

An introduction to The YN&E Bridge Circuit **(formerly known as 'Circuit 17')**

What is "The YN&E Bridge Circuit"

This is a new circuit to be created with this aim and vision:

To release as much time, energy and space as possible for local churches to flourish in their mission and ministry, by ensuring that all responsibilities of governance are performed excellently by the circuit.

What is covered by the word 'governance'?

We use, here, the word 'governance' to cover the wide range of different administrative and trustee responsibilities, many of which are required by the law of the land. These include, charity trusteeship, financial and property stewardship, safeguarding and GDPR.

What area will the new Circuit cover?

The Circuit will have the capacity to embrace any church or existing circuit within the Yorkshire North and East District. Of course, the decision to become part of the Circuit is a local decision, to be worked out in consultation with the Circuit's trustees.

When will The YN&E Bridge Circuit come into being?

We intend for the Circuit to be formally founded on 1st September 2023. Between now and then we will be creating a 'shadow' structure which will be putting into place all that is needed.

Which churches will belong, initially, to the new Circuit?

At this stage, it is envisaged that the churches of the Pateley Bridge Circuit and the Pocklington and Market Weighton Circuit. The Bridlington Circuit is also indicating a strong interest in being a founder part of the new Circuit. It is also envisaged that in time other circuits may be able to benefit from the governance capabilities that are built up within the Circuit.

How will it work in terms of all the circuit meetings etc that we are used to?

The key aim of the new Circuit is to enable a greater release of time, energy and space for local churches to flourish. There will be a dedicated aim, therefore, to always minimise how much time and expectation is focussed on the Circuit. The priority will be to ensure that the Circuit Meeting (the trustee body) is sufficiently resourced with people who have the gifts to be good and faithful trustees of the whole, but keeping the size of that body as small as it reasonably can be. Normal circuit gatherings such as 'local preachers meetings' will be held in the various locations of the circuit where groups of churches are served by the local preachers in that area.

What will it feel like as a local church member within the new Circuit?

It is hoped that local churches (of what were formerly independent circuits) will continue to group together as is helpful – for deeper fellowship, fuller celebration, and together to advance the work of God. That local identity is key. To emphasise, the Circuit will be committed to ensuring that as much time, energy and space is released for encouraging the work that happens locally.

With whom will the new Circuit communicate at church level?

There isn't one standard answer to this question, but local church stewards will be a key contact. We will need to cultivate good communication as we develop with all people in local churches who are holding responsibility for different areas of life, to ensure that the circuit is able to offer as much support and encouragement as possible.

How will the new Circuit actually make a difference on the ground?

The Circuit will be committed to lifting burdens of 'governance' as fully as it is able. In some places, such matters are not burdensome, where, for instance, a church member is gifted in ensuring that the local church property is well maintained. The Circuit will celebrate all those who are gifted in these ways, and seek to further encourage and support. But where people feel burdened by such responsibilities, the Circuit will be

there to assist, and as far as is possible, take hold of those burdens and make sure that the necessary tasks are undertaken on behalf of the local church.

What help/support will be available to Church Treasurers and Property Stewards to reduce their current workloads on a day-to-day basis

As noted above, the aim is to empower and release people from 'burdens' whilst ensuring that enthusiasm to exercise gifts and vocation is encouraged. For those church treasurers and property stewards who would welcome reduced workloads, the Circuit, primarily through its Operating Officer (see below) will introduce book-keeping processes, and property service services, which minimise and streamline workloads as much as is helpful. Ensuring that this is bespoke to the needs and desires of each local context will be a priority.

Will local churches still be able to use local suppliers/contractors for, for example, property matters?

Yes. A key driver for the Circuit is to ensure that there is as much empowerment of the local as possible, with as much support as is needed. So, if there is a good local solution to an issue, that is ideal. Where there are not easy solutions to issues that arise the circuit would seek to offer as much assistance as possible.

Will local churches and former circuits still have 'ownership' of their own money and property?

Every Local Church will still have overall responsibility for its own money and continue to be Managing Trustees of its property. However, the Circuit will be keen to assist in how all that is managed, so that the local worshipping community is relieved of as much of the administrative and practical burdens as possible.

The funds of the former Circuits will come into the new Circuit. However, we intend to ensure that those funds are still ring-fenced, at least for a significant initial period, for those local areas.

How will the Circuit actually be able to fulfil its intention of ensuring that 'governance' is done excellently?

The Circuit will recruit an Operations Officer (or similar title) to be responsible for developing and implementing processes and policies that ensure that the governance responsibilities of every part of the circuit is fulfilled. As the circuit grows it may be that this role will need to be augmented by other paid staff.

How will ministers be deployed in the new Circuit?

It is the intention to station a minister to live in Pateley Bridge, and a minister to live in Pocklington & Market Weighton as from 1st September 2023. Those former circuits will be the main focus of their ministry, in a very similar way to the current pattern. If Bridlington Circuit becomes part of the Circuit they will continue to be served by the ministers already stationed there. The District Chair will be the Superintendent of the Circuit at least for an initial period to help support the circuit in its key formative period.

How will the new Circuit be funded?

Primarily the new Circuit will be funded in the 'normal' way of assessments being received from the local churches. Some work will be needed to ensure that this feels equitable and reasonable across the breadth of the new circuit. In addition, we may need to look for further funding, for instance from the District, to support the key role of Operations Officer (see above.)