



BIRSTALL METHODIST CHURCH

LEICESTERSHIRE

(Registered Charity No: 1128974)

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



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MINISTER: Rev Paula Hunt

TRUSTEES AS AT 1st SEPTEMBER 2022

Rev Paula Hunt (Chair)

Mrs Wendy Allan

Mrs Janet Bradford

Mrs Mary Downs

Mrs Alison King

Mrs Joan Pearson

Mrs Christine Tilford

Mr Andrew Webster

Mrs Ann Boettcher

Dr Christopher Brice

Mrs Shirley Harrison

Mrs Marion Liqueurish

Mrs Sylvia Taylor

Mr Richard Tinley

Mrs Susan Wheeler

Mrs Dorothy Bond

Mrs Jane Brice

Mr John Kilby

Mr Tony Moore

Mr Graham Tennant

Mr John Towson

Mrs Margaret Young

LOCATION

Birstall lies about five miles north of Leicester City centre and is one of eighteen churches which make up the Leicester Trinity Circuit of the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

MISSION

The church continues to be guided by the mission statement formulated by the Leicester North Circuit – *‘Deepening Discipleship – Making More Disciples’*.

THE CHURCH FAMILY

Membership

We are an open and inclusive organisation which values everyone who chooses to join us. Membership is open to all who wish to serve Jesus Christ and current membership stands at 96 and many friends also choose to worship with us.

Weekly Worship

This year, the church continues to hold services in person each Sunday and Wednesday morning, whilst continuing to stream the Sunday services via Zoom for those who are unable to attend. The online Circuit Service is every Sunday evening, (also on Zoom).

Baptismal Roll

Sadly there are at present no children on the baptismal roll. This is due to the fact that all children previously on the roll have reached their third birthday.

Sunday Breakfast Club

The Sunday Club meets throughout the year starting in church for a short time of All Age Worship then continuing its own activities a simple breakfast in the Coffee Shop.

The young people often contribute to worship & occasionally lead a service.

What's App continues to be the most effective & practical way of communicating & holding the group together. Ages range from 3-17 & attendance varies from 4 -12 with 3 adult leaders.

School-based work

The Circuit employed a Schools and Community Worker, who was based in Birstall and Rothley. His responsibility in Birstall was to work with young people and local schools. He had engagement with the three schools in Birstall under the administration of the Lionheart Academy Trust (3 primary schools and a secondary school). He also helped with Religious Study lessons. He had contributed to assemblies and has led workshops in the Primary Schools. He was also involved in working with the local Parish Church to deliver this work including: delivering workshops and Easter Experience.

Volunteers in this aspect of the work assisted the worker. The worker resigned at the end of August 2023.

Boys' Brigade

The boy's brigade has been running at this Methodist church for many years. We meet on Friday evenings between 7 till 9 pm. We accept children between 5 to 11 in the junior section and 11 to 18 in the company section. Our aim is to offer a safe and enjoyable environment in which the members can enjoy and take part in some or all of the activities that we offer. Our evenings include craft, indoor games, film nights, Billie bear, Christian festivals and evenings out. We charge £2 per member per evening that they attend. All our activities we try and cover the Christian teachings.

Birstall Methodist Monday Women's Group

The Monday Group meets at 7.30pm in the Coffee Shop. We have a varied programme of interesting speakers as well as 'amongst ourselves' evenings when our members contribute interesting talks, flower arranging and musical evenings etc. Our Project for 2022/23 was MND and we raised the amazing sum of £3,000. At our AGM in September 2023 the Project for 2023/24 was chosen - it is Age UK Dementia Support. We are a friendly/open group and we welcome visitors regularly (including men!).

Attendance at our meetings remained around the 25/30 mark. Thank you to the team for making the Coffee Shop a warm welcoming venue for our meetings. We are pleased that the committee work as a team and are supported by regular members. Details of our weekly programme are advertised in the Church Notices and on the various Notice boards around Church and we are always pleased to welcome new members.

Thursday Group

We were very actively involved with the annual Church Festival, both with decorating, making and baking, and manning stalls. It is something we all very much enjoy and look forward to.

We do not meet between the end of June until the start of September. We are still continuing to welcome new members which is quite gratifying, especially since moving our meetings to the afternoons instead of the evenings, which in turn has introduced more people to the coffee shop and luncheon club.

The Pastoral Committee

Our pastoral visitors keep in touch with church members and also with regular church attendees by home visits, telephone, e-mail and at church and church meetings. Pastoral visitors are a unique and essential part of the Methodist Church and try and support the minister by keeping in touch with the church membership, particularly the elderly, bereaved and infirm.

Safeguarding – Alison King

Birstall Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Birstall Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

Birstall Methodist Church has a Safeguarding Officer actively in post with more than 20 years' experience in safeguarding people. As a Church we will respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern which is raised that any person has been harmed, whether in the church or in another context.

Birstall Methodist Church has a current and up to date Safeguarding Policy which is on display at all times on the Church noticeboard for all to have access to it. The Safeguarding Policy details how our Church will safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults who use our premises and provide a safe and supportive community. It is reviewed and updated annually, or at any other time when the need arises.

Birstall Methodist Church has taken steps to make sure those who work with children and vulnerable people and any who perform roles of responsibility or leadership within our Church are fully DBS checked to a satisfactory standard and have also completed the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their role. This is regularly monitored and refresher training completed at the time required.

We affirm, encourage and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us at Birstall Methodist Church to safeguard the people who use our premises.

WORLD SERVICE, MISSION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Lunch Club

The lunch club has continued to offer a weekly meeting for older residents of Birstall to meet socially and to enjoy a two-course meal. Amongst various benefits, the club provides social interaction, nutrition and mental stimulation to its members, for whom the weekly meeting is an essential highlight of their week. Whilst the membership has changed, the number using the club has remained consistently around 38 and the meal is given on average to 34 people a week, including some of the helpers. The club runs for 45 weeks of the year and special occasions such as the coronation or Valentine's day have been enthusiastically celebrated.

Birstall Methodist Coffee Shop

The Coffee Shop was mainly able to open fully the past twelve months. As a standard we open Monday to Saturday 10-12noon bank holidays excluding, offering a range of beverages and home baked donated goods supplemented by some bought in bakery items. All sold at a nominal cost of £1. People may linger and chat as long as they like with no pressure to purchase further items, we do offer free refills of beverages. Our Prices have remained the same, a goodly amount of excess income after running expenses, (milk, sugar, coffee etc,) is paid into Church funds. All workers are volunteers. All have had a training on basic food handling and hygiene.

During the worst of the winter months we opened earlier as a "warm space," doors opened at 9.30 and serving free refreshments until noon and it proved very popular.

Every day all the tables are in use, sometimes two sittings as people come and go. Mainly people just sit and enjoy the company for as long as they like.

We do also have the opportunity to overspill into the church lounge as needed. Mondays and Fridays a group of mums from the playgroup for children with additional needs like to gather in there, it's a bit of a self support group. Alternate Wednesdays we have a dementia group in there whilst their carers now sit and chat in the coffee shop knowing they can safely have a break.

We have a book swap library, jigsaws to swap or do on our special mat, puzzle books and magazines. We are just about to start a "craft in the coffee shop" in the corner on Thursdays where people can bring their own project, (some already do, knitting, crochet,) or dabble in a new craft with mini tester kits.

We have turned into a donation point for the local food bank, it just happened when people realised we had the necessary contacts and word spread. At holiday times (Christmas, Easter etc) people are very generous and we pile it up in the adjacent quiet room.

We are dog friendly, (free dog snacks on the counter, water bowl,) much appreciated by the owners as we are very close to the country park walks. Also much enjoyed by those customers unable to have a pet of their own anymore.

Being able to use some of the excess comfortable padded material and wooden armed church seats has been very successful, no more hard plastic! A regular spray of waterproofing keeps them looking bright and protects against the inevitable spillages. They are also easier for less able visitors to rise and fall on. The donation of new varnished wood topped tables with these multi-coloured chairs makes the room more welcoming. The tables are still trestle by necessity, as the room has other users some afternoons or evenings, but are much sturdier, a bit smaller and a lot less utilitarian looking. They are also easier to maneuver to one side by other users.

World Church

The total amount raised for World Church in the year 2022-23 was £303.50. Thank you for the ever more vital support for our brothers and sisters in the world through your generous giving to the World Mission Fund.

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer was held on 3rd March 2023 at the Methodist Church, using materials prepared by the women of Taiwan.

Special Needs Playgroup

The group continues to grow and now has 22 children as well as three paid workers.

Action for Children

Here are some highlights of the fundraising by the Leicester Support Group for the period 1/9/22 to 31/8/23. We were able to arrange entertainment by the Little BIG Band as we had done before Covid and our supporters in Birstall, Syston and Anstey were keen to support fundraising. Consequently, during this period we raised the amazing sum of £2089.76. The Home Collecting Boxes raised £411.22 for the calendar year to the end of December 2022; this is lower than previous annual totals because we now have fewer box holders. However, we are grateful to people who continue to support the charity and help to maintain the valuable work that is being provided by Action for Children.

FINANCE

The year before last's accounts (2021/22) showed a deficit of £8,000 (but not including loan repayments was a more modest £6,800). This year's accounts at first glance show an apparently alarming deficit of just over £19,000, but this includes a large one-off loan repayment of £20,000 on completion of the Walk in the Light project (as well as the usual £1,200 loan repayment at £100/month).

Income from personal giving has increased by 12% on 2021/22 for we the church is very grateful, and Letting incomes have continued to recover from the pandemic, doubling from £8,000 in 2021/22 to £16,000 in 2022/23.

Donations from Church Groups, particularly the Coffee Shop, have also remained strong and are an important part of our finances.

The small surplus in 2022/23 is especially noteworthy when it is taken into account that Expenditure increased by around £10,000 in 2022/23 (not including Donations to other organisations and loan repayments). Some of this was in energy costs, which rose by 14% year on year, but mainly was due to one-off repairs and decorating bills.

The outstanding loan amount at the end of August 2023 was £21,900.

Fund Raising

The Christmas Festival in November 2023 was again a great success, raising nearly £5,800 for the church and just over £600 was also raised on the door for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

RESERVES POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

The Birstall Methodist Church requires financial reserves to (i) fulfil its commitment to outreach work, (ii) to fund its regular operating costs and (iii) for repairs and maintenance of the building.

2. OUR RESERVES

Ideally, we aim to hold in reserve sufficient money in our general funds to cover six month's expenditure i.e. £37,000, which is made up of expenditure categories as follows:

- Circuit Assessment
- Staff Wages
- Premises Expenditure
- Heat and Light

In general terms we very rarely achieve this ideal because regular income through Sunday collections, Standing Orders and Letting over a six month period are not sufficient to cover this expenditure. The Church relies increasingly upon donations from Church Groups and other sources and Fund Raising events to supplement its regular income.

At the end of August 2023 £15,433 was held in the church's reserves, and nearly £7,759 in our current accounts. Combined this was just under £23,200, while our outstanding loan to the Circuit was £21,900.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Reserves Policy is monitored by the Church Treasurer who will submit a report to the Church Finance & Property Committee at its spring meeting. The Finance & Property Committee will review the Reserves Policy and recommend the changes necessary to the Church Council.

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	Birstall Methodist Church	
		2022-2023
Income	Opening Balance	42,260.39
	Sunday Collections	7676.73
	Standing Orders	27632.89
	Gift Aid	8830.18
	Special Services	N/A
	Donations From Church Groups	8236.22
	Other Donations and appeals	3460.53
	Bequests	2890.72
	Fundraising	9174.29
	Lettings	16108.00
	Furlough payments from HMRC	0.00
	Interest.	914.84
	Grants	2850.00
	Total Income	87,774.40
Expenditure		
	Circuit Assessment	38,769.17
	Staff Wages	8,635.86
	Heating Water Light	6,754.51
	Premises Expenses	3,688.04
	Telephone/internet	575.70
	Photocopy/Printing	0.00
	Computer Equipment	0.00
	Repairs	13,072.12
	fundraising costs	0.00
	Licenses	715.17
	insurance	2,582.46
	Donations	7,556.83
	Corrections	100.00
	ADS Accountants	288.00
	Walk in the Light	500.00
	Miscellaneous	2,404.69
	Repayment of loan	21200.00
	dev fund	0.00
	Total Expenditure	106,842.55
	Surplus/Defecit	-19,068.15
	Closing Balance	23,192.24
	Bank Accounts (on 31st Aug)	
	Barclays	2,901.12
	NatWest	4,857.89
	Central Finance Board	15,433.23
	TMCP	
	Unreconciled Chq's	-117.28
	Total	23,074.96
	Balance Y/N	
	Funds	
	General	23,192.24
	Total	-19,068.15
Within these funds Walk of Light Balance		0.00
Loan from Trinity Church		-21,800.00

Name of Church BIRSTALL METHODIST CHURCH No 1128974

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 that 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.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to 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 of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner DWS

Name of independent examiner Denise Wymre

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner Book keeper

Name of firm (where appropriate)

Address 46, Highfield Rd, Ardby, Leicester

Post Code LE6 0A4

Date 18 Dec 2023

* delete or circle as appropriate