

# District Rural Strategy

District Rural Lead - Rev Andrew Webb

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Dear Ministers and Church Council Secretaries,

I am pleased to give a copy of the 'District Rural Strategy' to each church and minister in the Yorkshire West District. This Document has been produced over the last months as a way of focusing on the rural mission and ministry across our district and reminding ourselves where the priorities are in this significant area of our work. As a District we are leading the way as we are the first District to have such a policy in place and the only district to employ a paid Rural Lead.

I have the privilege of being the Rural Lead for the district and was appointed to this role in 2019 alongside my role as Superintendent of the Skipton and Grassington Circuit. My Rural Lead Role is for one day a week. Despite the challenges of the last years a number of important developments have taken place

- The District Rural Strategy Team has continued its work as a place to reflect on and inspire our rural work.
- A data base of those interested in Rural work has been set up and regular updates are sent out.
- A new Rural Webinar called 'Positively Rural' began in 2020 and has now become a well-attended and respected quarterly gathering covering a range of rural inspired topics. The next one is on July 14<sup>th</sup> at 1pm, looking at how Green Spaces support positive mental health.
- I have worked with the district in a community consultation process as it considered the future of the Conistone Hostel project in Conistone.
- I have recently become part of the Connexional Rural Hub to reflect on connexional policy regarding Rural matters and working with Sarah Hulme the new Connexional Rural Mission and Ministry Officer.
- I spend some of my district time as a chaplain to the Skipton Auction mart
- A significant piece of work has been putting together the Rural Strategy Document which has been approved by the District Leadership Team and District Policy Committee and presented to the April Synod.

I would encourage you to have a read through the strategy document. There is important information within this for us whatever context we live in. There are also opportunities to respond to the challenges and joys of rural life in our district and to offer our prayers, support and encouragement. One particular area which I am keen to develop is links between different district contexts and if you would like to be involved in this do let me know. On the back of this letter are suggested questions/ areas for discussion at your church councils, circuit meetings etc.

Do get in touch if you would like any information or to be added to the database. I am keen to hear from anyone with an interest in Rural Mission and ministry and my contact details are at the top of this letter.

Grace and peace,

Andrew J. Webb

Questions for discussion at Church and Circuit meetings

For those in a Rural or semi rural context:-

Is there help, guidance or support that we would value from the Rural Strategy Group and Rural Lead?

Would we value a conversation about our rural mission and ministry, or about new and creative ways of being a Christian presence in rural communities?

Would we value a conversation about new ways of being church in light of the Methodist guidelines on oversight and trusteeship?

Do we have a rural good news story that we would be willing to share with others?

Would training and discipleship resources such as Methodist Way of life or mental Health First Aid be helpful to us?

Would we be interested in developing links with an urban community in our district? How might this be mutually beneficial?

Having read the strategy is there anything that encourages or challenges us?

Would someone in our church/circuit be willing to be on the mailing list to receive rural updates?

For those in an urban or semi urban context

Is there any help, guidance or support that we would value from the Rural Strategy Group and Rural Lead?

How might we support and pray for the rural communities and churches in our district?

Would we be interested in developing links with a rural community in our district? How might this be mutually beneficial?

Would someone in our church/circuit be willing to be on the mailing list to receive rural updates?