



Registered as **NEW OXFORD ROAD CHURCH**, Charity Number 1133819

# Annual Report and Accounts to the year ending 31 December 2023

Registered office

Mexborough Life Church  
New Oxford Road  
MEXBOROUGH  
South Yorkshire  
S64 0JL

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# Report of the Trustees for the year 1 January to 31 December 2023

## Our purpose and activities

The objective of the charity is for the benefit of the public:

- Promotion of the Christian religion
- Provision of public worship
- Provision of activities for the public benefit

### The vision

Our Vision is: L.I.F.E.

- Lift up Christ
- In this together
- Full of the Spirit
- Express the Love of God
- Spirit together in unity
- Discipleship
- Mission

We do this by · Relationships · Prayer · Worship · Word and Spirit together in unity · Discipleship · Mission

### The activities

The vision underpins the full range of our led activities, in 2023 we had the following activities, some of which were started in the year as annotated:

- Weekly Sunday services
- Two mid-week Bible Studies and Worship team, one of the mid-week studies started in 2023
- Monthly Prayer meetings
- Weekly Toddler Group “Little Acorns”
- Youth Discipleship Group “Rooted Youth”, started September 2023
- Monthly Women’s chat and bible study “Blooming Women”, started June 2023
- Sunday School “Roots”
- Fortnightly Welcome Space/Drop in – “Cedars”
- Street Outreach at key times in the calendar, 3 occurrences in 2023 – two involved other churches within Mexborough
- Website and Social Media
- Food distribution
- Community giving
- Christmas activities
- Tithing our income

## Achievements through our activities from the year

The church believes that the Christian gospel is good news which should have a positive impact on the local community. To do so we need to provide discipleship and family support to our

## Report of the Trustees for the year 2023

congregation. Furthermore, the promotion of Christian faith comes on the back of positive intervention in the life of the local community, demonstrating the gospel in both word and deed. The church also believes that a key role it has is to serve the local community in provision of services that may not otherwise be provided and in doing so introduce people to the Christian faith.

All the structure put in place and activities below led to a more sound, growing and financially and spiritually stable church in 2023.

### Weekly Sunday services

The church maintained its weekly Sunday service throughout the year with services continuing to be broadcast on-line and in-person. The first full year of our new minister 2023 has seen a lot of increase in the spiritual development and involvement of people in church life and its activities from within the congregation.

### Mid-weekly meetings: Prayer, Bible Study and Worship

A regular pattern of Bible Study and Prayer meetings continued throughout the year and two groups were formed, one for more introduction questions/themes and the other for those needing more depth.

A further monthly women's bible study was started, that includes, for large section part of it, time for conversation - to increase relationships within the congregation.

Studies were led by both the minister and others from within the fellowship and attracted at each of the sessions around 5-15 people.

The prayer meetings were usually held on the first Tuesday of the month. The prayer topics were set by leadership and Pastor. The average attendance was around 10.

The worship team continued to meet throughout the year and drew new people into this area of church ministry.

### Sunday School and Youth

Our Sunday School, called 'Roots' began to meet every Sunday from December.

We also held one outreach event on the 31<sup>st</sup> October which was well-attended.

The new minister went into the local Secondary School and conducted 4 Christmas-themed assemblies.

Our new Rooted Youth sessions happened about twice a month and were attended by most (if not all) of our youth each session.

### Weekly Community groups "Cedars" and "Little Acorns"

Our 'Little Acorns' toddler group continues to thrive each Thursday (during term time) with an average attendance of 25 children and their parents/carers.

"Cedars previously "Warm welcome space" moved its provision, so it could be better supported, from a 2-hour weekly Friday slot to a fortnightly Wednesday drop-in. We provide free hot meals and drinks, food, games, quiz and an opportunity to chat. Several of our regular congregation have come from our "Cedars" community group in 2023.

### Christmas activities

We did do some carol singing and leaflet giving in some care homes, hospital and in the streets around Mexborough to promote the real meaning of Christmas. We held Christmas activities for

## Report of the Trustees for the year 2023

families and for the Little Acorns children. As stated, the minister undertook some assemblies on a Christmas theme at the local secondary school.

### Other Community action

We also held other outreach specific family services at Easter and Harvest, which have started to be a real connection between our community activities and the church.

We continued to collect food to support Rotherham Food Bank (who also cover our area) and some needy individuals/families who attend our community and Sunday services.

We took to the streets at 3 different times in 2023: once at Easter as part of the Churches in Mexborough; another at the Christmas Light Switch-On in the town, again as part of the Churches in Mexborough. And once, including a team from a local bible training college. Several people were within earshot and responded to our message and stopped to talk with us as we told them the good news we have

### Website and Social Media

We continued to provide our services live online to those who have not returned from the COVID outbreak and for others who are on holiday or unable to attend the Sunday service.

We have also found this a source of gaining new contact with those who attended us in the past, and some have made physical appearances at our meetings.

### Tithing our income

The church continued to donate a regular monthly amount into the work of a church leadership network in Zambia, pursuing the same objectives as we have. In 2023 we also gave the balance of the 2022 tithe to a Bible Translation Project within the middle East, an area of low witness, so that in 2024 the community gained access to the Bible in their language for the first time.

Our balance for 2023 will be allocated and sent in 2024.

### Other congregational news

We held 2 baptisms and 1 dedication service.

## Future Plans

Our strengthened position not only stability and spiritually wise, but also on member numbers and financially, has enabled us to support further our ongoing activities and increased outreach events in 2024 by having an activity based requested budget in 2024, which we were able to fully provide for without going into deficit.

The leaders planned for 2024, and we put into place, more street outreach and a summer club for primary children. In 2025 we aim to do more with the links with the schools and primary children/families in the area.

Our 2023 plans were all put into place with the additional activities you can see above.

The church is also long-term looking into improving and extending our facilities on New Oxford Road building to support our plans.

## Volunteers

We cannot run without our volunteers, and we had the following volunteers (some people in more than one role):

- Leaders 3 (1 paid)
- 3-5 active Trustees
- 5 Key roles and responsibilities
- 10 Little Acorns Team
- 7 “Cedars” team
- 4 Rooted Youth
- 3 Roots
- 6 people involved in our various Bible Studies/Prayer meetings (excluding paid role)
- 10 people on our catering teams for the various internal events
- 10-20 of our regular congregation present at our street evangelism

## Structure and Governance

Type of governing document: trust deed, Wesleyan Reform Union Reference Deed, we are set up as a Charitable Trust.

How the charity is constituted: A church of the Wesleyan Reform Union

Trustees, Key Volunteers, Staff and Advisors

Trustee name	Office (if any) – all voluntary	Dates acted if not for whole year
Jennifer Copley	Acting Chair, Treasurer and Payroll Officer	
Lorraine Slater		Until December 2023
Sarah Collins	Secretary	
Note two new Trustees were added in January 2024 to strengthen those who remained at the end of 2023		

Trustee selection methods: Recommendation made by and approved by the Leadership Team and Trustees; approached by the trustees, to ascertain their willingness to serve their appointment; and approved by the congregation of the church.

Staff/Volunteer role	Details
Paid Pastor and Volunteers Leaders	<p>During 2023 the new paid Pastor (employed status since May 2023 as our way forward became clearer) took over the strategy of the church working with and answerable to the two volunteer leaders, creating a new twist on our vision and thinking about all our activities.</p> <p>This enabled us to do all the new activities and extended reach in 2023 as reported above.</p>
Pastor – additional	<p>Provides the main teaching and high-level pastoral care to its congregation.</p> <p>Support from others in teaching the bible studies, Sunday meeting and pastoral care is to be recognised and volunteer numbers are listed above.</p>

Trustees	Can challenge the decisions of Pastor/Leaders if necessary, but their main role is to ensure the decisions made by the and activities conducted by the church are done so in a legal way and with good governance and financial management.
Volunteers	Listed above for various activities, some supervise the activity and others attend to support the team in various ways.

Type of adviser	Details – same as previous years but more details given
Legal	CLAS – see below Safeguarding is supported with a contact officer from the WRU Trustees also have roles in this matter, including our Treasurer who works in the financial field, including payroll and HR for a living.
Wesleyan Reform Union <a href="https://thewru.com/about-us/confession-of-faith/">https://thewru.com/about-us/confession-of-faith/</a>	Our denomination, which also connects with CLAS (Churches Legal advisory service)

### Policies and Procedures

During 2023 we were able to agree a draft Health and Safety policy as part of our large review.

In 2023 we also trained our full range of volunteers in the new policies and procedures and took them on what that means for them and tours of the building, fire and items they need to access. We also ran fire practices that led us to identify some issues which we have since changed.

2024 has been again more putting the policy in practice by getting specialist training and undertaking a plan to undertake risk assessments for all activities, including new ones.

We also reviewed our Safeguarding Policy and Employment policies, contracts and handbook and raised the Money Laundering issues with Trustees/Leaders.

We have the following policies some\* of which are still awaiting formal approval since changes in 2019:

- Health and Safety (including Fire\*, First Aid and Food Hygiene\*)
- Safeguarding
- Key Holders
- Reserves Policy
- Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Code of Conduct for Trustees (including Anti-bribery & Corruption)
- Employment policies including Staff Handbook, disciplinary and grievance policy, and appropriate risk assessments for lone working and homeworking
- Staff/Volunteer expenses policy

(in place previously just not listed)

- Confidentiality Policy

- Hire Policy
- diversity and equality policy\*
- Gifts and Money Laundering policy

## Financial Review

### Reserves

#### Ongoing ability

In previous two years we have only made a surplus because of not having a minister for all the year and/or the reduced spending because of Covid restrictions.

2023 is the first time since at least 2015 where we have made a surplus with full activities taking place and all of this has been paid for by member/congregation contributions in 2023.

As the church grew in 2023 there was the ability for us to set a balanced budget and not need the reserves, we had built up during the two previous years, to cover expenditure that was previously not sustained by member giving (namely paying a church pastor for the full year), and saved in 2023 until we knew our financial situation was stable.

Our unrestricted funds, as at 31/12/23, stand at £30,882, and we have £1,223 set aside to meet our tithing target (explained in activities above). These funds have been built up and preserved as at the end of 2023 as explained above.

These reserves are being used as follows:

Our normal needed reserves are 3 months regular (including monthly proportions of annual/quarterly costs) are: just under £10,000. We updated the reserves policy in 2024 to identify at which point we should start actions so that we do not get to this position.

For the 2024 budget £11,291 of these reserves were set aside for spending ad-hoc (67.2%) or extra costs not currently covered by our income and committed to 2 years (32.8%).

Mainly on new equipment building repairs and also on the spiritual growth of our congregation.

At present, until the detailed costings of the building project are known, most of the remaining general reserves are being kept high to support that as it enables us to do more of what we want rather than be restricted.

In 2024 Trustees/Leaders have discussed several times the fact that we now have reserves that can be used. Additionally giving further increased so that some of the above is now coming from ongoing income. In 2025 budgets again will include use of reserves to support more outreach activities and spiritual growth of our congregation, as well as anything that comes out of the building project (as per the above paragraph).

#### Restricted reserves

The restricted funds, mainly for the building improvements, stand at £19,903 and that is the reason it is pretty constant, because although new restricted funds in go out pretty quickly, the building project is a long-term ongoing one only in its early stages.

We also allocate interest on that account to the building fund and so it does increase even without further giving.

#### Reserves held elsewhere

## Report of the Trustees for the year 2023

Also as stated last year due to a sale of a building we have additional financial resource available to us at WRU some for capital purposes and some for outreach. These are not within these accounts and remain with the WRU but have been set aside for us. Around £55k of this has been set aside for supporting the building improvements and the rest as at 31/12/23 was thought to be going to be used towards new posts and future outreach activities.

### Overall changes in funds

Overall the increase in **overall funds** has gone from £47.6k to £52.0k, with **unrestricted balances** from £28.6k to £30.9k. This is because, despite the now 12 month pastor salary and additional spending on activities and the utilities and other overheads to support them giving (given the growth mentioned above) went up significantly (£29.2k to £41.5k) and although Trustee quarterly reports update giving forecasts and so more spending is approved, in 2023 we made a small surplus, and the previously built up reserves for the pastors salary were therefore not used.

**Our restricted funds** movements have been discussed above.

### Within reserves policy?

So as at the end of 2023 we were well within our reserves policy.

The trustees aim to ensure the charity will be able to continue to fulfil its charitable objectives even if there is a temporary shortfall in income or unexpected expenditure. The trustees will endeavour not to set aside funds unnecessarily. The thoughts behind using our current reserves are explained further in the above comments.

We praise God for this glowing financial report and position that has enabled us to back our pastor/leader vision for the year without any grant funding.

### Accounts - income and expenditure comments

Our funding this year came purely from: free will offerings and donations mainly from church congregation (93.2%); some hire rental (3.5%); the remaining was from donations from those who access our weekly activities (2.2%) and some interest and other. Of this income 3.3% of it was given for restricted purposes.

The Trustees designate 10% of the gross unrestricted donations. This is for our biblical tithe principal to organisations doing the same work in promoting the Christian faith.

The restricted income all furthered our charity objectives.

Of the unrestricted income we used this to:

1. Further our charities activities within our charity (76.9%) + the overhead running costs (0.9%) – *note this doesn't include the designated unrestricted giving to further our same charity aims at another charity*
2. To ensure we are insured for our activities and following legal requirements for the charity law (11.5%), which increased as they are stepped costs with congregation numbers
3. Surplus generated as increased giving outstretched increased spending (7.6%)
4. Trading costs to raise further funds (1.9%) which made profit;
5. Equipment/R&M (1.0%); and
6. Given away to support others (0.2%) – this is unrestricted, not the designated 10% tithe

Overall our spending was 95.4% on charitable activities.

### Assets

Movement of assets compared to the previous year (2022), listed on page two of the accounts:



## Report of the Trustees for the year 2023

were disposed of as stated:

Asset	Why disposed – any value for it
None, however, at the very end of the year laptops were reviewed for use and cleared to send out to Middle East as part of a church community there we partner with.	Not using and others had greater need, especially given our financial position to buy new ones if ever needed in the future.

We purchased the following assets:

Signs and Banners	To promote the church to passers by around the building and to show the vision inside the church
H&S equipment inc. fire and FA kits	As part of our update and inputting the H&S policy in place.



Charity Name	No (if any)
Mexborough Life Church and Centre (New Oxford Road) 1133819	

CC16a


## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/01/2023		31/12/2023

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Designed funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Voluntary Income	36,235	1,272	4,032	41,539	29,209
Activities for generating funds	1,550	-	-	1,550	230
Charitable Activities	966	-	-	966	62
Investment Income	247	217	51	515	2
Other Incoming Resources	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>38,998</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>4,083</b>	<b>44,570</b>	<b>29,503</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>38,998</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>4,083</b>	<b>44,570</b>	<b>29,503</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Cost of Generating Voluntary Income	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities	34,195	1,287	2,860	38,342	23,644
Governance Costs	1,084	-	-	1,084	1,520
Fundraising Trading Costs	752	-	-	752	72
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>36,031</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>40,178</b>	<b>25,236</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>36,031</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>40,178</b>	<b>25,236</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>2,967</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>4,392</b>	<b>4,267</b>
<b>A6 B/F funds - true b/f adjustments after full fund review</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>679</b>			
<b>A6 B/f Cash funds</b>	<b>28,594</b>	<b>19,022</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>47,616</b>	<b>33,642</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>30,882</b>	<b>19,903</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>52,008</b>	<b>37,909</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Bank Account	30,568	19,903	1,223
	CASH	314	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>30,882</b>	<b>19,903</b>	<b>1,223</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	New Oxford Road Building (legally is ours but we cannot sell, only use for furthering the gospel)	Restricted	-	-
	PA equipment at NoR		-	-
	Old highthorn PA equipment at NoR			
	Hoovers (2) and cleaning equipment			
	3 old Laptops - various uses			
	2 more recent Laptops	General	960	
	Portable sound/projection/light. equip.		-	-
	Kitchen and café equipment NoR		-	-
	Toys and equipment for mums and tots group		-	-
	Crafts and games			
	Various DVDs and Books			
	Chairs/Tables at NoR		-	-
	NOR Lecturn and Storage boxes/drawer	General		
	Heater in NoR	General		
	Baptism tank: hot tub and pump etc	General		
	3 TVs (2 on stands)			
	Pool table on lower hall stage	General	Donated	
	Football table on lower hall stage	Youth/Outreach		
	Portable nets and various balls: NoR storage	Outreach		
	Christmas Tree and decorations			
	office equipment: chair, cupboard/cabinets	General	380	
	office equipment: small lockable files (1)	General	23	
	Office electrical equipment: copier/printer (2), shredder	General	65	
	Conference Chairs and desks at MYC			
	Wireless Mircophone	General	106	
	Old Musical instruments that are ours: Old Piano at NoR; keyboard; old drum kit			
	4 Speakers and 1 amp			
	New Piano at NoR	General	478	
	Signs and Banners	General	174	
	H&S equipment inc fire and FA kits	General		
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature 	Print Name Jennifer Copley	Date of approval 18/10/2024	



# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

New Oxford Road Church (Mexborough Life Church and Centre)

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31/12/2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1133819

**Set out on pages**

CC16A Sections A and B

**Respective  
responsibilities of  
trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent  
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
    - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
    - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
  2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** A Mumford

**Date:** 01/10/2023

**Name:** Andrew Mumford

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body:**

**Address:** 30 Haigh Court, Brampton Bierlow  
Rotherham, S63 6LP

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**