The Situation at Spring 2018.

**Agenda item 5**

Across the circuit, membership numbers have been declining and collections have not been raising enough money to pay for our Ministerial staff (4 Presbyters and 1 Deacon).

Simply reducing the number of Ministers would only accelerate the decline. We hardly have enough Ministers and Local Preachers to keep our present pattern of services going anyway. Both in local churches and for circuit work, we rely on a reducing number of faithful stalwarts.

We have ideas and experience of how to get Methodism growing again, which will involve changing the balance of our effort away from what we do already and putting more effort into mission.

We have two separate choices to make:

1. Do we simply look after our faithful people as long as we can, which means accepting the continued decline of Methodism in this area or do we try something much harder, to “reveal the kingdom of God” across the St Albans and Welwyn Circuit”?
2. Whatever the answer to that question do we do it with 5 ministerial staff, or with 4?

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| **Option** | **5 Ministers** | **4 Ministers Option A** | **4 Ministers Option B** |
| **Ministers at** | St Albans (2) Potters Bar (1), Hatfield & Welwyn (2) | St Albans (1), Potters Bar (1), Hatfield & Welwyn (2) | St Albans (2), Potters Bar (1) and Hatfield & Welwyn (1) |
| **Ministers Focused** | As now or free one for mission | Where the churches are | Where the members are |
| **Members per Minister** | MR – 158  HR + R – 148  St J + S - 147  O+B – 65  LW + D - 103 | MR + HR – 277  St J+S +R – 205  O + B – 65  LW + D - 103 | MR – 158  HR + R – 148  St J + S – 147  O+ B+LW+D – 168 |
| **Money per member in 5 years** | Increase by 28% | Increase by 13% | Increase by 13% |
| **Membership in 5 years time** | 10% increase also needed to pay bills | Can accept 10% decline | Can accept 10% decline |
| **Services per Quarter** | 129 as now | Reduce by 10% | Reduce by 10% |

How much money the Methodist people of St Albans and Welwyn need to give depends on how many staff we have. Our choice of “looking after people” or “going for growth” will decide what we spend our time doing (that’s both Ministerial staff and unpaid members of the church). For example, if we keep 5 ministers, and accept the particularly steep rise in giving that means, are we better to keep them in their present roles, or re-organise anyway and free one whole person for mission? If we have 4 ministers, how much of their time do we want them to spend looking after Methodist people and how much on outreach and mission?

Can we help our lay people start and run mission activities?