

**THE VALE OF AYLESBURY  
CIRCUIT (23/29)**

Website: [www.aylesburyvale.org.uk](http://www.aylesburyvale.org.uk)

**A GUIDE TO THE USE OF THE  
CHRESTOS PLAN MAKING TOOLS  
FOR THE CREATION OF THE  
CIRCUIT PREACHING PLAN  
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THIS  
CIRCUIT**

These notes are based on those published by ThenMedia and adapted to our style of usage after 2+ years experience.

I hope they will prove useful to those using the system for the first time and also to those who have an important part to play, your participation is greatly valued.

*Roy Collis* — Technical Editor      February 2018

# Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit

The construction of the Preaching Plan is supervised by the Superintendent Minister, who is responsible for the contents of the Plan but has the assistance of a Plan Admin Team consisting of the Staff and a Technical Editor.

The CHRESTOS TOOLS can only be accessed after logging into the 'Cloud'

## Notes on the plan-making process

### 1 Basics

**The key groups in Chrestos plan-making are:**

Plan Admin

Available for planning

Church Plan Note Edit

**The main planning tools are:**

- Periods
- Availability
- Planning Grid
- Plan Notes (see Para 8.)

**Group Permissions for the main planning tools are:**

**Periods:** Read/EDit - Plan Admin

**Availability:** RD/ED—Plan Admin & Available for planning

**Planning Grid:** RD/ED—Plan Admin

**Plan Notes:** RD/ED— Church Plan Note Edit &  
Plan Admin

## 2 Groups

Members of the **Plan Admin** group oversee the planning process. Plan Admin can create and edit Periods, alter a period's status during the process, enter and edit availability, and do the actual planning. The **Technical Editor** is a member of this group but has no part in planning appointments but will probably set up the Period.

The **Available for planning** group enter the dates when they are available in the 'Availability Form' on screen, they can also state the maximum number of services they are willing take in the quarter and on a Sunday, and where they can preach, within those constraints, dates and **their deployment is entirely at the discretion of the Superintendent Minister.**

When planning is complete, they can re-visit the screen to view their appointments. Those in the Available for Planning group are listed on the website in the 'Available for Planning' group; some **Visiting Preachers** have agreed to be members of this group.

The **Church Plan Note Edit Group** members are contacts in each church who are expected to inform the **Plan Admin** of any special services, invited **Visiting Preachers** or anything else that will effect the Preaching Plan for their church, by adding **Plan Notes** on their respective **church pages**. Please note that preachers named in **the Available for Planning group should not be 'booked'**, however, **requests** for a certain preacher will be given proper consideration. Notes can be amended at any time but there will be times when they will be too late but never too early for the next Planning Period. These notes are a valuable 'aid memoire' for the Admin Group as plan making proceeds.

## 4 The status of a planning period

As plan-making proceeds, the status of a period changes.

### 1 Hidden

A planning period is 'greyed-out' in the list of periods. There can be no Planning activity possible when it is in that mode. All old plans should be put into Hidden mode

### 2 Awaiting preacher availability

Members of the 'Available for planning' group can leave availability. A planning grid can be generated, services (blue cells) can be created, but not edited.

### 3 Planning in progress

Planning can be done on the planning grid (i.e. services can be created, deleted & filled). Ministers normally plan in their own areas, but as Plan Admin Group members, they can plan anywhere. Preachers can view their availability, but no longer edit it. Preacher availability can only be edited by Plan Admin.

### 4 Plan being finalised

As 'Planning in progress', except planning can now only be done by Plan Admin.

### 5 Plan complete

No further planning can be done. Preachers can view their appointments from the Availability screen.

## 5 Why does the status of a planning period change during the process?

To separate the three main phases of plan-making: the giving of dates; the planning of preachers; the viewing of appointments.

It's messy doing the planning if availability keeps changing; its inappropriate to be viewing appointments if planning is incomplete. The changing status of a planning period keeps the phases separate, while allowing Plan Admin to over-ride where necessary. See note\*\*

(Note\*\*) any member of the Admin Group can edit a Period to change its status; Click on the Period icon then the Status and select the status– **click 'Done'**

Only 1 Period can be in the Planning in Progress mode at any instant, Any change must be reversed before you leave the site. The system will only make the Planning grid available for editing for Planning in progress/ being finalised.

## 6 Visiting preachers

There is also a Visiting preachers group. Those in this group appear in the Visiting preachers drop-down in the service dialogue box, allowing regular visitors to be easily selected. When the Plan is complete, the spreadsheet export lists visiting preachers used in the period. Any preacher invited by a church needs to be added to this group for the duration of the plan. As previously stated some regular visiting preachers are also in the 'Available for Planning' group

## 7 Service Codes

Service codes (C, HF, CA, AAW etc) can be created and added to services. 'Featured' codes appear at the top of the list.

## 8 Notes

There are two 'Note facilities' to aid plan-making.

1. Preachers can leave notes when recording availability. e.g Please don't plan me for Family Services.

The CHRESTOS Tools are an integral part of the CIRCUIT WEBSITE site and can only be accessed by going on to the Website and signing into the 'CLOUD'.

The Website and CHRESTOS share a common data base, this is used to create the list of up-coming services that can be viewed by any Website reader if they are searching the information on individual churches. **Those lists are updated automatically from the information put into the Planning Grid.**

For most services it lists the time; Preacher and then the decoded Service Code so what is on the plan may appear as :

**11.00am Bloggs FS** will be shown on the Website as:

**11.00am Rev Joe Bloggs Family Service**

Any additional Preacher or Service code will be similarly decoded.

There is also provision in the dialogue box for additional information to be put into the **Location Box**, such information will **override** the preacher's name.

**It is therefore important that no codes are used there** as it must be intelligible to the casual reader of the Website.

For the appointment to be seen as filled (turn dark blue) there must be a name in a Preacher slot or a full description of the service in the location box. **NB.** It is possible to 'kid' the system by putting blanks in the Location Box

When the **Planning Grid** has been completed it can be converted to a .pdf document which can be printed off and used as the Preaching Plan but apart from the Service Codes there is no other information in the document, it can also be converted to a Excel Spreadsheet which has the same limitations.

Most Circuits will have a familiar format for their plan which will include contact information about the preachers, useful information about Hymn Books used and contact details for each church. It is easier to transfer the Planning Grid details if that plan is based on an Excel Spreadsheet.

The plan can then be produced in the following stages:

### **STAGE 1.**

An Excel Spreadsheet template will have been prepared in advance which will have all the additional data already on it, only the main table of appointments is empty.

### **STAGE 2.**

The Planning Grid is inspected to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose'. That is to say in terms of rows and columns it is the same size as the template appointments area, that all services have been described according to the requirements of the CHRESTOS system (no inappropriate use of the Location Box and **ideally**, all appointments filled.

### **STAGE 3.**

Make any necessary 'repairs' to the Planning Grid including making use of information supplied (church Plan Notes) and consultation if necessary. Complete the entries for Fairford Leys and N. Marston normally following their established pattern of services, At this point there are usually a few unfilled appointments.

### **STAGE 4.**

Open the Planning Period and export the appropriate Planning Grid as an Excel Spreadsheet which will go into the download file on the editors PC.

## STAGE 5.

Open the download file and the template simultaneously in Excel, block and copy the whole of the appointments table in the download and paste it in to the central table of the template, **SAVE** this file as the 1st Draft of the preaching plan.

### Stage 6 (optional):

Traditionally each appointed has been set out on the Plan in the order of the following example: 10.55 K Edwards C

The Planning grid prints this as: K Edwards C / 10.55 am

The time is only included if it varies from the time shown in the left hand column and 'am' or 'pm' often has to be assumed because space is limited. It is also good to be able to leave spaces between the name and the coding. *(ever since a preacher appeared to have been awarded the Victoria Cross for preaching at Chinnor Village Centre that had the code VC)*

The way the appointments are set out is a matter of personal choice; the current format seems to be well accepted and understood.

## STAGE 7.

When the draft is in a satisfactory state it is sent for comment/ approval to the Plan ADMIN & CHURCH NOTE EDIT groups and at least 72 hrs is allowed for comments. The Draft will also be viewable on the main Website during that time.

## **STAGE 8.**

The 1st Draft is amended if necessary and a second draft circulated to all preachers involved. Both drafts will go with a covering message with an appeal for volunteers or ideas for filling the gaps.

**The drafts are currently circulated by our Web Mail which does not accept replies. It is safer to use 'normal' Email when making comments or suggesting amendments.**

## **STAGE 9.**

The response to the 2nd Draft may be slow so as much time as possible is allowed for comments to be made.

**It is essential that Preachers and Church Stewards/ Contacts review these drafts and if possible confirm this has been done to the editor.**

At some point it has to be assumed that no response indicates approval. **The draft will be updated and published on the website during this period.**

When the draft is considered to be as good as it can be it is renamed as Circuit Preaching Plan period & date and sent to the AMC Office for printing along with the file containing the information on the back of the plan, That file will have been update during the 'slack' periods when waiting for responses, ensuring the Date and other details are correct especially the Visiting preachers list which shows only those on the plan for the period.

**Both files need to be in .pdf format .**

It will be the Technical Editor's task to ensure the Plan published on the website is kept up to date which means they need to be reasonably proficient in the use of the EXCEL, WORD and PUBLISHER elements of Microsoft Office and familiar with updating procedures on the Circuit Website.



