



# **BIRSTALL METHODIST CHURCH**

**LEICESTERSHIRE**

(Registered Charity No: 1128974)

## **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**



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(Registered Charity No: 1128974)

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**MINISTER:**

**Rev Paula Hunt**

**TRUSTEES AS AT 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

Rev Paula Hunt (Chair), Rev Liam Dacre-Davis, Rev Frances Ballantyne

Mrs Wendy Allan	Mr Andrew Biggins	Mrs Ann Boettcher
Mrs Dorothy Bond	Mrs Janet Bradford	Dr Christopher Brice
Mrs Jane Brice	Mrs Mary Downs	Mrs Shirley Harrison
Mrs Alison King	Mrs Marion Liqueurish	Mr Tony Moore
Mrs Joan Pearson	Mrs Sylvia Taylor	Mr Graham Tennant
Mrs Christine Tilford	Mr Richard Tinley	Mrs Julie Tinley
Mr John Towson		
Mr Andrew Webster	Mrs Susan Wheeler	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 88 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.

### **Boys' Brigade**

The boys 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.

Contact details: 07773780476 after 6pm, bb2ndleics@yahoo.com

### **Birstall Methodist Monday Women's Group**

The Monday Group meets at 7.30pm (Term Time only). We have an open door Policy for visitors to join us (including men). We have a varied programme of Speakers, Demonstrations, Slide Shows etc. and once a month we have 'Amongst Ourselves nights'; arranged by our members. Our Project for 2023/24 was 'Age UK Dementia Support' which is very dear to our hearts; and a cheque for £2,000 was presented to Lisa, the Representative of that Charity. The Project chosen at the AGM for 2024/25 is Mesothelioma UK (a Cancer caused by exposure to Asbestos). Also at our 2024 AGM we welcomed a new Programme Secretary and extra help with fundraising activities. We have 34 'paid up' members and we are thrilled to have welcomed new members during 2023/24.

We advertise our Group via Church Notices, Birstall Post and Social Media. If you would like to know anything more about our Group then why not come along on a Monday evening at 7.30pm? You can be assured of a warm welcome.

### **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 People at Birstall Methodist Church**

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 currently has a Safeguarding Officer actively in post with 25 years experience of 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 any other 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 during the year when the need arises.

Birstall Methodist Church has taken steps to make sure those who work with children, 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.

### **Other groups**

As well as the above church affiliated groups the church is pleased to host a large number of Community groups, including a Bible Study Group, the Friends of Belgrave Cemetery, the Birstall Reading Group, LOROS (Birstall BAGS), Highcliffe Harmony (choir) and many others.

## **WORLD SERVICE, MISSION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD**

### **The Lunch Club**

As in previous years, the lunch club has continued to offer a weekly two course meal with tea & coffee and provides valuable social interaction and mental stimulation to its members, for whom the weekly meeting is an essential highlight of their week. Special occasions such as Christmas and Valentines Day are celebrated well. There has been little change in the membership and the number using the club has remained around 38 with the weekly meal being provided on average to 34. The club has made use of available grants, without which the club would either run at a loss or have consider increasing its prices. The main risk is the rising age of volunteers and new helpers would be most welcome.

### **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 10-12 noon (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 9.30am 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 run a "craft in the coffee shop" on two Thursdays each month where people can bring their own projects or dabble in new crafts.

We continue to accept donations for the local food bank. 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.

### **World Church**

The total amount raised for World Church in the year 2023-24 was £299.12. 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 Friday 1st March 2024 at St James Church. The service was prepared by the women of Palestine the previous year. It was based on Ephesians 4 1-7 "I beg you, bear with one another in love." It was a very beautiful service. The situation in the region had worsened and we included extra prayers for peace. Please keep praying.

### **Birstall Playgroup for Children with additional needs**

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 1/9/23 to 31/8/24. During the year we raised funds mainly through entertainments by the Little BIG Band and an Action for Children Weekend at Anstey Methodist Church. Our friends in Birstall, Syston and Anstey have been very keen and generous in their support. Consequently, during this period we raised the sum of £1050.

In addition, the Home Collecting Boxes raised £626.53 for the calendar year to the end of December 2023. We were delighted that this was a significant increase on the previous year. 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**

Last year's accounts at first glance showed an apparently alarming deficit of just over £19,000, but this included 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 decreased slightly on 2022/23, after having increased by 12% on 2021/22, but Letting incomes rose by enough to cover the shortfall.

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

Overall total income was up a couple of thousand pounds on 2022/23, mainly due to a large bequest from Susan Warnes estate (over £10,000), which has been set aside for future repair work.

While everyday expenses such as utilities, staff wages, licences and insurance have continued to rise, the circuit assessment was lower this year, as was the overall repair bill.

Another £5,400 has been paid off the circuit loan, and a one-off payment of £5,000 towards the SNPG pension debt (this is under review and may require a final adjustment payment later).

Overall the church had a small surplus this year of just under a thousand pounds. This was without a Gift Aid claim having been made since the end of December 2023. A claim for January to August 2024 has added £5,021 to the 2024/25 accounts.

The outstanding loan amount at the end of August 2024 was £16,500.

### **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 2024 £13,337 was held in the church's reserves, and nearly £10,500 in our current accounts. Combined this was just over £24,200, while our outstanding loan to the Circuit was £16,500.

### **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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To 30th August 2024

**2023-2024**

Income	Opening Balance	£	23,192.24	
	Sunday Collections	£	6,620.56	
	Standing Orders	£	27,394.53	
	Gift Aid	£	4,181.35	
	Special Services	£	-00	
	Donations From Church Groups	£	10,649.00	
	Other Donations and appeals	£	-00	
	Bequests	£	13,852.51	
	Fundraising	£	6,683.02	
	Lettings	£	17,653.50	
	SNPG rent	£	-00	
	Furlough payments from HMRC	£	-00	
	Interest.	£	1,137.58	
	Grants (Heating Project '24)	£	664.00	
	Photocopying Repayments & Piano sale	£	915.24	
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>89,751.29</b>	
Expenditure				
	Circuit Assessment	£	37,351.54	
	Staff Wages	£	9,450.11	
	Heating Water Light	£	6,945.59	
	Premises Expenses	£	418.04	
	Telephone/internet	£	529.26	
	Photocopy/Printing	£	53.13	
	Computer Equipment			
	Repairs	£	11,871.76	
	fundraising costs			
	Licenses	£	770.28	
	insurance	£	2,764.78	
	Donations	£	7,267.76	
	Corrections	-		
	ADS Accountants	£	288.00	
	Walk in the Light (ended)	£	-00	
	Miscellaneous	£	5,653.59	
	Payment of loan	£	5,400.00	
	dev fund			
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>88,763.84</b>	
	<b>Surplus/Defecit</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>987.45</b>	
	Closing Balance	£	24,179.69	CORRECT
	Bank Accounts (on 31st Aug)			
	Barclays		8,161.27	
	NatWest		2,681.15	
	Central Finance Board		13,337.27	
	TMCP			
	Unreconciled Chq's			
	Total	£	24,179.69	CORRECT
	Balance Y/N			



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 for concern 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. No special 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 Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Committee of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the statement of accounts date.

Signature of independent examiner Denise Wynn

Name of independent examiner DENISE WYNN

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner .....

Name of firm (where appropriate) .....

Address 46, Highfield Rd, Gaby

Leicester Post Code LE6 0QU

Date 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 25

\* delete or circle as appropriate