

DRAE Report Region 1

United Kingdom

DRAE HAS 4 members in UK: The Diaconal Association of the Church of England (DACE); The Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO); Diaconal Council of the Church of Scotland (DCS); and The Presbyterian Deaconesses in Northern Ireland.

Personnel:

Following the retirement of Janie Martin, after 14 years' service as Secretary to the Diaconate Council a new appointment was made: Catherine Wallace, was commissioned as a Deacon in 1989 and has worked in parishes in Scotland and in the States. She is a trained counsellor and manages a Christian charity that offers free counselling.

At the May Convocation, Sue Culver completed 8 years' service as Warden of MDO. In September, the Order welcomed a new Warden Karen Mc. Bride and Deputy Warden Richard Goldstraw.

At the DACE AGM Ann Wren retired as President and presently there is no one to fill the role. After discussion, it was decided to recommend to the membership that the Association closed. Meetings will be held in the Spring to confirm this decision. The present Executive will remain in post to fulfil the constitutional requirements.

Events/Celebrations

In 2017 the MDO celebrate 30 years since the renewal of the Order when men and women were both called to life time vocations following a decision of the Methodist Conference in 1986.

MDO London Pastoral Centre was opened and blessed in September. The Order is now exploring how the ministry of prayer and hospitality within Methodist Church House and learning to be the Order in a very different environment. (The Birmingham Centre was closed in August 2014)

Conferences/meetings

MDO holds an annual Convocation at Swanick in early May and a summer retreat in August, led this year by Ms. Gill Dascombe, chair of the Methodist Retreat Association and ex Vice President of Methodist Conference.

DSC meet annually for a residential council in June and a day conference in January. This year a small working party was appointed to facilitate the DRAE Assembly in 2019. (See separate notice)

DACE normally combine their AGM with a few days of study/reflection time. This year a day conference was held at Church House London. In 2017 it will be 30 years since the first women were ordained as deacons in the Church of England.

The Presbyterian Deaconess meet monthly for fellowship and study their work in churches, hospitals, prison service and community outreach are within the Board of Mission in Ireland.

New Applications

1 potential withdrawal. (DACE)

Challenges

The Methodist Church is currently exploring with its Faith and Order Committee: The nature and theology of Ministry. An interim report on the Diaconate came to Conference last year. MDO with the Church are continuing to reflect and work with questions, issues, opportunities and challenges it posed.

MDO would value the prayers, insights and reflections of the ecumenical and world partners in this important work.

DCS are taking part in a Consultation within the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland. A small group are working on "A Vision for the Diaconate"

The DACE membership has diminished in recent years and unable to provide continuing leadership. A few dioceses are supporting the explorations of the distinctive Diaconate but there is no current progress or understanding of the diaconate in the Church of England. Bishops in some diocese are appointing pioneer ministers but currently none of these are deacons.

One challenge is what form of support is appropriate in the future for people exercising or exploring the Diaconate and second whether a UK Anglican group could form in the future. Some Associate members in Scotland are part of the current exploration of the Diaconate.

Ann Wren January 2017