

August 2022- August 2023 Annual Report for the Charity Commission
Neath Port Talbot Methodist Circuit
Registered 23rd September 2009
Registered Number: 1131776

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

- a) The Christian Faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of the Methodist Church.
- b) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any connexional, district, circuit, local or other organisation of the Methodist Church.
- c) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution being a society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to the Methodist Church.
- d) Any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to the Methodist Church.

The Neath Port Talbot Methodist Circuit acts as an umbrella body and resource provider for the nine Methodist Churches and their people of which it is comprised.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The adopted mission statement is in line with the Methodist Church's statement of 'Our Calling' and 'Priorities for the Methodist Church'.

Mission Statement

The Calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and to work out its discipleship in worship and mission.

The Circuit exists, therefore, to enable the local churches to:

- Increase awareness of the presence of God – Father, Son & Holy Spirit – and to celebrate God's love.
- Help people to learn and grow as Christians, through teaching and mutual support / care.
- Become good neighbours and to challenge injustice and need.
- Make more followers of Jesus Christ.

Aims and Strategy Objectives

Aim 1) To ensure worship takes place through the communities of the Circuit.

- To ensure regular worship in the churches of the Circuit.
- To make worship effective and relevant through the best use of the resources available, adapted to the local needs and context.

Aim 2) To expand fellowship within each church, its community and the circuit.

- To pursue within the churches the means to grow as Christians.
- To take initiatives to support and care for the community.

Aim 3) To encourage and nurture caring relationships with each other within the churches and people in the local and world community.

- Develop pastoral communication links between each church and its members.
- Develop pastoral links with other care agencies in the local community.
- Widen and encourage involvement in local ecumenical activities.
- Learn, pray about and respond, in whatever way we can, to the needs of the unjust world we share.

Aim 4) To bring people to an awareness of Christ through word and example.

- To invite and encourage people to discover and relate to Christ.
- To encourage church members to share their faith with others through word and deed.
- To raise awareness of Christ outside the church.
- To encourage greater prayer ministry.
- Sharing good ideas of outreach and ministry between the churches.

Principles

In implementing the Policy we shall:

- Make effective use of resources.
- Work with other Circuits and ecumenical partners wherever possible.

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charities Act 2006 in relation to public benefit guidance.

Review of activities : 1st September 2022- 31st August 2023

1) Circuit Staffing

In September 2022, Revd Rosemary Davies continued to serve as Superintendent Minister with the support from one part-time Circuit Pastoral Worker, Robin Sherwood.

Robin also has lay authorisation to preside at Holy Communion in the circuit. Revd Rachel Wheeler, a minister without appointment living in Bridgend offered help with preaching appointments and other events in our circuit and this has been of great benefit. Revd Gordon Sollis, a supernumerary minister residing in the circuit

continues to have pastoral charge of North Cornelly Church and also takes services in the Circuit. All the Circuit staff work together to provide pastoral care in partnership with the pastoral visitors in individual churches.

Mr. Clem Raymond, despite ill-health, continues in a voluntary capacity as a Circuit Support Worker organising the prayer chain and helping with plan-making. Clem also has lay authorisation to preside at Holy Communion throughout the Circuit.

Rachel Freeman continues in her contract of three hours per week to provide any administrative help when needed by the Circuit Superintendent.

The staff team meet regularly and every two months they are joined by members of the Circuit Leadership Team which includes the Circuit Stewards, Minutes Secretary, Treasurer and Property Officer.

2) Circuit services and events

A number of Circuit Services and other events were held during the year, enhancing our sense of fellowship together. Some are held on-line via Zoom.

Service of Remembering

The annual service to remember those who have died over the last year was held on 1st November 2023 . The service was held at Skewen church and livestreamed. The service was well supported by friends from around the circuit, as well as by families who were particularly invited because funerals for relatives had been taken by members of the circuit staff team during the year. This has proved to be a worthwhile initiative, indicating our continuing pastoral care for those who have been bereaved.

Advent & Christmas

To provide a united focus during Advent, a liturgy was produced as in recent years for use in all the churches on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas and on Christmas Day itself. For each week there was a Bible passage, prayer and song, together with the traditional lighting of a candle on the Advent ring.

Christmas carol services were arranged in churches throughout the circuit. Christmas Day services were held in a number of churches.

Covenant service

The annual Methodist covenant service was held in all the churches over the 2 Sundays, 8th and 15th January 2023.

Lent and Easter

A liturgy to help us focus on Christ's journey to the cross was used on every Sunday in Lent. We held a Circuit Communion service at Skewen on Maundy Thursday. Services took place in churches on Good Friday. The early morning Easter service on Aberavon seafront was led by members of staff. There was an 8am communion service at Sandfields church followed by breakfast.

3. Mission & outreach

Churches continued to support the Foodbanks in Neath and Port Talbot by giving food and money to support hungry people in these communities.

Website / social media

Our website (www.neathporttalbotmethodist.org.uk) contains basic information about the circuit but over this past year more of our focus has been on the use of WhatsApp and Facebook pages to publicise circuit events and services. Several churches operate WhatsApp groups to exchange local information and to support one another in prayer.

Work with children, young people and families

Sadly, this aspect of our work has not recovered after the pandemic and our congregations are mainly elderly. However, we have some children coming to our Sunday services at Skewen and when they attend Sunday school activities are provided.

4. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The Methodist Church requires a number of different office holders at church and circuit level to attend appropriate training. A record is also kept and updated of all those who need to have DBS disclosures.

5. Property

The Sandfields & Taibach manses have continued to be let on a short-term lease in order to provide income for the Circuit.

6. Finance

We have been fortunate in receiving regular income from the letting of two former Manses in the circuit. The Circuit Treasurer has been keeping an eye on the finances and we have been able to help individual churches by keeping the assessment at a manageable level.

7. Christian discipleship & fellowship

Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings

Weekly studies and prayer meetings have been taking place online and have provided opportunities for people to meet 'on screen' and share in discussion and prayer. This has brought the Circuit churches closer together.

Circuit Men's group

Our Circuit Men's group meets sporadically.

Oasis group

This group for women on the periphery of the church has not really been active this year. Individuals have kept in touch with each other by 'phone or social media.

8. Worship

The circuit remains incredibly grateful to all our Local Preachers and Worship Leaders.

Worship Leaders and Local Preachers meet together on a regular basis for mutual support, fellowship and training.

The circuit held a Gymanfa Ganu service in Skewen church on 16th July 2023. Various people from the churches introduced the hymns and there was a mixture of English/Welsh singing. The service was also livestreamed.

9. Local Church news

Cymmer

The Charity Shop run by a small band of volunteers continues to provide low-cost items to the community as well as supporting several local and national charities.

Glyncorrwg

The arrangement of meeting with the Nebo congregation at the Centre on Sunday afternoons at 3pm continues to be successful. During the year a few of the regulars have become frail and this has had an impact. The Nebo congregation organise the last Sunday in each month when all the hymns are sung in Welsh. On other Sundays, it is customary to sing one Welsh hymn per week.

Glynneath

The celebration of the 130th anniversary of the church took place in March 2023.

Jersey Marine

'Friends of Jersey Marine' is a group made up of residents who use the church premises for events. The chair of the group is a committed member of Jersey Marine church and this has enabled the relationship between the church and village to be strengthened. The local primary school has used the church to hold carol services, Easter and Harvest services. The church has been used as a polling station for local elections.

Neath

The church continues to host many events which are well supported.

North Cornelly

The church is looking forward to celebrating its Centenary next year.

Sandfields

User groups started to make enquiries about booking the hall which was very pleasing.

The Church craft group have been busy making things. The Women's league and Bible study began to make plans to re-start their programme. The ill health and frailty of some stalwart members of Women's League has had a major impact.

Skewen

The church has played a key role in the livestreaming of worship in the circuit. We're grateful to the technical team at Skewen for managing this. The Women's Fellowship hold their meetings on a Thursday afternoon rather than on a Thursday evening. The Saturday coffee morning is well attended and is a good outreach into the community.

Taibach

The church continues to enjoy good ecumenical relationships and its hall continues to be used by groups such as a local choir and the neighbouring school.

Journeying Onwards

The churches are trying to negotiate a new landscape and to re-imagine what it means to engage in mission and outreach. In some places maintenance of the buildings and concerns about finances are more pressing. The Superintendent Minister, Revd Rosemary Davies continued to produce a weekly circuit bulletin to keep people informed and the weekly 'Vine at Home' worship resource published by 'Twelve Baskets organisation' has been appreciated.

Revd Rosemary Davies is retiring this year and a new Superintendent minister will start work in September 2023.

We give thanks that God has been faithful to our circuit in the past year and we trust Him to lead and guide us into the future as we journey onwards.

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2023 have been prepared from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit meeting.

Signature of treasurer  Date 20.09.2023

Name and address of treasurer Karen Sherwood

14 Parkfield, Tonna, Neath, Neath Port Talbot. SA11 3JN

Presentation to the Circuit meeting

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023 were/will be* presented to the Circuit meeting held on 20th September 2023

Signature of the Chair of the meeting 

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Dr Gareth Edwards

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Neath Port Talbot Methodist Circuit

Charity Number 1131776

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Neath Port Talbot Methodist Circuit for the year ended 31 August 2023 set out on pages 1 to 3. As the Circuit'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 Circuit'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

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



Name of independent examiner

ROGER J E BYERS

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner

FCCA

Name of firm (where appropriate)

ROGER BYERS & CO LIMITED

Address

CASTLE BUILDINGS, 23 CHURCH PLACE, NEATH

Post Code

SA11 3LP

Date

13/12/2023

* delete or circle as appropriate

Form reviewed

May-23