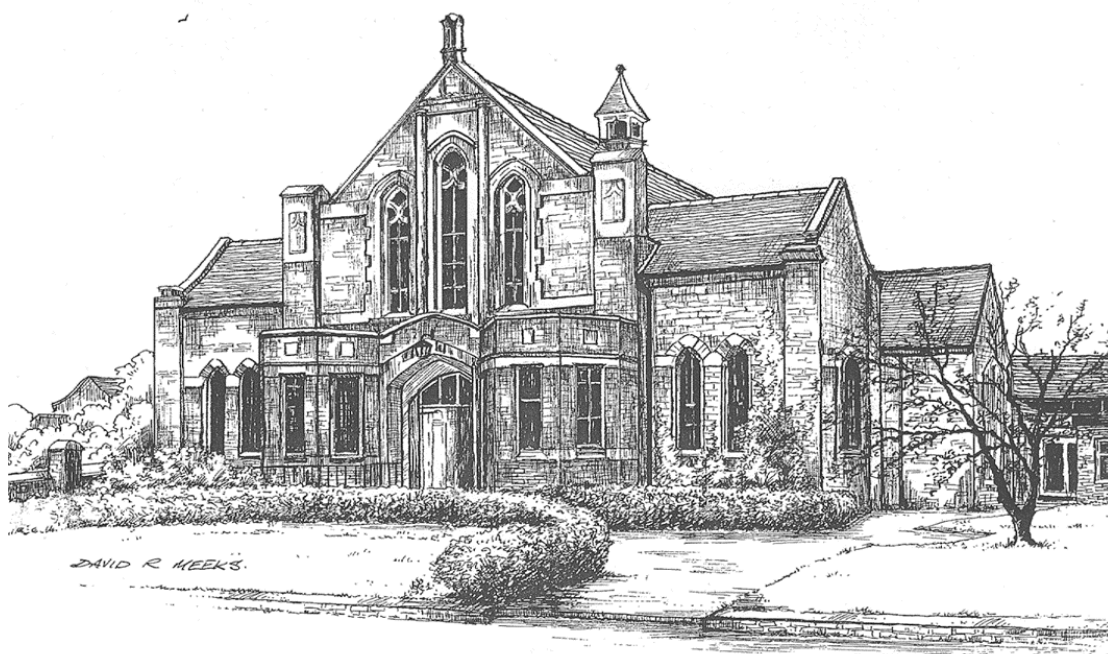




Bicester Methodist Church



Annual Reports May 2024 – May 2025

Presented to the General Church Meeting
18th May 2025

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Treasurer's Report for General Church Meeting May 2025

Last financial year 2023/24

Accounts have been independently reviewed and were approved by Church Council in April. They are now ready to be uploaded to the Charities Commission Website.

Current financial year 2024/25

The profit & loss statement for the first 8 months of the current financial year shows a net loss to the end of April of -£3,424. While rental income is £8.5k higher than at this point last year, which is encouraging, the offerings are down by £2.5k.

However, the main reason for the loss to date are the significant, and very necessary, maintenance projects undertaken this year - new lighting in the main hall and replacement worktops in the kitchen. This is in addition to the increased costs relating to heating and lighting, circuit assessment, wages and day-to-day property maintenance.

We are also committed to the improvements to the AV system in church and the hall toilets. We have reserve funds to cover these expenses as required.

Charitable giving

The donations from church funds last year were:

£200 each to Methodist Fund for Property; All We Can; MHA, Release International and £150 to Bible Society.

We held collections for:

Christian Aid; JMA; Action For Children; Oxfordshire Homeless Pathways. Sunday refreshments collections amounted to £422 which we sent to Tearfund as agreed at the General church meeting last year.

Which organisations do we want to support financially this year?

Val Pritchard

Christian Aid

£420 was raised by the Church community for Christian Aid week 2024

£190 was collected for the arvest Appeal 2024

We will be using the Christian Aid Worship ideas in the morning service on 18th May.

Beryl Mann

Property Report

I am happy to report that the hall kitchen was successfully refurbished with a new stainless steel worktop, which should ensure that users of the hall can prepare food in accordance with food hygiene regulations. Thanks should be noted to Andy Lewis for his hard work in clearing up the mess made during these works.

Future issues and projects.

1/ The installation of TV screens within the Church Building, this project is being led by Andy L

2/ Following considerable efforts from our Minister and myself the church lawn mower will soon be repaired under warranty.

3/ Costs have been sort to lower some of the church lighting to enable bulbs to be changed when required, since tower scaffolding is required at present at considerable cost.

4/ Costs are being sort for extra smoke alarms to be installed to allow uniformed organisations to arrange sleepovers to take place, as advised by fire office

The Church and the hall building is getting increasing older with the ever present challenges this brings; coupled with the increased usage of the halls the whole footprint of the Church is becoming more difficult and costly to maintain.

Working groups have not taken place this year, as attendance at previously arranged sessions has dwindled making it challenging to complete work that require multiple people. Currently there are no plans to recommence working parties.

The first walk round fire check has resulted in the need for quite a few improvements and annual fire drill will be coming soon – so be warned!

Richard Barber

The Church Garden

Generally the garden is no problem, but there are some concern about the two large trees at the front of church which we feel may require some professional attention due to overhanging branches. Currently the lawnmower is awaiting new parts which will be covered under its warrenty. The box hedges were removed last year as they had 'box blight' and the many weeds removed from the flower beds by each side of the door. Many thanks to Lynn and Lynne plus other volunteers who work hard to look after the flowers, shrubs and lawn.

JB & LG

Pastoral Report for Church GCM

Since the previous GCM the pastoral team has met on two occasions, the 11th September 2024 and the 12th of February 2025. The following report details our progress. The meetings were led by Rev'd Jocelyn and were well attended and both enjoyable and productive. As usual all members on the Pastoral List were reviewed with reference to each group's pastoral link person. We now have members living in Arncliffe covered by one of the pastoral team. We are confident that all our members are offered pastoral care that is such a vital part of our Christian calling. Membership tickets were given out by the team in February and March.

At the meeting it was raised that the Memorial Book (that can be seen in its glass fronted case just to the right of the lectern) was not in current use. With the help of Mary Brydon, Rev Jocelyn is exploring a new arrangement for its updating.

On the 4th of May Rev'd Jocelyn led a Confirmation and Membership Service. We welcomed Roland, Yvonne and Gordan into to membership and our church family. The date for the next Pastoral Meeting is planned for the 11th of June.

Angela Peters - Pastoral Secretary

Safeguarding Annual Summary Report

Safeguarding Policy

The safeguarding policy is normally reviewed at the Spring meeting of Church Council. Rev'd Jocelyn reported at the 3rd April 2025 church council meeting that the policy had been reviewed recently and no amendments were required, so the current policy remains in place. It will be reviewed again in Spring 2026.

Key church Safeguarding Contacts:

Silva Ninan, Church Safeguarding Officer
Helen Evans, Circuit Safeguarding Officer
Sally Wan, District Safeguarding Officer
Rev'd. Jocelyn Bennett, Minister in Pastoral Charge
Rev'd. Sara Cliff, District Circuit Superintendent (on sabbatical)

Safeguarding training

Those who require training are identified based on the role they have in the church.

Safeguarding Training sessions held in last year:

07Jun 2024 - Foundation training held in Brackley – 4 attended from BMC

21Mar 2025 - Foundation training held in Bicester Methodist Church, 2-4pm to allow those involved with Open Doors café to attend. Training by Rev'd. Sara Cliff and Helen Evans.

8 BMC members attended with only 1 member still requiring training.

10 Open Doors Friday lunch volunteers took part.

Circuit/District safeguarding team have advised that Open Doors volunteers do not require DBS checks, but it was advisable for them to undertake safeguarding training as they may come into contact with vulnerable people.

DBS checks

12 DBS checks conducted in the last year for various roles by Helen Evans, Circuit Safeguarding Officer. All DBS checks are now up to date.

Safeguarding training and DBS records are kept by BMC SGO to reflect who has been trained, who requires training, who has and requires DBS checks. These are cross checked with Helen Evans, District SGO.

Groups who use the building

As part of hiring church rooms / hall, the hirers are required to sign up to the BMC SG policy. The booking / lease states that:

Section 8. SAFEGUARDING

The Hirer confirms that the Hirer has received a copy of the Safeguarding Policy, has an understanding of it, and undertakes to follow it or comparable equivalent guidelines and procedures (such as Scouting and Guiding national safeguarding policy) for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Building.

This signifies that unless the leasing group have their own SG policy and process, the BMC church SG policy is to be followed and complied with. Church led or affiliated groups are covered by the BMC SG policy.

Access to the premises

At the Church Council on 3rd April, it was noted that a few user group keyholders are regularly accessing the premises outside their agreed rental hours. This poses a potential risk if they are on the premises when children or vulnerable adults are also in the building. All user groups were sent a reminder that they are not permitted to access the premises outside their agreed hours under the terms of their hire agreement. They must give advance notice if such access will be required, including the proposed time and the purpose of the visit, so that we authorise it, alert other users who may be due to be in the building at the time, and arrange for them to be supervised whilst on the premises if appropriate. Groups were also reminded that doors must not be left open whilst they are on the premises, to comply with our safeguarding and fire safety policies.

Silva Ninan, BMC Safeguarding Officer

Worship Report

Morning Services

Numbers at morning services are normally between 50 and 60, with a high of 72 on Easter Sunday. It is estimated that about 80 people attend worship at least once a month.

Rev Jocelyn leads our worship every other week with a few variations. Because of a change in Circuit policy, Alan Peters now leads our worship more frequently than other local preachers, every 4-6 weeks.

Music is provided mainly by our small band of Sue Morris, Vanessa Grimwade and David Meeks, to whom we extend heartfelt thanks. They have been assisted by John Boxall on the organ, and Jan Sandy has also stood in when Sue has been away. Both David and John have recently had health problems which have prevented them from playing – we wish them good health and hope they will soon be back in action.

Because there are less local preachers available than in previous years, we have had “Own Arrangement” services from time to time. These have been led by members of the Leadership Team and have taken a variety of forms including Celtic Worship, sermons on video, and discussion services based on the “Methodist Way of Life” material.

Evening Services

The normal pattern of evening services is:

1st Sunday of the month: Celtic Worship led by Andy Lewis

2nd Sunday: Bible study or other topical study led by Christine Townsend

3rd Sunday: Prayer for Persecuted Christians led by Andy Lewis

4th Sunday: No service

However this pattern varies occasionally if Andy or Christine have other commitments

The numbers attending vary from 4-8.

Celtic worship is based on the liturgy of the Northumbria Community

Recent series led by Christine have included studies on maturing in faith, and the stories behind hymns.
Prayer for Persecuted Christians mainly uses material from Open Doors and Release International.

Andy Lewis

Sunday and Door Stewards Report

The Sunday and Door Steward teams operate to support the smooth running of BMC Sunday services and provide invaluable support to the attending minister and congregation.

The Sunday Stewards are -

Alan Peters
Christine Townsend (also Church steward)
Silva Ninan (non-church member)
Sue Thurley (also Church steward)
Val Pritchard (also Church steward)

Chi Ho has stepped down from his role as a Sunday Steward in August 2024. We are thankful for his contribution to date. Christine Townsend volunteered to become a Sunday steward starting May 2025.

The Door Stewards are -

Doreen James
Eileen Trimble
Henry Cooper
Janet Sears
Jeanette Upton
Jenny Jones
Julian Keen
Mary Brydon

Barbara Daughters & Beryl Mann stepped down from their Door Steward roles in Dec 2024.

Barbara has moved away from the area and we are thankful for her contribution to date. Due to health issues, Beryl, is currently not able to support but plans to do so in the future.

Doreen James joined as a Door steward in Jun 2024.

The Sunday and Door steward list above does not include those who cover serving refreshments at the end of the service and the communion stewards. The quarterly rota is compiled and issued by Silva Ninan.

Silva Ninan

Report on Flowers in Church

I have continued to ensure that flowers are provided in Church each week, ably assisted by Mary Brydon who looks after the Memory Book and the flowers in that corner, and who helps out when I am on holiday.

I am very grateful to several Church members who often give me a donation towards flowers, and also those who wish to provide flowers in memory of their loved ones.

We were kindly given a donation from Grace Kill's estate of £200 towards flowers as she always loved to see them, which has helped out when doing the special occasions such as Easter.

We also occasionally have flowers left in Church from the Open Doors lunches, and the various groups that meet in Church now really appreciate seeing the flowers.

I was also pleased to be able to arrange the flowers for a Wedding held in the Church last October, even though that was quite hard work.

Anne Black

Wives Club Report September 2023- July 2024

After the summer break our meetings started on 11th September with tea, cake and a Quiz. The following week we welcomed our new minister, Jocelyn, who led the AGM. A varied weekly programme of interesting speakers followed.

Margery showed us the many door wreaths she had made for all seasons of the year. Alan spoke of his adventures and Bird Watching in Peru. Members shared Folk Sayings and Proverbs. Our Christmas Lunch was at Kirtlington Golf Club. In March we enjoyed a visit from the Launton Handbell Ringers. Janet told us about the Foodbank. In June we visited a garden in Islip with a delicious tea provided by Averil.

Wives Club meets weekly in the Primary Room, at 2.30pm on Mondays. Excluding Bank Holidays and the School Holidays.

Sadly at the end of the year we lost our dear and faithful member Linda. For many years Linda had been our Tea Hostess, formerly with Mavis and then Barbara. We miss her.

If our speakers don't charge a fee we give them money for their chosen charity. £500 has been given to the church and £50 in memory of Linda.

Attendance is around 20 and new members always welcome.

Joan Francis

Open Doors Café Report

The Open Doors Café turns surplus food to tasty meals for everyone. Our meals are made from in-date surplus food and are prepared and served by our team of over 40 committed volunteers. Our ingredients come from donations from local businesses, community groups, the Oxford Food Hub and even from our volunteers' allotments. We have been operating in Bicester on Friday lunchtimes since 2022 and we feed between 90 and 120 people each week.

Everyone is welcome at the Café and there is no charge for food, although we do accept donations. The menu is changed every week to best use the surplus food

available and provide variety for our guests. Two choices of hot main are offered which always includes a vegetarian option. This is followed by a dessert and tea or coffee.

Many people don't just come for the food. The Café is a great place to meet old friends and make new ones. Our designated 'chatty' table is where we encourage people to connect and has proved very popular. We also offer a takeaway option for guests who are less comfortable with the dining-in experience.

Being based centrally in Bicester allows us to maximise our impact and we get frequent drop-ins as well as guests from the other charities operating in the building. We have been able to host representatives from Age UK and Citizen's Advice to assist our guests with concerns with costs of living. We are always looking for new things to add to improve our guests' experience. In school holidays, children's arts and crafts activities are run and recently we have also been able to host music concerts giving our guests the chance to hear some of the talented musicians from the local area. We repeated our special Christmas Day event in 2024, which was a resounding success again with carols, crackers and community.

Some feedback from our guests:

"Excellent service, lovely meal, nice and hot, beautifully presented, lovely company, volunteers are very friendly and chatty... Keep up the brilliant work!"

"Welcoming, happy to come in on my own. Cannot beat service, all volunteers very helpful."

"The food was really lovely today and it gets better every week."

"One big happy family, come and join us, all are welcome"

"Very friendly, everyone at the tables talks to each other. Great choice of food"

"It's a pleasant and cheerful place to come"

"The food speaks for itself"

Emma Salisbury

Annual report from Café 103 for Bicester Methodist Church

Café 103 is a charity and outreach of Orchard Baptist Church in Bicester and has been operating for just over 3 years. We have grown in numbers and outgrown two homes. We are now extremely grateful to be using the foyer and main church at Bicester Methodist Church every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

We are part of the Renew Wellbeing Partnership, offering a place where it is 'ok not to be ok'. We provide beverages, homemade cake, company and craft activities. We do not charge but accept donations. We also stop during the session for a time of prayer which guests are invited to join in with. To my surprise and delight many of our guests do.

Café 103 is staffed by one part time paid manager and a team of 27 volunteers, who help at the sessions, bake cakes and help us set up.

Our Café users tend to be older and/or have ongoing chronic mental health issues, learning difficulties, are neurodivergent, are lonely or physically disabled, homeless, prison leavers or have addictions. We have between 20 and 30 guest at each session.

We have a core group of regular users with others coming for a few weeks and moving on. A real sense of community has grown up with guests offering mutual support and caring to one another. Real friendships which now extend outside of the Café have grown up.

Over the last year we have tried to respond to the needs of our guests, by hosting a Citizens Advice session on Tuesdays which is also open to the wider public, also we're a warm space and a safe space. One thing our guests asked for was a trip to the seaside, we were able to take a coach to Bournemouth thanks to funding from Bicester Village.

Cathy Bishop

Annual Reports - Guiding at BMC

1st Crockwell Rainbows (12 Rainbows; 2 Leaders; 1 Young Leader)

We continued to operate at full capacity all year, with a waiting list. Activities during the year have included crafts, games and varied badge work. We joined other Rainbow groups to celebrate Thinking Day in February. The Rainbows took part in the annual Remembrance Sunday service at BMC.

2nd Bicester (BMSS) Brownies

The Brownies have been busy all year, with a full and varied programme of activities, including badge work. Numbers remain high with upto 25 members in the unit.

2nd Bicester (BMSS) Guides (25 Guides; 4 Leaders; 1 Young Leader)

Activities during the year included badge work, crafts, cooking etc. We took part in the Remembrance Sunday service and parade and joined other Guide units to take part in an It's a Knockout challenge evening.

Otmoor Rangers (7 Rangers; 2 Leaders)

Sadly, our numbers have fallen during the past year, and are set to fall further with older members heading off to university in September. Our activities are chosen by the Rangers themselves and included working towards badges, cooking, crafts and games.

20 members of the Guide and Ranger units spent a weekend at camp together in July.

All of the Girlguiding groups meeting at BMC continue to be grateful for the support of the church.

Val Pritchard

7th Bicester Scout Group

All groups are full now with a waiting list for all scout sections- Beaver's, Cubs and Scouts. The meetings takes place on a Wednesday and Friday evening's.

The group runs a variety of actives from cooking, model making, map reading to navigation within the countryside. The whole group has participated in a number of community events during the year such as the Armed Forces day and assisting with the gardening in the community Garden.

However, the most popular items are just allowing the group to run energy off playing games, explore different outdoor activities, such as axe throwing, camp fires and keeping the leaders sleep deprived!

The scouts groups are running a number of camps this year in the area and are off for a overseas camp to Rotterdam in the Netherlands in August, using a variety of public transport methods which will be interesting for all leaders taking part (one person indicated it was like herding cat's but much louder)

Successes & activities are several Beavers, Cubs and Scouts gaining their Chief Scout Award, packing Christmas Shoe boxes for Samaritans over Christmas.

The scouts took part in the letter writing to a VE Veteran as part of the 80th VE celebrations.

7th Bicester Scout Group thanks the Church for its support and use of the hall as a base.

If you require any further information, please contact Richard Barber Lead Scout volunteer.

Richard Barber

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

Bicester Methodist	Church
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED

Saturday, August 31, 2024

Circuit	Circuit no.	3/06
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Registered Charity - Charity Registration number

1130238

If not a registered charity His Majesty's Revenue and
Customs Gift Aid number

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Minister:

Reverend Jocelyn Bennett

Church Stewards:

Susan Thurley
Valerie Pritchard

Treasurer:

Valerie Pritchard

SECTION A			Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
			£	£	£	£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note				
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	2	52,584		52,584	55,588
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	3	4,084		4,084	2,775
a4	Lettings	4	38,041		38,041	28,960
a5	Other receipts	5	8,030	12,935	20,965	21,182
	Refundable key deposits					40
a6	TOTAL RECEIPTS		102,739	12,935	115,674 (a7)	108,545

SECTION B						
b1	PAYMENTS					
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share		57,048		57,048	52,824
b3	Donations	6	1,025	600	1,625	1,172
b4	Repairs and Maintenance	7	13,150		13,150	50,803
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	8	12,284		12,284	12,368
b6	Youth work & administration	9	10,675		10,675	7,717
b7	Other payments	10	2,335	3,438	5,773	2,151
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS		96,517	4,038	100,555 (b9)	127,035

SECTION C						
c1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	6,222	8,897	15,119	(18,490)
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		75,249	27,245	102,494 (c6)	120,984
c3	Sub total	(c1+c2)	81,471	36,142	117,613	102,494
c4	Transfers and adjustments		(40)	(40)	(80) (c7)	
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	81,431	36,102	117,533 (c8)	102,494 (c6)

Check Res+Unres total	1
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c6 totals	1
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SECTION D				
FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS				
d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures above)		£	£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year		0	0
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations		1,592	1,442
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations		1,582	1,442
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	(d1+d2-d3)	10	0

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL**SECTION E****Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Church accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Church Council/Church Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross income and expenditure totals of the Church. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the District and connected District Organisations.

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances	
c1 Tuesday Fellowship	284	152	132		2,159	2,291	
c2 BMC Wives Club	2,395	2,314	81		867	948	
c3			0			0	
c4			0			0	
c5			0			0	
c6			0				
c7			0			0	
c8 Sub total of Internal Organisations funds	2,679	2,466	213	0	3,026 (e11)	3,239 (e12)	Check 1
c9 Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	115,674 (a7)	100,555 (b9)	15,119	(c7)	102,494 (c6)	117,613 (c8)	Check 1
c10 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	118,353	103,021	15,332	0	105,520 (x)	120,852 (y)	Check 1
Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward		TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS				

SECTION F**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES****CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2024**

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES	
f1 Cash in hand	30	30	
f2 Bank Current Account	33,571	34,682	
f3 Bank Deposit Account	726	735	
f4 Central Finance Board	68,167	82,176	
f5 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes			
f6 Other funds			
f7 SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	102,494 (c6)	117,623 (c8)	
f8 Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	3,026 (e11)	3,239 (e12)	Opening Closing
f9 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	105,520 (x)	120,862 (y)	Check bails 1 0

SECTION G**OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES**

	At 1 September 2023	At 31 August 2024
g1 Investments (include Endowments)	1,303	1,303
g2 Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)		
g3 Other Assets		
g4 Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5 Other Liabilities - returnable key deposits	450	450

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board

f5 Include only Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line f5)

Name of Church No.....

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2024 have been prepared from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of treasurer Date.....

Name and address of treasurer

..... Post Code.....

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 were/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on

Signature of the Chair of the meeting

Name of the Chair of the meeting Date

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Bicester Methodist Church

Charity Number 1130238

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Bicester Methodist Church for the year ended 31 August 2024 set out on pages 1 to 3. As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Church's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

* delete or circle as appropriate

Name of Church No

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.

~~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

Signature of independent examiner



Name of independent examiner **Dionne Sherwood**

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner **FCCA, FMAAT**

Name of firm (where appropriate) **DS Small Business Help Ltd**

Address **Cnwc Y Cneuen,**

Llangeitho, Tregaron, Post Code SY25 6SU

Date **4 April 2025**

* delete or circle as appropriate