

Annual Report of Morpeth Methodist Church and Centre for the Community,

Registration no: 1128303, for the year to 31st August 2021

Administrative Information and Structure

The Church's mission statement is "To make Christ visible in the world". This report will discuss the means in which this is discharged.

The Church comprises the Sanctuary and 5 rooms of various sizes. The address is: Howard Terrace, Morpeth. NE61 1HU. Tel no: 01670 511078.

The Church was opened in 1905, extended in 1986 and reconfigured and further extended in 2005. The Church has (170) confirmed members and approximately an additional (50) adherents.

The Church is a member of the South-East Northumberland Ecumenical Area (SENEA), a federation of Methodist and United Reformed Churches, Newcastle Methodist District and the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church.

Our presbyter is Rev Antony Oakley. Jackie Laidlaw is our Children and Family Development Worker. Darleen Turner is our Office Manager.

The Governing Board is the Church Council, whose members, the trustees, during the year were:

the minister (Antony Oakley), the stewards (Paul Crook, Louise Kemp, Pam Oakley, and Vivien Scott) and elected and ex-officio members (Malcolm Kennedy, Neil Robinson, Stephen Carmichael, David Simpson, Christine Hawkins, Maureen Baker, Arlette Irving, Stephen Proom, Jane Greaves, Clive Kemp, Win Morris, Dorothy Potts, Jean Gaunt, John Carss and Sheila Clinton).

The trustees understand their responsibilities described in the document "Managing Trustees and their responsibilities" published by the Methodist Church Property Department resource division.

Church Committees and groups report to the Church Council. Church Council's function and terms of reference are described in pages 516-522 of The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, volume 2 (Methodist Publishing House 2016).

Church Council met three times via Zoom during the year. The Council's members discussed the management of the Church's activities and made decisions regarding based on their discussions.

The Annual General Meeting postponed to 5th September 2022 due to the corona virus pandemic.

Aims, Objectives and Delivery

The aims of the Church, as seen on the Charities Commission website, are:

“The provision of regular public acts of worship open to members of the Church and non-members alike. The provision of sacred space (a building) for prayer and contemplation. The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups, pastoral work, including visiting the sick”

Morpeth Methodist Church and Centre for the Community also offers modern facilities for regular meetings of clubs, societies, organisations and focus groups and for special events to the wider community. The Church reopened its premises for use by Church groups letting to outside organisations in April 2021

The accounts (see attached file) show that the payments for the use of the premises contain no element of profit nor general overheads (insurance, utilities, cleaning etc). Under normal circumstances, the fees received are approximately equal to the salaries of staff needed to service the use of the premises. During this year lettings restarted in April 2021 and our lettings income was much lower. Staff were furloughed under the national scheme. Two members of staff were made redundant in July 2021. When the Church reopened in April the hours worked by staff gradually increased with demand.

The Church seeks to pursue its mission statement by “Celebrating Christ, growing in His love, praying and acting for Him and being a Centre acting as a resource for the whole community.

The committees and groups that report to the Annual General Meeting or Church Council are:

Leadership and Stewards Group, Future Faith Future Church Group, Finance Committee, Centre Management and Property Group, Child and Family Development Worker Support Group, Pastoral Group, Worship Group, Mission Partnership and Social Events Group..

The Centre Management Working Group, on behalf of Church Council, manage the Church Centre for the Community.

The Office Manager acts as Safeguarding Officer and Health and Safety Officer. A Church member acts as Church Secretary.

The structural organisation of the Church seeks to cover three broad areas of influence:

- 1) The spiritual, pastoral and social needs of its members.
- 2) The care and development of the physical assets of the Church
- 3) The promotion of the facilities for the benefit of the wider community

Corona Virus Pandemic

The corona virus pandemic continued to have a major effect on the working of the Church. Public services in the Church resumed on 20th September 2020, stopped at the lockdown in January 2021 resuming again on 25th April 2021. Virtual reflections on Sunday mornings accessed via the Church's Facebook page and You Tube channel continued throughout the year, finishing on 29th August. These were taken by our presbyter, Rev Antony Oakley and local preachers, who are members of our congregation. Printed reflections were posted to those without access to the internet.

The Church continued to use a phone bank through this year, so that Church members were allocated to ring other members regularly. If members needed any help, this could be sourced through an internet group.

Notices were sent weekly by email and, if needed, by post.

Virtual coffee mornings were held on four days a week.

The Church reopened to lettings in July 2020, closing again at the end of October. There was limited uptake. The Church reopened to lettings on 21st April 2021 with gradual increase in lettings through the remainder of the year. Two of the office staff were furloughed and it was necessary that they were declared redundant in July 2021. The office manager and the caretaker continued to work reduced hours.

The Children's and Family Development Worker's salary is met from external grants and she continued to work as well as supporting the minister and office manager. During this year she supported the minister and the office manager in the continued work of the Church, including maintain contacts with and between Church members. Funding for this position ceased on 31st August 2021. Junior Church continued to meet

virtually with St George's Junior Church and met in person from 25th April 2021. The uniformed organisations continued to meet virtually.

Comment on the Annual Accounts

The audited accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021 are set out in the attached file.

The Church finances operate on the basis of a balanced annual budget, with outcomes monitored by the Finance Committee. Church Council approved a Reserves Policy holding reserves approximately equal to six months of normal expenditure, in accordance with the recommendation from the Methodist Connexion.

In normal circumstances, offerings and associated tax refunds comprise about 60% annual income. Receipts for use of our premises amount to about 35% annual income.

During 2020/21 receipts and expenses were affected by people's behaviour due to the lockdowns. Offerings and Gift Aid receipts were only a little lower than 2019/20. The Church received furlough payments of £16000. Income from lettings dropped further to £6153. The Church applied to Northumberland County Council and received a Covid Recovery Grant of £10000. Receipts from bequests and donations was lower.

Expenses showed an increase in the South East Northumberland Area Assessment of £13000. This follows the reduction in 2019/20 as a response to Covid. SENEA has agreed not to request payments of deferred assessments in July, August and September 2021. This has not been increased from the figure in 2018/9. Expenditure on staff salaries was £9000 lower following redundancies in February 2021 as the Centre was not open.

The year as a whole showed a deficit of £5313.

The Cash Flow in July 2021 suggested that the Church had a predicted deficit of £4000 per month. This is not sustainable. It was planned to have an appeal to members of the congregation in autumn 2021 and we expected income from lettings to grow as lockdowns eased. This will be reviewed frequently during the coming year.

Most of the expenditure items are self explanatory. By far the largest expense is the Area Assessment which is set by the Area Executive and covers the Church's central overheads, including stipends and other central expenses.

Responsibility for day to day receipts and payments and the presentation of final and interim accounts are the responsibility of the Church Treasurer, Neil Robinson.

Review of Progress and Achievements

The Church's activities in our local and wider communities were continuing. These have all been affected by the corona virus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

The Church office staff cover the Centre for the Community during working hours and weekday evenings. They provide a welcome and support to those using the centre. They organise lettings and manage the centre as well as supporting the minister and congregation.

The post of Children and Family Development Worker is supported by grants from Newcastle Methodist District, South East Northumberland Ecumenical Area and The Joicey Trust. Jackie Laidlaw continued in this post. Jackie's post is supervised by a Support Group. Before the lock down Jackie supported existing Church groups for children and young people, including Junior Church, 13+, Beavers, Cubs, Guides and Talking Ducks. She organised bimonthly Messy Church sessions for local under 5s. She ran Rainbow Rhythms music sessions. Jackie maintained her contacts virtually during the lock down. Funding for this post ended on 31st August 2021.

The Church runs groups on a Sunday for children and young people. Junior Church met when Sunday Services were held and monthly jointly with St George's Church. The 6th Morpeth Beavers, Cubs and Scouts met in the church, apart from during lockdowns.

Drop in lunches are usually held weekly on Tuesdays and the Memory Café meets fortnightly in the Church for those with cognitive impairment and their carers. Both of these activities have been well supported and appreciated by those attending. These activities were not held during lockdowns.

The Church continues its Mission Partnership with Kamuzinda Victory Christian Church, Uganda. Morpeth and Kamuzinda Churches support each other with regular prayer, meetings and communication. Collections of donations for the benefit of KVCC are held after Sunday services 3 times a year.

The Church continued to be used as a centre in Morpeth for musical events, including concerts, performances for Morpeth Music Society, organ

recitals and performances by choirs. These activities were not held during lockdowns

The Social Events Committee supports the Church with social gatherings and any surplus goes towards Church funds. Activities were not held during lockdowns.

MORPETH METHODIST CHURCH
Statement of Financial Accounts
for the period 1 September 20 - 31 August 21

	This Year	Last Year
<i>Receipts</i>		
Offerings	54,941	55,322
Gift Aid	17,683	19,999
Staff Furlough	16,084	6,576
Bank & CFB interest and investment income	67	363
Lettings	6,153	21,193
Donations - Children&familiesWorker	9,666	9,666
Grants	10,000	
Bequest	1,281	13,200
Other Receipts	1,901	5,345
Total Receipts	117,776	131,664
<i>Payments</i>		
Area assessment	58,993	45,968
Donations	1,417	1,885
Repairs and Maintenance	5,587	6,414
Insurance	2,880	3,227
Gas/Electricity	4,372	4,313
Staff Salaries	43,214	52,027
Internal organisations	692	852
Internet / computers	2,404	2,100
Bank Charges	236	586
Other Payments	3,294	4,541
Total Payments	123,089	121,913
Net income/ (expenditure)	(5313)	9751

BALANCE SHEET

	As at 31/08/2021	As at 31/08/2020
Current Reserves		
5001 : Bank Current Account - Barclays		10,382
5002 : Legacies TMCP	16,746	16,722
5003 : Endowment	5,000	5,000
5004 : Central Finance Board	6,654	26,618
5005 : Bank Current Account - CAF	25,899	890
 Total Current Reserves	 54,299	 59,612

Neil Robinson Treasurer

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

Name of Church MORPETH METHODIST No 1128303

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below*) which give me cause to believe, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

[the [the

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I ~~have~~/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner



Name of independent examiner

MR GEORGE MCCOWIE

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner Chartered Accountant

Name of firm (where appropriate)

MCCOWIE & CO ACCOUNTANTS

Address

2 GOSFORTH PARK AVE

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Post Code NE12 8G

Date 14/10/2021

* delete or circle as appropriate