they have seen transformation in the community from loving acts, or where we have worked for justice? What is that story, and where is God in it?

7. CONNECTION TO THE WIDER CHURCH

Fruitfulness marker: There will be a clear relationship of mutual accountability with the wider Methodist Church, and the NPNP will inspire other churches and circuits to start their own NPNPs.

Core practice: Accountable to the wider church and contributing to the development of NPNPs in the district.

For more on connecting with the wider church, speak to your District NPNP Team, your District Chair or your Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathway lead.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

How are we connected and accountable to the district/ circuit? How do we plan to communicate the vision and learning from our community to inspire other people?

- *Soft metrics*

Do we feel connected and supported by the structures in place? If not, what do we need? What could we offer to the wider Church?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have worked with the wider Methodist Church, or inspired/supported other NPNPs? What is that story, and where is God in it?

8. LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Fruitfulness marker: The NPNP will seek long-term financial sustainability by nurturing a culture of financial giving and/or entrepreneurship, and long-term sustainability of leadership by growing a base of volunteers and new leaders from beyond the initial planting team.

Core practice: Growing the leadership community and encouraging a culture of giving.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

How many people are volunteering their gifts, finances, energy? How are we developing a culture of giving? Do we recognise what resources we need for long-term sustainability?

- *Soft metrics*

Are we enabling people to offer their gifts and skills?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they have contributed their time, money or skills to the NPNP, or how they have grown as a leader? What is that story, and where is God in it?

9. REPLANT OR SECOND PLANT

Fruitfulness marker: The NPNP will seek to form an emerging idea of the next new ecclesial community that could be planted from this NPNP or inspired by it.

Core practice: Actively discerning where to locate the next NPNP and praying about it regularly.

Review questions:

- *Hard metrics*

Are other people interested in what we are doing? Are we capturing our learning, and communicating this to other people?

- *Soft metrics*

Do we welcome the questions and observations of others? Are we communicating in ways that inspire other people to start an NPNP? Is the time right to extend our community to begin another?

- *Story*

Who in our community or network could tell a story about how they feel called to start another NPNP, or where they see the need for another NPNP? What is that story, and where is God in it?

The review process

The review process we recommend all NPNPs follow, and which funded NPNPs are expected to follow, is two-fold:

1. A review meeting every six months to review work and set specific goals based on the fruitfulness markers above.
2. An annual submission of responses to the review questions (see above).

Review meeting

Every six months a meeting should be scheduled to review, evaluate, and set specific goals for the NPNP based on the fruitfulness markers. The fruitfulness markers and associated questions should guide your meeting. This meeting could involve people from the District NPNP Team, the pioneering team, the management/ steering group, the reference group/stakeholder forum, and/ or the NPNP itself, depending on the current context of the NPNP. Enabling an atmosphere of prayer and openness will be important to support these conversations.

For the first review meeting (six months after the start of the NPNP), we recommend the following agenda:

1. Welcome and prayers.
2. Discussion: Have we established the three core practices (clarify your vision, connect with new people, build a team and begin gathering together)?
3. Reflect on the review questions associated with the first three fruitfulness markers. Provide an opportunity to respond to these questions in a variety of ways (eg open discussion, votes, writing comments on a flipchart, giving each person 30 seconds to respond).
4. A time of prayer/worship/silence for reflection.
5. Set clear priorities for the next six months. Remember: when it comes to priorities, less is more. The fewer priorities you have, the more progress you will be able to make.
6. Closing prayers.

For the second review meeting (12 months after the start of the NPNP), we recommend the following agenda:

1. Welcome and prayers.
2. Discussion: Have we established/are we building on the three core practices?
3. Time to reflect on the review questions associated with the first three fruitfulness markers. Opportunity to respond to these questions in a variety of ways (eg open discussion, votes, writing comments on a flipchart, giving each person 30 seconds to respond).
4. Reflect on the additional core practices you need to develop the fruitfulness markers of deepening discipleship, new people, social justice, and connection to the wider church.
5. A time of prayer/worship/silence for reflection.
6. Set clear priorities for the next six months.
7. Closing prayers.

For subsequent review meetings, we recommend the following:

1. Widen your conversations to reflect on all the fruitfulness markers, using the review questions. Though the NPNP may be focusing on one area (eg social justice or discipleship), healthy NPNPs will be 'well-rounded' and bear some fruit in all areas.
2. Always set clear priorities and goals for the next six months.
3. In year three, begin to focus on long-term sustainability.
4. In year four, begin to focus on replanting or second planting.

Annual submission

Responses to the review questions above will be gathered annually. This will enable the learning from local NPNP communities to be shared, and to develop and build the movement across the Connexion, with the aim of seeing an NPNP emerge within every circuit. Responses should be sent to the Project Funding Officer, who will collate and analyse the information from across the Connexion and share trends and learning. For further details on how responses should be submitted contact the Project Funding Officer on bondj@methodistchurch.org.uk

Chapter 13 One-to-One Meetings as a Pioneer

We spend a lot of our time in 'what' conversations: we exchange pleasantries, talk about the weather, discuss our activities, seek or provide advice, etc. The one-to-one meeting may start here but quickly aims to go deeper than these normal patterns. It's not a commercial for our new initiative, an interview, or a pastoral counselling session. The one-to-one conversation is an opportunity to listen, build trust, and learn what the other person values.

What is a one-to-one meeting?

The one-to-one meeting is a short (30-45 minute), memorable, in-person conversation between two people to uncover, explore, and share the stories, core values, and motivating interests of each conversation partner. The goal of a one-to-one is to figure out the 'why' of the person you are talking to by inviting them to tell you – a significant piece of building a connection and a relationship. One-to-ones are essential in ensuring your NPNP is contextually relevant, and in connecting with new people and building the pioneering team.

Before the one-to-one

1) **Make a list of everyone you know in your city, town, village, or whatever the ministry context is.**

That's right: why not start with everyone? Put everyone you know on your list. These will be the people you reach out to first. If the idea of that list is simply too overwhelming, make a list of the leaders of important organisations in your community – schools, voluntary organisations, businesses, cultural groups, etc.

2) **Choose ten of these people and email (or phone) them to ask for a meeting.**

Invite a range of people. Explain who you are and your connection, clarify what you're inviting them to and why, and ask them to respond if they're available. Some of them will immediately respond: some of them won't. You could follow up on an email invitation a week later. Schedule the meeting and the meeting location. A public space such as a coffee shop could be an ideal place to meet.

During the one-to-one

3) At the beginning of the meeting, thank the person for their time.

Restate who you are and your context, and be clear that you will stick to the time set aside.

4) Then move into the main part of the meeting: the conversation itself.

Don't default to the previously mentioned conversational patterns that this relational meeting is not. Your goal is for the conversation to be memorable – for it to stand out from the hundreds of other conversations that happen in a week. So ask good questions, and follow up with more good questions that invite people to consider the 'why' of the answers they just gave. Share meaningfully too about your own commitments. At first, navigating the balance of deep listening, probing questioning, follow-up, and story sharing will feel clunky. But don't worry. The more relational meetings you do, the more natural they will become to your practice of ministry.

Here are some potential starter questions:

- Tell me the story of how you became a _____. Biography is the best place to start but push hard on the particulars; don't let it stay superficial.
- What does that mean for your life now?
- What's the main thing you're up to in your organisation? Who are your heroes?
- You seem angry/passionate/deeply committed to that. Where did that come from?
- What are you going to do about that anger/passion/conviction? If money were no object, what would you do?
- What's next for you?

Go for a probing question that risks troubling the easy, polite information exchange that we're used to. For example, 'What do you value about this community?' Ask big questions that have focus and spark. Don't forget, during the conversation you should find natural places to speak about your story, interests, and values. The one-to-one is not an interview.

Ending the one-to-one

5) Five minutes before the end of the meeting, move to finish meaningfully.

Resist the temptation to stay at the table for a long time. Finishing the meeting at the time agreed and on a high note increases the likelihood that you'll meet again in the future.

Ask your conversation partner if they have any last questions for you.

This is essential: ask your conversation partner if they know anyone else that you should be talking to. Ask the question and then be quiet and wait. More often than not, they'll suggest a couple of people. Then ask if they'd be willing to e-connect you with them. If you sense potential for future connection, mention how interesting the meeting has been and then ask if you could follow up in a couple of months for another conversation.

After the one-to-one

6) Record your conversation partner's basic information.

Use whatever technology works for you to keep track of contacts. Follow the guidance on good practice in recording at methodist.org.uk/Confidentiality

7) Follow up with an email the next day.

Thank your conversation partner, reiterate how helpful/enjoyable the conversation was, and ask whether anyone else has come to mind that you should reach out to. If they haven't yet e-connected you with those they mentioned at the end of the one-to-one, ask them to do so.

8) Figure out how to scan and organise the 'data' you're getting from the meetings.

This will help you to order to discern next steps for current and future NPNPs.

9) Repeat.

Keep reaching out with more invitations for more one-to-ones, you should never run out.

Chapter 14 What is a Pioneering Team?

A key element of the pioneer's work will be to gather, build and sustain a pioneering team.

Teams do not just happen: they are created and built. They take time to grow and need to be nurtured to continue developing. Several key thinkers in pioneer ministry believe it is time to think less about individual pioneers and more about pioneering teams.[3]

The role of the pioneering team (which includes the pioneer) is to do the core work of pioneering the NPNP. Remember that the pioneering team doesn't need to do everything – the circuit or District NPNP Team and/or management group should support you in clarifying the aims and core vision of the NPNP, and other groups at a district or circuit level may be able to help with particular functions, eg communication or finance.

Building the pioneering team is one of the first tasks for the pioneer. The pioneer should establish a regular pattern of meeting people one-to-one and then discern (using the characteristics below) who might be invited to form part of the pioneering team.

When six to eight people have been identified, the team can begin meeting regularly and engaging in activities. The continued good leadership of the pioneering team is a crucial part of the pioneer's ongoing work.

The pioneering team should include people who:

- are on a spiritual journey and want to invite others to explore
- are committed to and share a passion for the mission, vision, and values of the NPNP (competing understandings of the mission will disable the NPNP)
- have lived experience of the context (essential for Church at the Margins, to enable them to be co-designed and co-delivered at every stage)
- are from diverse backgrounds and ages enjoy working collaboratively
- value authenticity and are willing to be vulnerable are people-orientated and willing to serve others
- can engage and respond to conflict healthily and creatively
- are innovative, creative, curious, and willing to take risks are orientated to the future.

3 Mike Moynagh and Andy Freeman, *How Should We Start?* (Fresh Expressions Share Booklet, 2011).

Chapter 15 Praying for your New Place for New People/Church at the Margins

It is essential for your NPNP/CaM to be rooted, sustained and grown in prayer. As we listen to God together, we discern God's will and purpose for God's people. The theologian Simone Weil wrote, "Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer." Being attentive to God together centres us in God and enables us to discover our vision, values and purpose.

The pioneering team should:

- build prayer into the cycle and rhythm of all meetings
- form a prayer network and agree how and who will communicate prayer requests to others eg via email/ WhatsApp
- include an opportunity for people to share their concerns for prayer as individuals and for the community as a whole
- regularly pray for who could be invited to join in
- introduce different and creative forms of prayer eg Lectio Divina, music, art, writing, prayer walking, silence
- invite people in the pioneering team and across the larger Church and world to be intercessors for the NPNP/CaM.

Topics for prayer

The pioneering team should share regular updates from the NPNP for prayer (both the joys and the struggles). Include in your prayer times, a regular invitation for people to reflect on how God might be speaking to you/them about NPNP. Offer these topics of prayer:

- The pioneer and pioneering team
- Potential people who might engage
- The management group/line manager
- Practical issues: funding/buildings, etc.

Further resources

For more resources on prayer, visit the Methodist Way of Life prayer website: methodist.org.uk/Prayer

Chapter 16 How to Listen

As you listen, always be clear and honest about who you are as an NPNP and share how and why listening is an important and consistent part of your practice. From the beginning, plan how you will listen to the wider community as a regular part of your activities.

We listen to…
value one another
hear different voices and opinions learn about others
hear their hopes, dreams, fears, challenges and concerns
hear what people are proud of
form and develop relationships
break down perceived stereotypes and barriers between people.

Where to listen …
in the places people meet and gather: leisure centres, cafés, coffee shops, school gates, parks, community spaces, social media groups, community online forums, local interest gatherings, public noticeboards, etc
while joining in with a community activity
while volunteering for a charity or a foodbank

Listening to a community group by hosting an event

Be clear and honest about who you are and why you are hosting the event. Identify a shared concern or issue arising from the community/context and try to keep people focused on that without going off-topic.

Depending on the context, and how formal the event is, it might be helpful to set some guidance around listening well to each other, such as:

- Agreeing to be open to different opinions.
- Agreeing that only one person will speak at a time.
- Agreeing that everyone will participate.

After setting guidance, the three key elements for successful listening are: participation, positive questioning and reflection.

We listen to…
Be attentive to the words used.
Notice the volume and tone of the words.
Try to recognise and suspend your own assumptions and judgements.
When someone pauses and is silent, avoid rushing to fill the space.
What remains unspoken and seems to be unmentionable (the elephant in the room)?
Notice when something upsets you, or surprises you, and focus on listening rather than your own response.
Listen with the aim of understanding the other person. Use 'I' language when responding to someone.
Honour confidentiality.
Ask open-ended questions.

Signs you may not be listening well
You are busy thinking of your response.
You recognise yourself thinking, 'that's good' or 'that's bad'. Fidgeting, tapping your fingers, glancing at your watch. Avoiding eye contact.
You constantly feel the urge to interrupt.
You bring the conversation back to you! You don't ask any questions.
You quickly become defensive and want to speak. Your body language is closed and defensive.
You forget the name of the person you are talking to.

Chapter 17 Positive Working Together and Managing Conflict

In human relationships, conflict is to be expected, especially when people are experiencing change. The space to differ honestly in an atmosphere of grace and acceptance is the mark of a healthy community. Conflict becomes destructive when it is hidden or unresolved.

Experience shows that there have been tensions between pioneer initiatives and the wider Church. This is to be expected, for one of the gifts of NPNPs is that they can challenge assumptions about the way Christian community is expressed. A helpful Methodist Church resource is *Living with Contradictory Convictions* found at Methodist.org.uk/ConferenceReports2006

Ready for conflict

As you begin your NPNP, it is important that you are ready for the conflict that is likely to arise and find patterns of handling it positively. This will enable difference to be a place of creativity that brings about growth and deepening of relationships: a moment that helps an NPNP be understood and integrated in the life of the wider church context. Here are some helpful procedures to put in place:

- Normalise practices that help more people share in community conversations. Encourage people to speak up, and support those who find it more challenging to speak. Sometimes this requires not speaking so that others have a chance.
- In situations where someone raises a conflict, be ready to listen to what the person wishes to share. To be heard is sometimes all someone needs.
- Do not look for immediate solutions or fixes. It is better to gather information and enable conversation that will bring people together.
- Facilitate different people working together in their tension rather than keep them apart.
- Enable mutual accountability: where both an NPNP and the wider church understand the importance of what is required of them and what is required of others to support them.
- Enable consistently good communication between key wider church leaders and the pioneering team. This is vital in preventing tensions from escalating. A small reflection shared early on means an issue won't become bigger than it needs to be.
- Acknowledge differences and affirm the value of people's perspectives to create a place where honest questions can be asked and answered.

Positive Working Together

Dealing well with conflict is not easy and many feel overwhelmed by the prospect. However, the skills can be learnt and the Methodist Church is committed to empowering leaders in this area. The Positive Working Together resources provide information and training to equip leaders in every context of the Methodist Church.

Resources and further information on training events can be found at methodist.org.uk/PWT

Chapter 18 Financial Sustainability

The first month of an NPNP might include a variety of important activities: hosting a meal for early stakeholders and supporters to talk about the new community, printing a survey to give out as you knock on doors to meet your neighbours, designing art engagement for the school assembly, hiring a hall and organising food and music for your first community party, and of course, buying cups of coffee for as many new people as possible – to listen to their stories and share yours.

All of these relational commitments are absolutely crucial and also extremely fun! And though they are quite diverse, they all have at least one thing in common: they all cost money.

If you sit down with 20 people a month for coffee and conversation, the annual coffee bill could be significant – and you're only getting started! We recognise that each context will be different, but all will need to be attentive to financial resourcing.

There is a temptation in pioneering and church planting to let money be the last thing you worry about, the last action item in the pioneering team to-do list. We rationalise and convince ourselves: 'If we get the vision right, if we just focus on meeting people, if we have the most beautiful website or most profound statement of welcome, we won't need to worry about money. It'll all work itself out.'

Of course, this is not true. One of the most common mistakes made in pioneering (and existing churches, too) is not talking honestly, candidly, and positively about money from the beginning. Sadly, creative pioneering initiatives come to an end all the time – not because they weren't making a difference in people's lives, nor because they weren't clear about their reason for existence, but because they ran out of money. Good financial practice is linked to our understanding of who God is, who we are in relation to God, and what the ultimate promise and purpose of life are.

Small conversations early on

Discussing finance from the beginning of the NPNP is important as a regular aspect of the community's development and growth. Talking to individuals and the whole community regularly and in small ways avoids a conversation about it in a crisis situation. Having a clear understanding and set of related actions for how your NPNP will steward finances is not only good business practice, it is foundationally linked to your mission, your discipleship and your theology.

Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). This is not an obscure verse; in fact, how we steward money – including our possessions, economic practice, material and financial generosity – is a major theme in Scripture, right up there with love. We believe the two are connected.

So, from the very beginning of your NPNP, discuss prayerfully and confidently how financial generosity will be integrated publicly and clearly into your discipleship pathways and measures of fruitfulness. Instead of speaking of giving in general terms ("we will all give in different ways, and that's fine"), be explicit that financial generosity is part of discipleship – we offer our prayers, our presence, our financial gifts, our service and our witness. For increasingly committed disciples, it's not pick-and-choose.

Church at the Margins

NPNPs in economically marginalised communities will need to be sensitive to the potential limitations of financial resources in their communities. It will be important to encourage financial giving appropriate to the resources available. Considering the costs of activities will be an important aspect of community life to ensure they are accessible to everyone.

An attitude of gratitude

A helpful way to begin the discussion about money is to reflect on the seed missional funding the new NPNP has received from the district or circuit. This money is an investment to help you get started, but it's not a transaction. It's a gift, a sign of the abundance of God who is the source of everything good, and also a sharing in the faithfulness of those who have come before us – forebears whose financial sacrifices over the centuries mean that there is something now to provide for new things, new missional experiments.

At the beginning, praise God for this generosity, help the pioneering team to practise gratitude and reflect on what honouring and stewarding this gift might mean for your new community as you begin to establish discipleship rhythms. How might this generosity beget more generosity? How is financial generosity part of your mission and ministry? How is it connected to helping the kingdom of God come about? What is your understanding of fundraising and stewardship, and how will you practise that? How can you begin to take responsibility for your financial life in ways that expect sustainability but more than that, in ways that expect you to fund new things in the future?

Who can help?

Your pioneering team will need to learn to think and communicate clearly about finances in a way that people respond to. It is important to have as part of your team someone who can hold the day-to-day finances in perspective and help forecast the finance required for the future as the NPNP grows in reach and ministry.

Practising giving and stewardship

Consider the following in creating a culture of giving and responsible stewardship:

- How are you, as a leader in this community, modelling the spiritual discipline of giving? Could you practise tithing or move towards it?
- What does increasing faithfulness in financial generosity look like? Share testimony about the practise of giving and how your own commitment has been both a challenge and a gift. Never ask people to make a commitment that you're not willing to make yourself.
- How will you discuss finances in pioneering team meetings (and meetings with your line manager, coach, management/steering group)? How will financial matters be incorporated into your mission plan/strategy?
- How will you build a budget for your NPNP? How will your share it with others, so they can understand the finances? Your circuit treasurer will be able to offer support in this.
- How will you manage the day-to-day finances of the NPNP? You may need to open a current account. Your circuit or district treasurer will be able to offer support in this.
- How will finances be part of discipleship pathways? How can people learn about, practise, and share the joys and challenges of giving? Consider using a resource such as Holy Habits (holyhabits.org.uk), which includes a chapter on 'Sharing Resources'.
- How are you helping the NPNP understand its ongoing financial development in relation to the initial connexional funding? How are you stewarding the community's finances in a way that will make it possible for you to fund other NPNPs in the future?

Possible revenue streams

Funding can come from many places; consider the following:

- Ask community members to make prayerful, reflective, regular financial contributions to the NPNP as part of their discipleship.
- Make it easy to give. Carrying cash is becoming less and less common, so innovative ways such as contactless payments, text codes and online giving are popular ways to encourage one-off payments.
- Grow a supporter network. Explore creative conversations with people who are interested but not a part of the community. Perhaps local Christians or other churches who want to support your vision.
- 'Tent-making ministry' is slowly emerging as a way for NPNP leaders to fund their role. Leaders have paid employment of some other kind outside of the Church. They are not paid to lead the NPNP but instead volunteer their time for this. Are there skills and business opportunities that key leaders could develop?
- Becoming entrepreneurial is a way of developing an income stream for the NPNP. Could it be a product or service you sell? A shop or café? Is there a space in premises you own that could be rented?
- Applying for grants is a potential, if at times complicated, funding stream. There are Christian grant-giving organisations and other community-based funders who may support elements of your community's life. However, it is better to develop a culture of giving rather than depend on a culture of grant applications.

Further resources

Methodist Insurance guidance on fundraising: methodistinsurance.co.uk/church-fundraising

Helping church plants explore how to become financially sustainable: stewardship.org.uk/church-planting-pathway

Chapter 19 Circuit Funding Processes

When the District NPNP has been approved, and launched, the District initiates a process to discern where circuit NPNP communities are emerging.

Step One Discovering the vision, focus and context for new circuit NPNP communities is a partnership of prayerful discernment between the District and circuits. Ideally, this would include the District NPNP Team, mission enabler, or learning network staff and could occur in:

- District leadership team meetings
- District Superintendent gatherings
- Circuit leadership teams
- Gathering of all the circuit leadership teams for prayer and discernment
- District Representative Synod

Step Two Accompanying the development of a local vision is the core priority. This journey of support, prayer and discernment to design and prepare for a circuit-led NPNP community will take time (at least 6-12 months) and may include the testing of ideas and experimentation. We recommend the District NPNP Team (or its representative) meet the circuit NPNP team at least three times to design and prepare for their circuit-led NPNP.

Step Three The role of the District NPNP Team is to clarify which circuits have an emerging vision and meet the NPNP criteria of a new Christian community in a new place and would benefit from circuit NPNP funding. The NPNP eligibility criteria can be viewed at the end of this chapter or in the District NPNP Guide, p. 7.

Step Four The District NPNP Team identify how many circuit NPNPs are emerging and would benefit from the funding.

Step Five Determine which of the two funding models below, Model A or Model B, is appropriate for their context.

Funding Models

The Connexional Mission Committee has approved two funding models which have been developed by the Connexional NPNP team with input from District NPNP colleagues.

Model A: 1-3 (usually) circuit NPNP communities within the District

The Mission Committee receives and approves each circuit NPNP submission *agreed by the District process* prior to the releasing of funds. It is ideal for districts who have identified between one and three larger circuit NPNP communities which will draw upon the whole circuit funding allocation and whose submissions are ready to be received within the existing cycle (three meetings per connexional year) of the Mission Committee.

What is required:

- A District NPNP Team to support the initial process and offer on-going support, including a District appointed named NPNP lead (eg Mission Enabler or someone with equivalent skills).
- A District NPNP panel to scrutinise the circuit NPNP submission (at least three people who have expertise in pioneering and mission and have not been involved in the support process).

Location:

In single circuits or a combination of circuits.

Timescale:

NPNPs are either ready to begin immediately, or within the next 6-12 months.

Funding:

To be released on an annual basis as per the NPNP budgets.

Evaluation:

The ongoing releasing of funds is dependent on receiving an evaluation (after the first 6 months and then first 12 months onwards) of the circuit NPNP work.

Action

Each circuit NPNP completes their funding submission form and makes a presentation to a District NPNP panel to hear the project vision, ask questions, and offer feedback. The purpose of this is two-fold: to tell the story of the NPNP and to evidence how the eligibility criteria have been met.

Funding Submission Form

After the District group has agreed the circuit NPNP meets the criteria, the Funding Submission Form is signed by the Superintendent/District Chair and then submitted to the Connexional Funding Officer.

Connexional Funding Officer

The Funding Officer scrutinises and signs off each circuit NPNP submission before sending the documentation to the Mission Committee for approval.

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee receives and signs off each individual circuit NPNP community submission prior to the releasing of funds.

Model B: Multiple (usually more than 3) circuit NPNP communities; this could include extending/replicating the district NPNP.

The Mission Committee receives and approves the District's circuit NPNP oversight process, it does not approve the individual circuit NPNP submissions.

The role of the Mission Committee is to approve the District's circuit NPNP oversight process. This model offers greater flexibility as circuit submissions can be approved locally and (subject to final approval by the Funding Officer) offer a timely response. The model is ideal when multiple circuit NPNPs are anticipated, and likely to emerge during the next 12-18 months.

What is required:

- A District NPNP team to support the initial process and offer on-going support, including a District appointed named NPNP lead (eg Mission Enabler or someone with equivalent skills).
- A District resourced oversight process to assess each circuit NPNP community submission which is outlined (proforma to be made available) for approval to the Mission Committee.

Timescale:

Some projects are ready, and more time (12-18 months) is needed for others. As soon as the process has been approved by the Mission Committee the district can begin to approve its own circuit-based NPNP submissions.

Funding:

To be released on an annual basis as per NPNP budgets.

Evaluation:

The ongoing releasing of funds is dependent on receiving an evaluation (after the first 6 months and then first 12 months onwards) of the circuit NPNP work.

Following approval of the district oversight process

Action

Each circuit NPNP completes their circuit funding submission form and makes a presentation to the District oversight group (DPC, or its equivalent) to hear the NPNP vision, ask questions, and offer feedback. The purpose of this is three-fold: to tell the story of the NPNP, to evidence how the eligibility criteria have been met, and approve the submission.

Funding Officer

The Funding Officer scrutinises and signs off each circuit NPNP submission and then informs the Mission Committee that this has been done. In the event of the Funding Officer disagreeing with the decision of the District, the circuit NPNP submission will be sent to the Mission Committee for review (otherwise, the documentation is not shared with the Mission Committee).

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee receives and approves the District's circuit NPNP oversight process, rather than each circuit NPNP submission.

Here is an example of a circuit submission form: your District may have developed their own version of this form so please do check **methodist.org.uk/CircuitNPNPFunding**

Eligibility Criteria for Circuit NPNPs

Funds will be awarded to circuits that meet the following criteria.

An NPNP focused on one of these areas of opportunity:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins
- or another context where an NPNP vision has arisen.

The NPNP will be:

- a new community, not a relaunch of an established church or existing community.
- focused on intentional evangelism and discipleship, leading to significant numbers of new people exploring faith and becoming disciples.

The circuit will have:

- a good manager/overseer/coaching culture agreement and support from Circuit Leadership Team and Superintendent
- carried out substantial contextual and prayerful discernment about community needs and local church/circuit resources surrounding the NPNP
- a clear foundational gospel vision, including evidence of listening to God and prayer
- an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy; equality and inclusion of all people must be demonstrated as a core value of your NPNP. More information is available here methodist.org.uk/inclusive-church/resources

- followed safeguarding best practice, as defined by the Conference. Conversation with the District/Safeguarding Officer required to advise on safeguarding risk assessment/policy and sign off.
- DPC/District Chair ownership, accountability, and endorsement
- clear and robust leadership appropriate to the context. clearly outlined roles and responsibilities of different parties; this will include:
  - a named line manager/management committee for the pioneer
  - a steering group for the NPNP.
- continuity plans in place where needed, to ensure the stability of an NPNP (eg planning for a change in the local superintendent, or for working with existing congregations)
- clear and realistic outcomes (fruit) that emphasise missional culture change. The plan must evidence a clear link between planned activities and outcomes.
- a six-monthly review process to enable the NPNP to remain agile and responsive
- for CAM communities – people with 'lived experience' from the community must have been involved in the design and development of the NPNP and its aims.

Chapter 20 Owning and Sharing the Story

"Data lists what happened; story expresses how and why it happened."[4]

People love to tell and hear stories because they help us reflect on our place in the world, to identify with the characters, and ask questions of where we find meaning in what unfolds. And at the heart of the Christian faith is the story of God's love and redemption that invites all people to respond. That story is told in the Bible and in the living people whose faith we encounter.

Telling the story of an NPNP brings life and character to the important work of reflecting, learning and evaluating. Good storytelling builds bridges with others, raises awareness, encourages others to join in or offer support, affirms those who have worked for the NPN, and is a wide-reaching and powerful way of sharing good news.

Here are some helpful pointers on how to tell a good story...

Start with God and with people The story of God's interaction with humankind is discovered in the Bible in the form of poems, history, codes of law, and parables. The gospels provide many perspectives on the stories of Jesus' life, which reveals the good news of God's love for all.

Tell stories of transformed relationships Each NPNP has a unique story that adds depth and colour to the emerging picture of NPNPs in the Methodist Church. These stories will be diverse and varied, reflecting the different communities and the people they serve. We celebrate the way each community will look wonderfully different, while the same desire for new people to be transformed by an encounter with the love of God is central in all.

Tell stories of key moments and turning points Captivating stories are full of ups and down, jeopardy and triumphs, challenges faced and overcome, and characters facing adversity. We invite you to highlight key moments which signified a breakthrough, an affirmation of a tough choice, or the point at which the vision began to be realised.

Tell stories with integrity It is important to tell the story of how things have gone well, but often the things that did not quite work will encourage others more. A fruitful community has as many stories of trying and learning and, of complicated relationships and events that missed the mark, as it does of things running to plan. Also, make sure you have permission to share any stories.

Further resources

Image consent forms: methodist.org.uk/ConsentForms

Social media guidance: methodist.org.uk/digital

4 Robert McKee, *Storynomics: Story-Driven Marketing in the Post-Advertising World* (Hachette, USA, 2018), p. xix

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