

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
For the year ended 31 August 2023

Wesley Methodist Church, Reading
Basingstoke and Reading Circuit

Charity registration number: 1134691

Minister: Reverend David Shaw (until 31 July 2023), Reverend Martin Beukes (from 1 August 2023)

Church Treasurer: Kenneth Fordjour

Church Trustees (at 31 August 2023):

Rev. Martin Beukes (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)
Anna Ghelli (church steward)
Chris Preetham (church steward)
Tirivashe Manhera (church steward)
Evelyn Coffie (church steward)
Vishal Singh (church steward)
Bethany Finnegan (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 2022-2023 we have carried out the following activities:

- Continued our family worship on Sundays throughout the year in church, including Junior Church. The congregation has grown over the past year.
- Continued to provide online worship for those who are unable to meet in person in church. The numbers engaging with these services still make it worthwhile to do this.
- Planned and carried out a programme to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the church's foundation, lasting from December 2022 to October 2023, including:
 - Publication of a history of the church
 - Photographic and art exhibitions
 - An open day as part of the town's Heritage Weekend (planned for September 2023)
 - Invitations to previous ministers and preachers to take services.
 - Visit of the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference in February 2023
 - Celebration meals
 - The making of a banner to commemorate the anniversary.
- 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 Coronation.

- Taken our responsibilities towards the environment seriously by developing policies in keeping with being an Eco-Church.
- Supported our children and young people in Junior Church by continuing to hold in-church sessions. A group of 17 children and young people was taken to the 3Generate conference in Birmingham in October 2022
- Continued with the development of the 84 Queen's Road project. Phase 2 was completed (dining-room, kitchen, and accessible ramp to the main entrance). Phase 3 (creating one main room out of two) was started.
- Supported a network of other voluntary groups when possible, through the provision of space, including a number of support groups for people with addictions.
- Continued 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 (including the completed 84 Queen's Road project) 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 2023/2024 include:

- Bringing 84 Queen's Road into full operation.
- Continuing joint community outreach with St Andrew's URC.
- Continuing to support other church communities through the use of our buildings.
- Supporting other community service projects as well as continuing existing ones, including engaging with Citizens UK.
- Complete the celebrations for the church's 150th anniversary, culminating in October 2023.
- Further develop work with young people, including employing a youth minister.

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. Collections and tax credit increased by £23201 over the previous year to £91924 and lettings by £2176.

The major expense is the assessment paid to Basingstoke & Reading Circuit. The assessment this year was £70727 compared with £68661 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 £43913 this year.

We were able to almost complete the refurbishment of the work in 84 Queens Road during the financial year, with only one or two minor items needing to be completed for the Project to finished.

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 £32000 readily available to cover these payments.

General funds held at Y/E 31/08/2021 £119472.

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: £13666.

Review of the year 2022 - 2023

Overall, the year has proved very satisfactory from a financial point of view. Our income has increased, and we have been able to contain expenditure to within manageable limits, so that the Church is in a sound financial position.

Outline of Wesley Methodist Accounts (at 31/08/23):

TMCP Account £58151

CFB Deposit fund account £24028

Current account balance £50959

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 16th June 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Signed:

Rev. Martin Beukes *Date 16th June 2024*

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:

- a. Select suitable accounting policies and apply them prudently
- b. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- c. 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.