

Oxford Methodist Circuit

Charity Number: 1134618

Trustees Annual Report

and

Accounts

for the period

1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

Introduction

The Oxford Circuit serves the city of Oxford, its suburbs, and villages and market towns from Woodstock to Watlington. Public worship is offered in twelve places, including jointly with the Church of England at St Mary's Chalgrove. Staff and volunteers also lead worship in several residential homes in the area. Within the Circuit, local Methodist Societies (churches) operate as centres of worship, outreach, fellowship and community service, each under the management/trusteeship of its own Church Council. The Circuit supports the local churches by providing ordained and salaried lay ministry, by training and deploying Local (lay) Preachers to lead Sunday worship, by giving grants for property and mission projects, by linking local churches to the wider life of the Methodist Church regionally and nationally, and by acting as a forum for strategic planning.

At the start of the year, Revd Miriam Moul took up her post as Superintendent. She also had pastoral responsibility for Cowley Road and Wesley Memorial Methodist Churches; Revd Paul Carter had pastoral responsibility for Bladon, Kidlington, Rose Hill, Tackley and Woodstock; and Revd Stephen Spain pastoral responsibility for Kennington, St Mary's Chalgrove, Great Milton, Lime Walk and Watlington. Mel McCulloch was the Children and Families Worker, Liz Spain and Libby Hawkness-Smith were community chaplains, and Jo Godfrey the Circuit Administrator.

Purpose

During the year, the Oxford Circuit redefined its Purpose¹ to be: ***The Oxford Circuit aims to support its worshipping communities in a time of change so we can flourish as outward-looking witnesses of God's inclusive love.***

The year 2023/24

God was praised and worshipped at all our churches. A number of congregations developed imaginative "local arrangements" for three Sundays a quarter. The quarterly meetings of circuit local preachers and worship leaders were reorganised to encourage fruitful reflection.

We appointed Adrienne Cooke as Methodist chaplain to students and staff at Oxford Brookes University, a post funded by the Westminster College Oxford Trust. Wesley Memorial, New Road Baptist Church and St Columba's URC jointly appointed an ecumenical student worker from September 2024. Encouraged by our inclusive approach, there has been a welcome increase in the number of students attending worship in the city centre.

¹ Methodist Standing Order 500 (1) defines the Nature and Purposes of a Circuit as follows:

The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help. It is in the Circuit that presbyters, deacons and probationers are stationed and local preachers are trained and admitted and exercise their calling. The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources of ministry, which include people, property and finance, as they relate to the Methodist churches in the Circuit, to churches of other denominations and to participation in the life of the communities served by the Circuit, including local schools and colleges, and in ecumenical work in the area including, where appropriate, the support of ecumenical Housing Associations.

Ministers and pastoral committees provided pastoral care. A particular focus has been to support members of the morning congregation at Cowley Road who have taken the brave decision to cease to meet. Safeguarding is a continuing priority. The Circuit, and every church, has a safeguarding officer. The Circuit meeting approved a new Circuit Safeguarding policy, and training is kept up to date. The Circuit reviewed and approved its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. All Circuit preachers and office holders are required to attend unconscious bias training.

Work with children and families continued to evolve, including the Woodstock Tots group and Christmas Tree Festival, Rainbow House in central Oxford, Minecraft Church and Zac Pack (for primary age children) at Kidlington. More recently, Rose Hill and the Anglicans of St Mary's Iffley have launched a joint Messy Church. Although few of our churches have many children in the Sunday congregation, there was a notable increase in numbers attending the national 3Generate weekend in October, including the talented music theatre performers of Bladon Junior Church.

Churches continued to organise Eco-Church services and work towards higher levels of A Rocha Eco Church awards. Plans are underway to install solar panels at Rose Hill and Wesley Memorial. The Eco Circuit team commissioned a report from Caring for God's Acre to guide future management of the Quarry Churchyard.

Kidlington ran a discussion series "Grave Talk" which was well-received by members of the church and local community alike. The Circuit is keen to learn from models such as this that help people to talk about subjects which they might previously have found difficult, including matters of faith. In this vein, Wesley Memorial ran the Methodist Church's "Everyone an Evangelist" course.

The chaplaincy work at Rose Hill continues to develop in the wider community and local community centre as well as at the church premises. Numbers attending the Community Cupboard and Monday Drop-in continue to rise. Following an extensive community consultation exercise, Woodstock church now hosts a regular film afternoon run by Age Concern as well as a "Knit for Peace" group. Watlington church runs regular well-being sessions in a local café.

The Circuit and member churches have taken a number of initiatives to recognise the plight of refugees, including sponsoring and housing a Syrian family and leasing two manses to Afghan families, as well as support for local charity Asylum Welcome.

Led by the Superintendent, the Circuit Leadership Team is engaging in a strategic planning process. Consultation meetings were held with each of the churches. Two Awaydays were held, and sub-committees established for mission, finance/property, and staffing. An early output was to recruit Ruth Leach to a new part-time post to alleviate some of the staff team's heavy workload by providing administrative support to ministers and the Rose Hill Community Chaplain.

Priorities

As part of this strategic planning, the Circuit adopted first the new purpose, and then a new set of priorities, laid out below. They reflect how we see God is calling us. We look forward to implementing them in the years ahead.

Circuit Priorities 2024 – 2026

	Priority	What we shall do
1. Worship	Enable acts of worship that help participants to grow in knowledge and love of God and to deepen their discipleship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate sharing of good ideas, worship plans and resources for local arrangements; • recruit and train new worship leaders and local preachers; • develop imaginative ways to worship as a Circuit.
2. Learning	Encourage opportunities for all to grow in understanding of the Christian faith and distinctive emphases of Methodism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that a range of study and fellowship groups are accessible at different times and places across the Circuit, both in person and online; • provide and signpost training as appropriate so that more lay people have the confidence and skills to lead or facilitate such groups; • invest in existing and new work with children and young people, recognising that even thriving groups can be vulnerable as generations pass through; • sustain and develop student ministry within the Circuit through chaplaincy and the work at Wesley Memorial.
3. Caring	Support churches through structural changes over the period to August 2026 that will be necessary, both to relieve unsustainable burdens and to position the Circuit to continue to fulfil its purpose for many years to come.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commit to provide pastoral support as churches face difficult decisions and adjustments; • encourage collaboration and opportunities to build personal relationships between churches; • cherish and look for new ways to carry forward the legacies of our churches; • provide practical help to the members of both closing and continuing church councils to ease burdens such as compliance, property and financial management; • support circuit churches in working towards the full inclusion of all God's people; • sustain our commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults; • work with churches to make our buildings as energy efficient as possible and promote biodiversity on our land.

	Priority	What we shall do
4. Sharing Good News (Evangelism)	Build greater confidence to talk authentically about our faith and the awareness to take opportunities to share it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn from and share successful approaches that have helped people to talk about topics that they have previously found difficult; • offer worship services that provide opportunities for conversations about faith and that focus on the evangelism 'stations' from the Methodist Way of Life: 'live, share, tell'; • seek to intentionally share our faith with our local communities through activities such as leading assemblies in schools, toddler groups and holiday clubs.
5. Service	Build on existing work with people on the margins with a particular focus on the community in and around Rose Hill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and encourage Circuit churches to serve their local communities and to share and celebrate good examples; • work with advisors and partners to draw up a vision and plan to build on the work of Rose Hill Community Cupboard and the Rose Hill Community Chaplaincy; • explore whether and how this vision fits with Connexional models of 'church on the margins' or 'new places for new people'; • invest to provide appropriate premises to support this work.

Financial review

Income trends

Total income increased by 4% to £359,112 (£345,350). Assessments paid by circuit churches, which make up the bulk of regular income, grew slightly to £293,391 (£290,084).

Rental income jumped to £37,387 (£16,200) as a second manse was let to tenants, this time under Oxford City Council's Refugee Resettlement Scheme.

Investment income was up 50% at £20,376 (£13,566) due to higher interest rates.

The accounts include restricted grant income of £7,458 (£25,000) from Westminster College Oxford Trust to fund student chaplaincy and support work. Grant income is matched against related expenditure; the balance of a £25,000 grant received during the year is classified as deferred income.

Expenditure trends

Total charitable expenditure decline by 6.5% to £360,290 (£385,142). The three main categories of regular expenditure are: ministerial stipends and lay employment costs, property maintenance, and contributions (assessments and levies) paid to the District and Connexion to support the wider work of the Methodist Church.

Total employment costs decreased by 8% to £206,000 (£224,677). The number of ordained ministers appointed to the Circuit reduced from four to three. This created a vacancy for a part-time chaplain to students and staff at Oxford Brookes University which was filled in April.

Property expenditure was 25% lower at £39,825 (£53,143), despite the introduction of management fees by the Circuit's property agent.

Amounts payable to the District and Connexion increased by 21% to £86,384 (£75,482). The formula used to calculate the annual assessment payable to the Northampton District and Connexion takes account of the relative number of ministers and unrestricted reserves of each Circuit and its member churches as reported in the previous year. The reduction from four to three ministers in the Oxford Circuit will be reflected in the current financial year's assessment.

Gains and losses on investments

Gains on monetary investments were £7,922 (-£4,554).

Fund balances

Total funds carried forward increased by £6,744 to £2,598,643 (£2,591,899).

Of this total, £2,170,027 (unchanged) is represented by the carrying value of five manse properties and £221 (£721) by a restricted fund for the upkeep of the churchyard adjacent to the former Headington Quarry Chapel. Excluding these items, unrestricted net current assets were £428,394 (£421,151).

Plans for 2024/25 onwards

The most recent forecast anticipates a deficit in the current year before grant commitments and levies, in the region of £36k. The intention is to hold assessments levied on churches in the Circuit steady through a period of adjustment and consolidation. Meanwhile, costs will increase, following recruitment of additional administrative support for the staff team and a return to more normal levels of property expenditure.

The reserves policy points to a target level of unrestricted reserves of £150,000. This compares with adjusted net current assets noted above of £428K. A levy of £19K on balances held in the Circuit Model Trust Fund was paid to the District Advance Fund in September. These figures, combined with the forecast deficit imply that a balance of approximately £223K is available to invest in projects that further the Circuit's purpose and priorities.

At a meeting held on 22nd September 2024, the Trustees of Cowley Road Methodist Church designated Oxford Methodist Circuit Successor Managing Trustees. Figures stated in this report do not include the assets and liabilities of Cowley Road Methodist Church.

Basis of preparation and legal framework

The Charity's annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice 2015 as applicable to the Financial Reporting Standard(FRS) 102

Full Name of Charity: Oxford Methodist Circuit

Charity Registration Number: 1134618

Date of registration: 3 March 2010 (previously excepted)

Main communication address: Wesley Memorial Church, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford, OX1 2DH.

The members of the Oxford Methodist Circuit Meeting are the Charity Trustees, membership being made up of Circuit office holders, ministers and representatives appointed by the local churches. Full membership is shown as Appendix A to this report.

Circuit Ministers and officers active during the year

Active Circuit Ministers: Rev. Paul Carter
Rev. Miriam Moul
Rev. Stephen Spain

Circuit Lay Workers: Mrs Adrienne Cooke (from April 2024)
Mrs Joanna Godfrey
Mrs Elizabeth Hawknesh-Smith
Mrs Melanie McCulloch
Mrs Elizabeth Spain

Circuit Stewards: Mr Christopher Butler
Mr Malcolm Dodds
Mrs Margaret Sawyer
Mr Paul Spray
Mrs Ruth Taylor
Mr John Winterbottom

Name of Treasurer who acted as the principal officer overseeing the day to day financial management and accounting for the circuit during the year: Christopher Butler

Independent Examiner: Chapman Robinson & Moore Ltd

Investment Bankers: Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Bankers: CAF Bank
Barclays Bank

Aims and organisation

Charity objective is to act as a Resource provider and co-ordinator within the area around Oxford for the Methodist Church. The purposes of the Methodist Church are and shall be deemed to have been since the Date of Union the advancement of:

- a) The Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and 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 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.

Locally, these purposes are worked out through:-

The organisation and resourcing of regular public acts of worship open to members of the church and non-members alike;

The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses, publications and small group discussion;

The resourcing of pastoral work by stipendiary, salaried and voluntary workers, including visiting the sick and bereaved;

Taking religious assemblies in local schools.

Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and services.

Provision of chaplaincy services to local universities and other communities.

Public Benefit

We confirm the Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

The governing document for the Circuit is the Deed of Union (1932) and Methodist Church Act (1976). Detailed governance arrangements are outlined within the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD)* by order of the annual Methodist Conference.

Managing trusteeship and overall governance responsibility rests with the Circuit Meeting, which meets at least twice a year.

Day to day management of the circuit is undertaken by the Superintendent Minister, Circuit Stewards and Circuit Leadership Team, in partnership with other officers and committees as appropriate.

Trustee Training

A range of guidance produced by Methodist Connexion to support the effective running of the circuit is distributed to Trustees, including a paper circulated by the Northampton District: "Financial Governance and good practice for Church and Circuit Trustees".

Related Parties

The Circuit is part of the Northampton District and is also accountable to the Methodist Conference.

The following Methodist Churches are part of the circuit:-

Bladon; Cowley Road; Great Milton; Kennington; Kidlington; Lime Walk; Rose Hill; Tackley; Watlington; Wesley Memorial; Woodstock.

The Methodist congregation at Chalgrove has joined St Mary's (Church of England) through a Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome.

There is also a Methodist involvement in the Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys, a Local Ecumenical Partnership.

The Circuit is in receipt of a multi-year grant from the Westminster College Oxford Trust Ltd, whose board is appointed by Conference to oversee the continuing relationship between the Methodist Church and Oxford Brookes University, following the merger between Westminster College and Oxford Brookes University in 1999.

Safeguarding

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of all people in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential 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.

Methodist Connexional practice outlines commitment to the following principles:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
- We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

Oxford Methodist Circuit Annual Report 2023-24

- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice

The Oxford Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The Oxford Circuit commits itself to the provision of support, advice and training for lay and ordained people that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Risk Management

The major risks have been identified and recorded by the Circuit Leadership Team with professional advice taken as required. The Circuit Leadership Team undertakes a regular annual review of risks, the findings of which are presented to the Circuit Meeting for approval. The table below is a summary of the most recent risk management review:



Risk	Mitigation
Failure to protect vulnerable people	Safeguarding policy, training and monitoring
Major unplanned property repairs	Quinquennial surveys; reserves policy
Continued decline in active church members and related income	Strategic planning with churches; reserves policy
Insufficient volunteers to meet statutory requirements or mission objectives	Employment of ordained and lay staff and of professional advisors

Income and Expenditure are monitored and compared with the approved annual budget on a quarterly basis to detect trends as part of the risk management process to avoid unforeseen calls on reserves.

Reserves Policy

Risk	Reserve Level	£
Manse Repairs	Work recommended in most recent quinquennial inspections	£ 40,000
Churches unable to sustain assessments	Four months' expenditure	£110,000
	Total	£150,000

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees

Name	Signature	Office	Date
Rev Miriam Moul		Chairman	18/03/2025
Mr Christopher Butler		Trustee	18/03/2025

Appendix A: Trustees of the Oxford Methodist Circuit during 2023-24 and to present

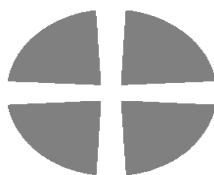
Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole period	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
Rev Miriam Moul	Chairperson		
Rev Paul Carter			
Rev Stephen Spain			
Mr John Winterbottom	Circuit Steward & Property Secretary		
Mr Christopher Butler	Financial Steward		
Mr Malcolm Dodds	Circuit Steward		
Mrs Margaret Sawyer	Circuit Steward		
Mr Paul Spray	Circuit Steward		
Mrs Ruth Taylor	Circuit Steward		

Mrs K Dobson			Wesley Memorial Methodist Church
Mrs Janet Forsaith			ditto
Mrs Mary Lines			ditto
Mrs Marilyn King			Kidlington Methodist Church
Mr Graham Kirby			ditto
Mrs Emma Rosentall			ditto
Chris Rosentall			ditto
Mrs Debbie Teanby			Woodstock Methodist Church
Mr David Jones			ditto
Mrs Patricia Clapton			Bladon Methodist Church
Mr Philip Rumsby			ditto
Mrs Alicia Rumsby			ditto
Mr Tim Bailey			Tackley Methodist Church
Mrs Vi Banbury			ditto
Mrs Sara Hall			Lime Walk Methodist Church
Mrs Sue Barratt			ditto
Mrs Bryony Thomas			ditto
Mr Jeremy Dawe			Rose Hill Methodist Church
Mr Jeremy Burgess			ditto
Miss Jackie Wright			ditto
Prof Bev Clack		to Dec 2024	Cowley Road Methodist Church
Mrs Jan Boylan		To Dec 2024	ditto

Mr Andrew Quigley			Kennington Methodist Church
Mrs Doreen Biggadike			ditto
Mr Barrie Edwards			Great Milton Methodist Church
Mrs Pippa Read			ditto
Mr David Holme			ditto
Mr Phil Crockett			Watlington Methodist Church
Mrs Kathleen Gomm		Dec'd Feb 2025	ditto
Mr Mike Trinder			Local Preachers Meeting
Mrs Joanna Tulloch			ditto
Prof Simon Blainey			ditto
Mrs Alison Matthews	Safeguarding Officer		
Mrs Emma Huber	Action for Children		
Mrs Ann Leck			

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	Custodian Trustees



**Circuit
Accruals Accounts
2022-2023**

THE METHODIST CHURCH
ACCOUNTS
(ACCRUALS BASIS)
for the year ended 31 August 2025

Oxford	Circuit
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Registered Charity - Registration number

1134618

District No / Circuit No

23/01

Ministers

Rev Miriam Moul
Rev Paul Carter
Rev Stephen Spain

Circuit Stewards

Mr Christopher Butler
Mr Malcolm Dodds
Mrs Margaret Sawyer
Mr Paul Spray
Mrs Ruth Taylor
Mr John Winterbottom

Circuit Treasurer

Mr Christopher Butler

Name of Circuit

Oxford

Circuit No

23/01

Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year ended 31 August 2024

	Notes to the accounts	General Fund (Unrestricted) £	Circuit Model Trust (Unrestricted) £	Designated Funds (unrestricted) £	Restricted Funds (note 15) £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2023- 24 £
Income							
1 Donations and legacies		500					500
2 Income from monetary investments		3,636	16,740				20,376
3 Income from investment properties							0
4 Assessments on Churches	3	293,391					293,391
5 Capital Receipts							0
6 Grants received	4	-			7,458		7,458
7 Other charitable income	5	37,387					37,387
8 Total income		334,914	16,740	-	7,458	-	359,112
Expenditure							
9 Grants and donations	6	1,248					1,248
10 Salaries and associated costs	7	198,542			7,458		206,000
11 Property costs	8	39,325			500		39,825
12 Connexional assessment and levy	9	53,923					53,923
13 District Assessment & Levy	9	13,343	19,118				32,461
14 Depreciation							0
15 Office expenses	10	18,567					18,567
16 Other outgoings	11	7,207	1,059				8,266
17 Total charitable expenditure		332,155	20,177	0	7,958	0	360,290
18 Gains/(losses) on monetary investments			7922				7,922
19 Gains/(losses) on investment properties							
20 Net income/(expenditure)		2,759	4,485	0	-500	0	6,744
21 Transfers between funds							0
22 Other gains/(losses)							
23 Net movement in funds		2,759	4,485	0	-500	0	6,744
24 Total funds brought forward		2,224,602	366,576	-	721	-	2,591,899
25 Total funds carried forward		2,227,361	371,061	-	221	-	2,598,643

Name of Circuit

Oxford

Circuit No

23/01

Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year ended 31 August 2023

	Notes to the accounts	General Fund (Unrestricted) £	Circuit Model Trust (Unrestricted) £	Designated Funds (unrestricted) £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2022-23 £
Income							
1 Donations and legacies		500					500
2 Income from monetary investments		1,667	11,899				13,566
3 Income from investment properties							0
4 Assessments on Churches	3	290,084					290,084
5 Capital Receipts							0
6 Grants received	4				25,000		25,000
7 Other charitable income	5	16,200					16,200
8 Total income		308,451	11,899	-	25,000	-	345,350
Expenditure							
9 Grants and donations	6	2,377	4,300				6,677
10 Salaries and associated costs	7	199,677			25,000		224,677
11 Property costs	8	51,773			1,370		53,143
12 Connexional assessment and levy	9	44,571					44,571
13 District Assessment & Levy	9	8,810	22,101				30,911
14 Depreciation							0
15 Office expenses	10	15,345					15,345
16 Other outgoings	11	8,646	1,172				9,818
17 Total charitable expenditure		331,199	27,573	0	26,370	0	385,142
18 Gains/(losses) on monetary investments			-4554				-4,554
19 Gains/(losses) on investment properties							
20 Net income/(expenditure)		-22,748	-20,229	0	-1,370	0	-44,347
21 Transfers between funds		15,000	- 15,000				0
22 Other gains/(losses)							
23 Net movement in funds		-7,748	-35,229	0	-1,370	0	-44,347
24 Total funds brought forward		2,232,350	401,804	-	2,091	-	2,636,245
25 Total funds carried forward		2,224,602	366,575	-	721	-	2,591,899

Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2024

Notes to the Accounts	General Fund (Unrestricted)	Circuit Model Trusts (Unrestricted)	Designated Funds (Unrestricted)	Restricted Funds (note 15)	Totals 2024	Totals 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£

Fixed Assets

Circuit Manses & Equipment	12	2,170,027			2,170,027	2,170,027
Investment properties					0	0
Investments					0	0
Total fixed assets		2,170,027	0	0	2,170,027	2,170,027

Current Assets

Debtors	13	21,959			21,959	26,826
Loans by the Circuit	14	0			0	20,000
Investments with TMCP			376,061		376,061	371,576
Central Finance Board Deposits		86,477		17,838	104,315	62,591
Cash at Bank and in hand		11,835			11,835	17,253
Total current assets		120,271	376,061	0	514,170	498,246

Current liabilities

Creditors (due in under 1 year)	16	62,937		17,617	80,554	71,374
Grants payable within 2024-25	17		5,000		5,000	5,000
Total current liabilities		62,937	5,000	0	17,617	76,374
Net current assets/liabilities		57,334	371,061	0	428,615	421,872

Total assets less current liabilities		2,227,361	371,061	0	221	2,598,642	2,591,899
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Long term liabilities (due after more than one year)							
Grants payable after 2024-25						0	0
Loans						0	0
						0	0
Net assets		2,227,361	371,061	0	221	2,598,642	2,591,899

Funds of the Circuit

Funds of the Circuit						
General Fund (Unrestricted)		2,227,361			2,227,361	2,224,602
Circuit Model Trust Fund (Unrestricted)			371,061		371,061	366,576
Designated Funds (Unrestricted)				0	0	0
Total Unrestricted Funds					2,598,421	2,591,178
Restricted Funds				221	221	721
Endowment Funds					0	0
Total Funds		2,227,361	371,061	0	221	2,598,642

Signed



Circuit Treasurer

1. Basis of accounting and accounting policies.

1.1 Accounting standard

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with *Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)* applicable to charities preparing their accounts with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective from 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

1.2 Public Benefit entity

The Oxford Methodist Circuit meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s) below.

1.3 Basis

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historical cost except that investments are shown at their market value at the end of the year. The accruals basis has been used and the trustees present accounts that show a true and fair view of the Circuit's financial position and activities.

1.4 Content

The financial information presented is relevant, reliable and complete. Where estimates are used these are based on experience, research and judgement. The accounts are expressed in £Sterling, rounded to the nearest pound.

1.5 FRS102 (SORP2015)

These accounts are compliant with FRS102 and with the FRS102 SORP2015. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable charity law in England, this being the Charities Act 2011 and SI 2008/629 (Charities Accounting and Reporting Regulations) and, pending the making of replacement regulations specific to SORP2015 in accordance with Reg.8(4)(d) of SI 2008/629, the charity trustees have departed from the requirement of Reg.8(5) by following SORP(FRS102) instead of SORP 2005 to the extent necessary to give a true and fair view of the circumstances.

1.6 Going concern

Based on the monetary assets and human resources available at 31 August 2024, the trustees believe that the Circuit is a going concern.

1.7 Consolidation

The Circuit has denominational regulatory oversight in respect of the work of the Churches within the Circuit but has no legal or operational control of those Churches and their governing bodies except in extreme circumstances. For this reason, the financial statements of the Churches within the Circuit are not consolidated into these financial statements.

1.8 Income recognition

Income is brought into account when there is entitlement and the amount is reliably measurable, once it is more likely than not that the economic benefit of the income will be forthcoming.

Individual amounts categorised as *Other Income* in the SOFA will be shown separately in the Notes if they are considered material.

The Circuit acts as agent in the administration (application, collection and disbursement) of grants requested by Churches within the Circuit from, but not limited to, the District and Connexion. In these matters the transactions are not reflected in the SOFA because they are the income of the Churches.

In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102), the time of volunteers is not recognised. Further information on this matter is provided in the Trustees' Annual Report. If goods are donated, a value will be shown in the SOFA or Notes where the value is considered material.

1.9 Expenditure

This is recognised when a liability is incurred, or a constructive obligation arises, where the amount is reliably measurable and it is considered more likely than not that there will be an outflow of economic benefit.

1.10 Grants

Grants made by the Circuit from its own funds are recognised in full at the time of agreement to make a grant without performance conditions or as and when the Circuit accepts that there is a legal or operational obligation to make the payment if it is subject to performance conditions. When the grant to be accrued is recurrent over more than one year the balance payable in future years, discounted to net present value where the difference is material, is treated as a provision for future commitments in the balance sheet against the appropriate fund, the provision being released in future years in accordance with the originally agreed terms. In cases where the grant has been charged to one fund but for ease of payment has been transferred to another fund any future payment provision is applied to the fund from which the grant will ultimately be paid.

1.11 VAT

Since the Circuit is not VAT registered, all input VAT is charged with the expense to which it refers.

1.12 Tangible fixed assets

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and individually cost at least £1,000.

The freehold and/or long leasehold residential property is shown in these accounts at deemed historical cost representing each property's gross carrying value as at 1 September 2015, being that property's insurance reinstatement value or, if acquired after that date, at its market value at the date of acquisition. No depreciation is provided because the trustees consider the current residual value of the property in its present condition to be not less than its historical cost and, in the absence of any evidence of impairment, any depreciation provision for the buildings component of the property would be immaterial.

From time to time the Circuit may be required to assume responsibility for Church premises following closure and cessation of worship. This results in the Circuit becoming Managing Trustees for the property. At that time the property is recognised as an asset at its anticipated new sale price as determined by a professional valuation and after taking into consideration the levy to be charged by the Connexion. Any expenditure on such assets, if held for reinvestment of the proceeds, as the trustees determine, that it is likely to enhance sale value is capitalised at the time the expenditure is incurred. Where the proceeds are intended to be spent on activities, the property is included in current assets at the lower of cost and realisable value.

1.13 Monetary investments

The Circuit's investments are in monetary assets classified as basic financial instruments under FRS102 and are held by the Trustees for Methodist Purposes (TMCP) as custodian trustees. The valuations, at market value, are those provided by TMCP. The unrealised gains arising on investments at the end of the year are shown in the SOFA.

Investment Property

From time to time the Circuit may hold residential property (formerly manse) which is surplus to its normal staffing requirements. Where this is the case and it is anticipated that the property is unlikely to be used as a manse within a period of five years, the property is classified as an Investment Property (whether let or not) and any lets are at market rates unless there is a compelling reason not to do so in furtherance of the Circuit's charitable objectives. Any such cases would be specified in a later Note.

1.14 Bank and Receivables and Payables; Cash (Basic Financial Instruments)

Debtors are stated at the amounts owed to the Circuit or prepaid. Creditors are initially recognised at settlement amount after any trade discounts, where normal credit terms apply, or at the amount advanced to the Circuit. Subsequently creditors that are current liabilities are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid. The liquid funds of bank balances and deposit fund balances are shown at their realisable values.

1.15 Loans as Basic Financial Instruments

Where concessionary loans (i.e. at below market rates of interest) are made to (or received by) the Circuit to further its charitable purposes, and are repayable after more than one year, they are initially recognised at the amount paid (or received), with the carrying value adjusted in subsequent years to reflect repayments and any accrued interest, adjusted for any impairment, if necessary.

Where there is objective evidence of impairment, an immediate impairment loss is recognised in the SOFA. Subsequent reversals of impairment loss that objectively relate to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognised, are recognised immediately in the SOFA.

Where loans require the calculation of discounted cash flow valuation, this will also be recognised.

1.16 Methodist Connexional Funds

The Methodist Connexion raises assessments against Circuits and these are paid quarterly to their Districts. The Circuit raises assessments against Churches in the Circuit. The District quarterly remits to The Methodist Church Fund most of the sum received from the Circuits, retaining a small sum to meet its own costs. The Circuit may act as agent for *ad hoc* collections for various funds controlled and administered by The Methodist Church. Any such collections will be detailed in a later note.

1.17 Funds

The trustees have adopted a policy for all unrestricted reserves which is attached as a separate document.

1.18 Endowment funds

Where the Circuit holds money that may not be spent and must be retained (as capital) to generate an income the money or assets to be retained are classified as an Endowment Fund. The capital will be shown in the balance sheet in the column for endowment funds. The income may be restricted or unrestricted depending on the terms of the endowment.

1.19 Manse costs

The Circuit is required to provide accommodation for each minister in the Circuit and their families and this is seen as a benefit to the Circuit. Ministers are expected to occupy the manse provided for them. The Circuit bears the cost of repairs, maintenance, buildings insurance, Council Tax and water charges. These figures are not separately disclosed as benefits-in-kind for ministers as HMRC does not seek to tax these receipts in the hands of ministers.

2. Glossary of terms

CFB: The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church manages a Common Deposit Fund and a series of pooled investment funds for Methodist entities in Great Britain and provides investment advice to those entities.

Church: a group of members from fewer than 10 to more than 300.

Circuit: a group of Methodist Churches near each other, typically between 10 and 30.

Circuit Meeting: The trustees of the Circuit, most of whom are appointed by their local Churches, and others by virtue of a role they undertake for the Circuit and/or their local Churches. All trustees are members of the Methodist Church.

CLT (Circuit Leadership Team): A group (comprising mostly, but not exclusively) of Circuit trustees responsible for the day to day administration and policy formulation of the Circuit. Generally the CLT comprises the Ministers stationed within the Circuit and the Circuit Stewards.

CMTF: Circuit Model Trust Fund.

Connexion: The Methodist Church in Great Britain which includes the Head Office at Methodist Church House, all Methodist Districts, Circuits and Churches in Great Britain.

Connexional Funds: The Designated and/or Restricted Funds held and administered by the Connexion in furtherance of its charitable and mission objectives.

CPF: Connexional Priority Fund

District: a group of contiguous Circuits, usually between 15 and 30.

DAF: District Advance Fund.

FRS: Financial Reporting Standard.

HMRC: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Lay Employees: Personnel employed by the Circuit on generally accepted commercial employment terms.

MCH: Methodist Church House (Finance Section).

MMPS: Methodist Ministers' pension Scheme.

PASLEMC: Pensions and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church.

Pensions Trust: The Pensions Trust, the organisation through which the Circuit arranges a pension scheme for its Lay Employees.

Presbyters: Probationer or Ordained Methodist Ministers who have pastoral and administrative responsibility for the Churches in the Circuit.

SOFA: Statement of Financial Activities.

SORP: Statement of Recommended Practice.

TMCP: Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, the legal owner and custodian Trustee of all Methodist Model Trust Property, including Legacies, Endowments and Accumulated Funds.

3. Assessments on churches

The Circuit is comprised of 11 churches and each is assessed for a contribution to meet the overall net cost of the Circuit. An assessment on Churches is determined annually by a formula which takes into account the relative income (after deduction of certain actual and notional expenses) of each church. Assessments on churches are received quarterly or monthly in advance and are treated as prepayments on a receivable basis. If any church has not paid its assessment by the due date the sum in question is treated as a debtor. The churches concerned and the assessments for the years 2023-24 and 2022-23 were:

Church	2023-24	2022-23
Bladon	4,820	5,192
Cowley Road	13,672	14,624
Great Milton	4,815	6,492
Kennington	10,820	10,556
Kidlington	29,592	31,656
Lime Walk	34,824	33,984
Rose Hill	11,700	11,416
Tackley	9,064	8,840
Watlington	13,680	13,576
Wesley Memorial	136,412	128,088
Woodstock	23,992	25,660
Circuit totals	293,391	290,084

4. Grant income

Grants were received towards the cost of providing chaplaincy services to students and staff at Oxford Brookes University. Of the £25,000 received in 2023-24, £7,458 was recognised as income and the balance of £17,542 treated as deferred income (see note 16).

	2023-24	2022-23
Westminster College Oxford Trust	7,458	25,000
Total	7,458	25,000

5. Other charitable income (unrestricted)

This income consists principally of rent received from manses temporarily let.

	2023-24	2022-23
Rents received	37,387	16,200
Total	37,387	16,200

6. Grants and donations

Grants made or committed	2023-24	2022-23
Bladon lighting equipment		3,500
Lime Walk audio visual upgrade		4,800
Wesley Memorial Refugee Welcome		5,000
University of Durham (Underground Story - biblical literacy project) - write-back of contingent award		-9,000
Rose Hill kitchen equipment	1,248	
Church AV equipment		1,857
Wesley Memorial 3Generate subsidy		520
Total	1,248	6,677

7. Stipends, salaries and associated costs

The Circuit paid three ministers in 2024-25 (four in 2022-23), plus small amounts to supernumerary ministers who undertook preaching appointments.

	2023-24	2022-23
Stipends	90,024	110,405
Allowances	582	944
N.I.	8,738	10,586
Pension contribution	23,435	28,975
Preaching fees	1113	1084
Total	123,892	151,994

The Circuit employed five part-time lay staff (four):

- Children, Families and Outreach Worker based at Wesley Memorial;
- Two Community Chaplains;
- Joint Circuit and Church Administrator, based at and 50% funded by Wesley Memorial;
- Oxford Brookes University Chaplain.

Salaries	79,119	68,690
N.I.	5,479	4,829
Pension contribution	4,600	3,724
Less Wesley Memorial share	-12,836	-12,325
Total	76,362	64,918

Travel expenses were incurred primarily by ordained and lay staff.

Travel expenses	5,747	7,765
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Total Salaries and associated costs	206,000	224,677
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The ministers are members of the Circuit Meeting.

8. Property costs

These costs were incurred on maintenance and running costs of manse, both occupied by presbyters and temporarily let. The Circuit also pays for the quinquennial inspections of its constituent churches. The manse at Abingdon Road, Cumnor was rented by the Circuit for a period prior to completion of the purchase.

	2023-24 General	2023-24 Restricted	2022-23 General	2022-23 Restricted
Occupied properties	24,924		31,291	
Properties leased to tenants	1,330		15,492	
Rental costs			4,000	
Agent's management fees	9,477			
Church expenditure, incl. quinquennials	3,594		990	
Quarry churchyard maintenance		500		1,370
Total	39,325	500	51,773	1,370

Note 8a. Costs of Ministers and Trustees

The members of the Circuit Meeting are the trustees of the Circuit. The stipends, employer's NIC and employer's pension contributions and other expenses of the Ministers of the Circuit are paid by the Circuit (administered by MCH). The lay employees are employed by the Circuit (administered by MCH).

The manse are provided by the Circuit and the Circuit maintains the property. The values of Council Tax and water charges paid by the Circuit (included in the table above) are not separately disclosed here as HMRC does not regard this as benefit in kind in the hands of the minister.

Apart from the above no trustees receive payment for the duties that they undertake on behalf of the Circuit. Members of the CLT are reimbursed for some travel expenses and for small items of expenditure properly incurred in furthering the smooth working of the Circuit.

9. District and Connexional Assessments & Levies

The District and Connexional Assessments (Northampton District) are calculated using a formula that takes account of the relative numbers of ministers in the Circuit, liquid funds and unrestricted reserves of the member churches. These assessments are assigned here to the General Fund.

Balances held with TMCP in the CMTF are subject to a levy by the DAF.

In addition, sales of Methodist Church Property are subject to a levy by the CPF.

	2023-24	2022-23
Connexional Assessment	53,923	44,571
District Assessment	13,343	8,810
District Levy on Model Trust Fund	19,118	22,101
Total	86,384	75,482

10. Office expenses

	2023-24	2022-23
Wesley Memorial office and IT support	10,212	9,056
Stationary, phone, postage, copying, etc.	3,694	4,066
Website services	965	1,274
Office equipment	3,696	949
Total	18,567	15,345

11. Miscellaneous expenditure and other outgoings

	2023-24 General	2023-24 CMTF	2022-23 General	2022-23 CMTF
Relocation, removal expenses of ministers	0		1,920	
Fees of Independent Examiner	1,920		1,920	
Conference Minutes, Circuit preaching plans and similar	94		253	
Payroll charge, incl. Apprenticeship levy	1,332		1,404	
Worship Resources	669		896	
Other unallocated expenditures	1,166		1,038	
TMCP admin charge	0	1,059	0	1,172
Training, recruitment	2,026		1,215	
Total	7,207	1,059	8,646	1,172

12. Fixed assets

Fixed assets comprise five manses and the Quarry Churchyard and are unchanged.

Property	2023-24	2022-23
Abingdon Road, Cumnor	785,000	785,000
Ramsay Road	361,167	361,167
Oxford Road, Kidlington	312,946	312,946
Westbury Crescent	380,037	380,037
Watlington	330,876	330,876
Quarry Churchyard	1	1
Total	2,170,027	2,170,027

13. Debtors & advance payments

Item	2023-24	2022-23
Advance payment of stipends	10,356.5	10,176
Wesley Memorial share of Circuit admin and office equipment	143.8	12,469
Assessment due from churches	11,459.0	3,936
Other (agency collection)		245
Totals	21,959	26,826

14. Loan advances

Loan Advances	2023-24	2022-23
Wesley Memorial	0	20,000
Total	0	20,000

At a meeting on 15th March 2022, the Trustees approved a loan to Wesley Memorial Methodist Church of up to £20,000 to support growth of lettings income. The loan has been repaid in full.

15. Restricted and endowment funds

The Circuit has a restricted fund for the upkeep of the Churchyard adjacent to the former Headington Quarry Chapel. Income was £0 (£0) and expenditure £500 (£1,370), leaving a year-end balance of £221 (£721). Grant funding and any other income received for a specified purpose is also treated as restricted. Of the £25,000 grant received from Westminster College Oxford Trust (see note 4), £7,458 was expensed in the financial year and the balance of £17,452 held on deposit with CFB, matched by a deferred income liability. The Circuit has no endowment funds.

16. Creditors due within one year

Item	2023-24 General	2023-24 Restricted	2022-23 General	2022-23 Restricted
First Quarter assessments received in advance from churches	55,867		53,699	
Pre-paid rental income	3,160		4,787	
Deferred grant income		17,542		
Employment costs	1,250		1,427	
Property costs	2,321	75	1,358	875
Other	339		9,228	
Totals	62,937	17,617	70,499	875

17. Grants payable

Grant payable < 1 year	2023-24	2022-23
Rose Hill	5000	5000
Total	5,000	5,000

18. Related parties

None of the Circuit Trustees made donations direct to the Circuit during the year or in the previous year, other than collections administered by the Circuit for leaving members of staff. All Circuit Trustees are members of the Methodist Church (and hence related to the Circuit, District and Connexion); almost all are Trustees of one or more of the Churches in the Circuit, and a small number may also be Trustees of other Connexional bodies. Such related parties identified as donors to, or recipients from the Circuit in the year 2023-24, and the amounts involved (excluding loans) are:

Connected organisation	From Circuit	Received by Circuit
Connexional 3Methodist Church Fund (note 9)	53,923	
Northampton District (note 9)	32,461	
Circuit Churches (notes 3, 6, 7, 10)	11,460	306,227
Westminster College Oxford Trust (notes 4, 16)		25,000
Totals	97,845	331,227

No other material related party transactions were identified by the trustees.

RESERVES POLICY

Report on behalf of

Oxford Circuit Meeting

(*Church Council/ Circuit Meeting/District)

To

Northampton District

(*Circuit Meeting/District)

We submit our annual report in accordance with the requirements of the Methodist Conference and the Charity Commission guidance in CC19.

- (i) The trustees have established their mission aims taking into account all of the resources available in terms of people, property and money
- (ii) Mission initiatives/projects have been costed or estimates made of projected future costs which take into account the needs of the buildings and the requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection Report/s

- (iii) We have agreed a Reserves Policy which is set out overleaf and is recorded in the trustees' minutes and our Annual Report

- (iv) We recognise the need to be accountable as charity trustees for all the money which comes into our hands and will provide further information as required by the Circuit/District/Connexion

- (v) Our Report is attached overleaf

* please delete as appropriate

To be completed by Receiving Body

The

*Circuit Meeting/District received the RESERVES POLICY of

*Church Council/Circuit Meeting/District

Policy accepted and acknowledgement sent to the trustees

YES ☐ / NO ☐

Policy noted and the following enquiries made of the trustees

Responses received and any further action taken

*Circuit/District

Signatures Date.....

* Please delete as appropriate

RESERVES POLICY of

Oxford Circuit Meeting 23/01(*Church Council ☐/Circuit Meeting ☐/District ☐)

1.	General Funds held at Y/E 31/08/2024	£428,394
2.	Restricted Funds held “	£221
3.	Endowment Funds held “	£

4. **Reserves policy for General Funds**

General Funds of £428K noted above are unrestricted net current assets.

The Trustees consider it reasonable and prudent to maintain unrestricted reserves to mitigate the following risks (current £ values in brackets): manse repairs (£40,000); churches unable to sustain assessments (£110,000). Target unrestricted reserve level is therefore £150,000.

A further £55K has been set aside to cover the District Advance Fund levy on the Model Trust Fund and anticipated General Fund deficit in the current year. “Free” reserves are therefore considered to be £223K.

5. **Policy for Restricted Funds**



The Circuit has a Restricted Fund for the upkeep of the Churchyard adjacent to the former Headington Quarry Chapel: £221 (£721).

The Circuit is in receipt of restricted grant funding from Westminster College Oxford Trust towards the cost of providing a part-time member of the chaplaincy team at Oxford Brookes University.

6. **Terms relating to Endowment Funds held**

This Reserves Policy has been approved by **Circuit Meeting**

(*Church Council ☐/Circuit Meeting ☐/District ☐)

Treasurer	Trustee
Full name Christopher Butler	Full Name Rev Miriam Moul
Signature 	Signature 

Name of Circuit ...Oxford..... No...23/01.....

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these accruals-based accounts for the year to 31 August 2024 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 18/03/2025

Name and address of treasurer: Christopher Butler, Wooster Arms, The Walk, Islip, Kidlington

..... Post Code OX5 2SD

Presentation to the Circuit meeting

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 were presented to the Circuit meeting held on 18/03/2025.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting: 

Name of the Chair of the meeting: Rev. Miriam Moul Date 18/03/2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Oxford Methodist

..... Circuit

Charity Number ...1134618.....

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Oxford Methodist Circuit for the year ended 31 August 2024. 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

Name of Circuit ...Oxford..... No 23/01.....

Independent Examiner's Statement

The Circuit's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination 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; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination
- the trustees' annual report is not consistent with the accounts

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 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: Jessica Mason

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner: FCCA

Name of firm: Chapman Robinson and Moore Ltd

Address: 30 Bankside Court, Stationfields, Kidlington, Oxford

Post Code: OX5 2LR

Date: 1st April 2025