

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
For the year ended 31 August 2022

Wesley Methodist Church, Reading
Basingstoke and Reading Circuit

Charity registration number: 1134691

Minister: Reverend David Shaw

Church Treasurer: Kenneth Fordjour

Church Trustees (at May 2022):

Rev. David Shaw (Minister)

Kenneth Fordjour (Treasurer)

Patricia Brown (Secretary)

Julie Marsh (Pastoral co-ordinator)

Vicky Fordjour (Junior Church superintendent)

Mary Ludlow (Lay pastoral worker)

Peter Frank (Chairman, Property group)

Jonathan Brown (Chairman, Worship team)

Anita Abbey-Quaye (church steward)

Fredua Agyeman (church steward)

Anna Ghelli (church steward)

Sohini Shama (church steward)

Chris Preetham (church steward)

Tirivashe Manhera (church steward)

Evelyn Coffie (church steward)

Stephen Appiah (church representative)

Peter Chapman (church representative)

John Clarkson (church representative)

Brenda de Souza (church representative)

Alan Langford (church representative)

Richard Langford (church representative)

Angela Marjoram (church representative)

Terry Rowell (church representative)

The Church's statutory particulars are as follows:

Full name: Wesley Methodist Church

Main communication address: Wesley Methodist Church, Queen's Road, Reading RG1 4BW

Charity registered number: 1134691

Date of registration as Charity: 8 March 2010

Independent examiner: Mrs Christine Holland, 9 Ellerton Close, Theale, Reading RG7 5QN

Bankers: HSBC Bank plc, including an account through the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church.

The Church is part of the Basingstoke & Reading Circuit, which is part of the Southampton District and is also accountable to the Methodist Conference.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Wesley Methodist Church has been at the centre of the community since its establishment in 1873. We are a thriving congregation representing a wide range of ages, backgrounds and ethnicities, committed to worshipping together and serving our communities in the best way we can.

Our core purpose is the furtherance of the Christian faith through the provision of regular public acts of worship which are open to members and non-members alike. We do this through a lively and supportive programme of worship on Sundays and at other times of the week, through sermons, courses of Bible study, music and singing, prayer and small group fellowships for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We support our members and those who see us as their spiritual home through pastoral work and prayer. Practical manifestations of this include extending friendship to those who come to us, and visiting and praying for members of the congregation.

We also commit to supporting other groups who use our building and to making links with others, both in our local area and internationally. We do this by providing space for groups, and by providing financial support to other charities.

Our membership is about 150, and various other people visit the church regularly.

The following is our vision and purpose:

We believe in a loving God who came into our world in the person of Jesus Christ to bring us to himself. In his life and teaching Jesus showed us the best way to live. On the cross he died in our place, offering us the free gift of forgiveness and a new start. By rising from the dead he assures us of eternal life. In his daily presence with us through the Holy Spirit he gives meaning and direction to our lives.

The Trustees confirm that the Church is a public benefit entity.

Achievements and performance:

During 2021-2022 we have carried out the following activities:

- Continued our family worship on Sundays throughout the year in church, including Junior Church. Congregational numbers have recovered from lockdown and even gained new worshippers.
- Continued to provide online worship for those who are unable to meet in person in church. The numbers engaging with these services make it worthwhile to do this.
- Continued to use the gifts of our congregation to lead and support worship in church and online through music and other means.
- Continued our ecumenical links with our neighbouring church St Andrews URC, including the distribution of Easter eggs and Easter leaflets around the neighbourhood, and putting on a Street Afternoon Tea for the Platinum Jubilee.
- Taken our responsibilities towards the environment seriously by developing policies in keeping with being an Eco-Church, achieving a Bronze Award.
- Supported our children and young people in Junior Church by continuing to hold in-church sessions. A group of children and young people was taken to the 3Generate conference in Birmingham in October 2021
- Completed Phase 1 (accessible ground-floor toilets) of the major refurbishment project of the adjoining former manse building (known as 84 Queens Road), to create more usable space for the church, the charities that occupy the building, and the community. Drawn up specifications and tender documents for Phase 2 (a kitchen

and café area, and accessible external ramp). Funds were raised from grants, the Methodist Circuit and District, and the Wesley congregation.

- Supported a network of other voluntary groups when possible through the provision of space, including a number of support groups for people with addictions.
- Re-started our services for parents and babies through the Spokes parent and toddler session.

The future:

As part of the developing work of the church we are looking at how best we can use the resources and skills of the congregation, the gift of the buildings and the space they offer, together with the financial resources of the church, and to identify what else we should develop to meet our objectives as a church and a key part of the community. Plans for 2022/2023 include:

- Submission of further applications for grant funding for development of the former manse for church and community use, and completion of Phase 2.
- Joint community outreach with St Andrew's URC, to distribute free Easter eggs with leaflets around the neighbourhood, to hold a Walking Nativity, and to offer a free Street Afternoon Tea for the King's Coronation.
- Continuing to support other church communities through the use of our buildings.
- Supporting other community service projects as well as continuing existing ones.
- Begin to plan for the church's 150th anniversary in 2023.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income and expenditure:

Church income is primarily drawn from the Sunday collections paid by the congregation plus the related Gift Aid tax credits, and lettings income paid by local community groups using the premises. Owing to lockdown, collections and tax credit fell by £538 over the previous year to £73944, and lettings by £13857.

The major expense is the assessment paid to Basingstoke & Reading Circuit. The assessment this year was £70203 compared with £68728 the previous year. The assessment pays for the minister's salary, employer pension, NI contributions, travelling expenses and manse running costs; Circuit administration; and contributions towards denominational central costs. The other main expense is Church running costs, including heating and lighting, insurance and utilities, maintenance and improvements, which amounted to £43067 this year.

We were able to prepare for Phase 1 of the refurbishment of the ground floor of the old manse (84 Queen's Road) during this current financial year.

Reserves policy:

General funds: It is the Church's policy to have in hand sufficient to cover at least three months assessment, plus a further amount to cover any emergencies which occur in the short term and other one off payments which may arise, and to this end it will endeavour to have £27,000 readily available to cover these payments.

General funds held at Y/E 31/08/2021 £10271.

Restricted funds: No funds have been drawn from the TMCP Investments during the last financial year. It is intended to carry out work to the ground floor of 84 Queens Road for which consents have now been obtained. It is anticipated that some of these funds will be

used for this purpose, but it is our intention to keep some funds in reserve for any major works that arise to our Victorian buildings which are now over 140 years old.

Restricted funds held at Y/E 31/08/2021: £24,186.

Review of the year 2020-2021:

The year got off to a good start, with healthy giving and other income. From March 2020 income from lettings and other sources dropped by more than 75%. In spite of the unprecedented circumstances and the financial challenges that we have encountered, we have managed to meet most of our expenses, mainly due to generous giving of our members. As the financial year 2021-2022 began, it looked as though we could continue to hold our own.

Outline of Wesley Methodist Accounts (at 31/08/21):

TMCP Account £56,394

CFB Deposit fund account £32,212

Current account balance £9,325

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Wesley Methodist Church is a Christian organisation that is governed by the Methodist Church Act 1976. Detailed governance arrangements are outlined in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD) by order of the annual Conference. Day-to-day management of the Church is undertaken by the Church stewards along with the Minister under the authority of the Church Council, who are the Trustees. The Trustees are appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Church.

Mr Kenneth Fordjour (one of the managing trustees) as Treasurer oversees the day-to-day financial management and accounting for the Church during the year, supported by a Property & Finance group chaired by Mr Peter Frank.

A range of guidance produced by the Methodist Connexion to support the effective running of the church and the role of the Trustees is given to the Church Trustees at various meetings and/or training sessions.

Risk management

The major risks have been identified and recorded by the Trustees with professional advice taken as required. A regular annual review process is undertaken as required. Income and expenditure is reviewed and monitored against budget on a quarterly basis as part of the risk management process to avoid unforeseen calls on reserves.

Safeguarding

The Methodist Church, along with the whole Christian community, believes that each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

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.
- Establishing safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
- Carefully selecting and training 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.
- Responding without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- Seeking to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- Seeking 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 following legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Wesley Methodist Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the Circuit and in the churches.

Wesley Methodist Church also 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.

Approved by the Trustees on 21st May 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Signed:



Rev. David Shaw

Date: 21st May 2023

Accounting responsibilities

Charity law requires trustees to prepare annual accounts that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs to the Church at the year end and of its financial activities during the period. The Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them prudently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Church will continue in operation.

Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Church, so that the accounts comply with the charity accounting SORP 2015. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Church and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

The Church is entitled to exemption from audit under the Charities Act but is required to have an independent examination of its accounts; the Church has therefore taken advantage of this exemption.