THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales · Charity number 1135613

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2010-04-21
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Circuit Office Brookside Methodist Church Gunthorpe Road Gunthorpe Peterborough PE4 7TG
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Activities

Objects: 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 THE DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH;(B) ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE FOR THE TIME BEING OF ANY CONNEXIONAL, DISTRICT, CIRCUIT, LOCAL OR OTHER ORGANISATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH;(C) ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE FOR THE TIME BEING OF ANY SOCIETY OR INSTITUTION 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.

Activities: SUPPORT TO LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE CIRCUIT TO PROVIDE ACTS OF WORSHIP - IN PERSON AND ONLINE - FOR MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS. THE TEACHING OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH SERMONS, COURSES AND SMALL GROUPS. PASTORAL WORK INCLUDING VISITING THE SICK AND BEREAVED. PROMOTING CHRISTIANITY THROUGH EVENTS AND SERVICES. SUPPORTING OTHER CHARITIES LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND OVERSEAS FINANCIALLY AND WITH PRAYER.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE, LOCAL.
- Cambridgeshire
- Lincolnshire
- Northamptonshire
- Peterborough City

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-08-31	£202,817	£201,512	-	-
2023-08-31	£150,402	£181,743	-	-
2022-08-31	£194,072	£141,741	-	-
2021-08-31	£170,373	£134,400	-	-
2020-08-31	£183,661	£160,989	-	-

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Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Rev Colin Sherwood	Chair	2025-09-03
Catherine Joan Ruffles		2020-01-20
Christine Ritson Kell		2016-04-12
Constance Hunt		2024-10-24
DENISE MARILYN SARAH WATSON		2012-02-11
David Whiting		2021-09-06
Dr John Featherstone Hewitson		
Erica Dorothy Pilkinton		2025-02-12
GEORGE BARBER		2017-09-26
Heather Joyce Black		2019-01-16
Karen Elizabeth Armstrong		2024-05-02
Karen Lightfoot		2026-02-05
MONICA STURGESS		2013-01-09
Madeleine Whiting		2024-07-10
Mick Goodman		2015-05-08
NIGEL ANTHONY LIGHTFOOT		2012-01-27
Nicholas James Drury		2025-04-03
PETER JOHN WILLIAMS		
Paul Robert Abel		2023-11-23
Rev DAVID PARKES		
Rev DOUGLAS GEORGE STEVENS		2013-09-29
Rev Dale Stephen Sherriff		2025-10-16
Rev Sarah Catherine Gower		2013-12-30
SARAH KELLY		2018-01-24
Sarah Jane Bereznyckyj		2017-11-18
Shirley Dallman		2025-04-03
Susan Margaret Holmes		2020-01-23

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Name	Role	Appointed
Suzanne Julie Delegate		2023-11-23
TREVOR HOWLETT		
VALERIE JOY OCTON		

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THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales - Charity number 1135613

Accounts

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Peterborough Methodist Circuit
for the church year 1st Sept 2023 to 31st August 2024
(Registered Charity No 1135613)



Produced by the Peterborough Circuit of the Methodist Church
Circuit Office, Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough PE4 7TG
Email: pborocircuitoffice@gmail.com Tel: (01733) 328192

Our Mission Statement

"The Peterborough Methodist Circuit aims to be the people of God within our communities, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and showing God's love through worship, witness and service."

We seek to discover the needs of contemporary society and respond to it; working with our ecumenical partners towards creating relationships within the communities and sharing the word of God with those around us.

We seek to utilise and ensure the abilities and skills of lay people fully in the Circuit and encourage others to explore and offer themselves for service at all levels as equal partners in our work.

As a Methodist Circuit, we put into action the different elements of our Methodist Calling in our Worship, our Learning and Caring, our Service and our Evangelism, always striving to put Jesus first.

We have a heart for nurturing and shaping disciples. We are deeply committed to evangelism and social outreach. We have seen great things by working in partnership with other denominations.

Our vision statement for our children's and young people's ministry

"Providing loving and caring ministries that children and young people may come to know Jesus Christ"

Trustees during the year	
Revd Langley Mackrell-Hey (Chair)	Nigel Lightfoot
Paul Abel	Jo Marshall-Sully
Giles Armstrong	Valerie Octon
Karen Armstrong	Sylvia Parker
George Barber	Revd David Parkes
Sarah Bereznyckyj	Cathy Ruffles
Heather Black	Margaret Smith
Stephen Brown	Revd Douglas Stevens
Rhod Eaton	Monica Sturgess
Sue Gage	Revd Janet Titterton
Michael Goodman	Revd Graham Tooth
Revd Sarah Gower	Nicky Ward
John Hewitson	Denise Watson
Sue Holmes	Elizabeth White
Trevor Howlett	David Whiting
Sue Keeney	Peter Williams
Christine Kell	Wendy Willis
Sarah Kelly	

1 Our Circuit

1.1 Encompassing the heart of Peterborough and extending into three counties – Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire - we minister in the city, in towns, suburbs and in villages.

There are ten churches in the Peterborough Circuit. In addition, Methodist ministers and Local Preachers lead the service at Yarwell (an Anglican Church) once a month, where there is a Methodist class. Three of our churches: Whittlesey, Westgate New Church and Christ Church are Local Ecumenical Partnership's (LEPs).

The Peterborough Circuit is part of the Northampton District of the Methodist Church, which seeks to be a place where there is diversity and vibrancy, and a place where everyone can feel welcomed, a place where we can all flourish and grow in our discipleship. We have good links and regular communication with our District office staff.

1.2 Trustees of the Circuit Meeting met four times during the year and devotions were led by: In November 2023, Matt Forsyth (Local Preacher, and our District Mission Enabler) on 'You have Voicemail', using 1 Kings 2: 1-5; in January 2024, by Revd Sarah Gower on 'Working Together; in May 2024, by Revd Kim Shorley from the District Misson Team. (Revd Kim's role is to encourage New Places for New People, beginning with FEAST groups (Friends Exploring and Sharing Together); and, in July 2024 by Paul Abel (Circuit Steward), on 'What does the Bible teach us about teamwork, or working as one?'

1.3 *Services - in person and online* **-** Live daily online 'Morning Prayers' and weekly online recorded Sunday morning worship continued all through the year. Despite, since Covid, the return of most

people to services in person, our online community has continued to be constant, with good relationships formed and strengthened through regular fellowship, with lots of opportunities to encourage one another in prayer.

1.4 **Circuit Strategy**

In the light of our challenging financial situation, we continued having discussions about where we are and developing a new strategy for a sustainable future. As a circuit, we began work on developing a strategy that looks forward several years – not just regarding finance, but also resourcing in terms of people. We encouraged people to offer to serve as circuit stewards, and someone to offer as Circuit Treasurer as Giles Armstrong had given his intention to stand down. We were pleased to welcome Karen Armstrong as his successor and were then able to start reviewing the finances across the churches and develop a far richer strategy as we looked towards the future.

Due to the budget shortfall this year, we decided action must be taken. The Circuit has been looking at cost cutting and further assets sales after the sale of Ailsworth Chapel. (The sale is going forward, albeit very slowly. Circuit will get a portion of the money from the sale).
The logical approach was to look at manse options and cut back on churches. Three tangible short-term options were noted as circuit cost reductions, additional share contributions and identifying assets to sell. There were a number of further options, proposed at the treasurers' meeting, and these need further work to be completed; scenarios with less churches, scenario with one less minister from 2025, scenario with an amalgamation with another circuit, scenario with cost reductions identified in the Peterborough Circuit, and a scenario with stretch target assumptions for Church Share contribution increases.

As we are all aware, the cost of living crisis affects everyone; essentials costing more means less disposable money. Added to that, the effect of Covid has had far reaching consequences.

Circuit is meeting costs by using reserves to balance the books. One result of this was looking at a Circuit with only one Minister in 2025. This was not a viable option as things were, and we needed to think out of the box as to how we can move forward, how we can raise more money and how we can cut costs. The way forward for this is for us to work together, to make suggestions and discuss options, to support each other, and hopefully to find a workable solution.

Our churches are doing great work, in worship and in the community. Supporting and caring are obviously very important, and we need to support and care for each other on the road to find a future that works for us and enables us to continue the Lord's work.

To help people through this process, a leaflet was produced which explains how churches, Circuit, District and Connexion work together and these are available from each church.

We decided to enter into a time of prayer in the Circuit, and everyone was emailed a copy of the Circuit Prayer initiative, prepared by Judy Robinson, with helpful prayer pointers to help us to focus our prayers. This was sent to all our local preachers and leaders of worship, and we formulated a prayer sheet that was circulated to all the churches. As we wanted every member of every church to be heard through their representative, people were asked to pray for anything as it is an open forum so, churches were asked to send in short, concise, pithy messages for inclusion. The Circuit Prayer team issued this Circuit Prayer, which we all prayed as we prayed, shared, and moved forward together:

"*Where there is no vision the people perish*". (Proverbs Chapter 28, verse 18)

Lord, keep us focused upon Your will for us, individually and corporately.

In our diversity, draw us together in unity and not uniformity.

Help us to reflect and to learn lessons from the past, both the good and not so good.

Teach us to discern the difference, show us Your way forward.

Remind us continually that we worship a Great Big God, a God of surprises, a God who holds each of us in His loving embrace.

"*What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God*". (Micah Chapter 6, verse 8)

Lord, create in us a capacity to wonder where You are leading us, and give us the faith to follow.

"*You are the Potter and we are the clay*". (Romans Chapter 9, verse 21)

Giles and Mark continued to do some work and look at other options and bring them to our collective Circuit gathering in January, when Matt Forsyth also spoke about how we radically change the nature of the Circuit and provide spaces where our work is more likely to flourish.

We worked with Matt Forsyth (District Mission Enabler) who gave us encouragement in leading focused conversations when we gathered in discussion and prayer, which was the most important thing to do to help guide us in the decisions we were making. These were called 'The Art of Sankofa Vision Mornings', held on Saturdays 27th January, 16th March and 18th May. We took time to listen and pray and reflect and think about where and what things we need to change and adapt, bringing together everyone's different skills and talents in different ways and focusing on prayer and renewal.

There was feedback regarding Sankofa concerning what we value and what we lament: We value preaching, the enthusiasm of coming together and what we think of ourselves as a circuit.

At our third Sankofa meeting we worked with Revd Kim Shorley from the district and explored how we might resource our churches differently, prioritising some centres for worship on a Sunday, and others midweek so we achieve some consistency, with maybe more churches offering an afternoon. We looked at centres of worship and centres of mission and different ways of working. We considered what we want from our Circuit lay workers, and how they work in partnership with ministers. We continued asking questions of the district and the Connexion, and we also spoke directly to Conference through a memorial regarding grants, questioning them about Connexional financial Support and asking the Methodist Church to consider how it supports circuits of churches who are in transition.
Our concern in Peterborough focuses on circuits like ours that are transitioning to something new and may benefit from a raft of supportive interventions. As our churches evolve their ministry and mission during challenging economic times, financial uncertainties can hinder creative and visionary thinking. Our memorial urged the Methodist Church to leverage its full resources, particularly emphasizing the 'Connexional Principle' - the tradition of stronger members and churches (financial or otherwise) supporting the weaker. The memorial which we submitted in March 2024 went to the Conference in July 2024 said: 'The Peterborough Circuit Meeting calls on the Conference to commission a review of how the Connexional Principle (mutual support, and the stronger enabling the weak) is being upheld across our Church, particularly in relation to finance, and how we help poorer Circuits and Local Churches through periods of transition towards growth'.

Our concerns have resonated with others within the Church and, In response to our memorial, which echoed concerns from other regions about how we are deploying resources in different areas of ministry, the Methodist Church is forming an Economic Justice Working Group. This will benefit us and others in the future. We are pleased that we have opened up a new channel in the district for support for churches in transition. Thanks go to all those who worked on the memorial and to Matt Forsyth for his guidance.

The Sankofa mornings gave us insights that are informing our Circuit strategy and this includes helping us to see the huge amount that is actually happening in our churches. We put the detail in our

Sankofa prayer, where we give thanks for all that is going on:

Dear Lord, Sometimes, our understanding of what you are doing is too small. We can be focused on struggle and decline but overlook what you are doing through us as a whole. Sometimes there is too much money in our thinking, and not enough faith in Jesus. Help us to balance our pragmatism and purpose with the truth that you give us and what we need to fulfil your mission. Help us to turn to you as we discern how you are calling us to support each other as a circuit of churches. We give thanks …

For our just over three hundred members of the Methodist Church, with thirty in the past eighteen months/two years, and other new people who have joined us.
For our presence in over twelve communities.
For our capacity to welcome people with acute physical needs, and learning differences.
For our sixteen worshipping congregations - midweek and Sundays.
For our three Foodbanks, and our donation points (people give so generously), and for our community family meals.
For our Homeless Pod at Southside, and our partnership with Light Project Peterborough and the Garden House.
For our Preschool at Southside, and the preschool we enable at Dogsthorpe.
For our four Messy Churches.
For our three Toddler Groups.
For our five Sunday Schools.
For our working with five uniformed groups and three schools.
For our two After-School Clubs.
For our support of teenagers. (probably our weakest area, but there is a lot of mentoring going on).
For our eight Coffee Mornings.
For our fourteen Bible Study or Fellowship Groups.
For our eight Shared Interest Groups.
For our Livestream Witness of over 200 broadcasts since lockdown.
For our links with Methodist Homes, the Leprosy Mission, The Light Project, The Salvation Army, and Equipping the Saints.
For everything we have a part in enabling: The Peterborough Christian Bookshop, and Christian Options for Peterborough Schools (CROPS).
For our link with the URC and our partnering with the Christian Bookshop.

For the work we support by offering our premises to community groups that are so many and varied that we cannot do them justice here. Forgive us for the times when we underestimate what you are doing, and when what you are doing does not fit our neatly ordered categories. We give thanks that you will continue to grow this work in the future. Help us to find our part in that.

We created a video including all the above, which is available via YouTube. It is called the ‘Prayer and Celebration Video (‘Listening, Following, Changing’). It is a reworking and reframing of our Circuit Prayer, which we issued in May, in which we give thanks for how God is faithful - and how we can so easily overlook the positive things that are around us, especially in challenging times. The early (and new additions to the prayer) acknowledge how many of us struggle with change, but change can be for the better, and just because we may find something difficult does not mean that it will turn out bad. It dwells on the knowledge that we are on the rollercoaster of life but always moving forward). It has become known as the rollercoaster video, and it shows how someone changes as he video goes on.

We decided we want to uplift people about the movement that we are part of so, we produced a two-sided leaflet saying who we are and what we are about, and this can be given to people who walk into one of our churches to let people know who we are and this richness that we are a part of.

We drew in the threads that came from Sankofa, and some of the themes were that we are looking at transformation, we want to be financially sustainable, growth orientated, deeply engaged in

mission work, have a keen focus on deepening faith and increasing membership, deploying our resources widely and fairly and investing in the communities from which people are drawn and developing new forms of church. One of the underlying themes is that we are the kind of circuit that wants to talk about growth, not about managing decline.

Following the encouragement to explore all kinds of options and to enter into dialogue with the District, we decided to go into stationing for a full-time Superintendent. The Circuit Stewards have been working hard on the profile, creating one that has appeal to someone with a desire for a challenge, to enable the changes to move us to a more sustainable future. Thanks go to everyone and to the Working Party and the Prayer group, as their hard work and input has given us more insight into how our future will look and what needs to be done to get us there.

We had two working party meetings following the vision mornings, as part of which Revd Langley prepared a timetable of our plan ('Timetable for Transition') and what would be unfolding, and what we could all helpfully pray for as we journeyed into stationing.

At our September meeting we reported on the fact changes are required in how Circuit ministers to the churches and how there is a need to make a greater understanding of what our Circuit is and does. To this end we created and shared the "What is Circuit?" notes to begin encouraging the thoughts of all in determining what form such changes may take and how we can work together to deliver these. Since then, our main focus has been on the model of ministry from Sept 2025 linked to the fiscal projections, looking at different scenarios. CLT is keener than ever to involve all the churches and their members, and to this end District Enabler Matt Forsyth with his Sankofa initiative is an important step in engaging all.

CLT continued to act as Elton Church Council, working to ensure there were opportunities via the Sankofa gatherings and support in prayer to find ways to provide ongoing Methodist worship in the village.

The Circuit Leadership Team announced its eagerness to grow in number, to have a larger pool of people with their gifts and talents as we met to assimilate information from the Sankofa events and continued working to shape our Circuit's future.

We recruited the Circuit Invitation Committee and entered into the stationing process to find a new minister, as both Revds Langley and Janet are moving on at the end of July next year.

In terms of circuit policy, we have a rolling five-year financial projection (in operation for some years now). We are quite unique as a circuit in having this. Our Circuit Mission Statement and other documents are easily accessible from our web site.

1.5 **Circuit staffing**

Revd Janet continued with the oversight of the Methodist churches at Brookside, Dogsthorpe, Elton, Orton Waterville, Southside and Yaxley. Our Lay Pastoral Assistant, Suzanne Delegate continued her ministry in these churches under Revd Janet's oversight.

Our lay worker, Tim Wong, continued in his role as Children, Family and Community Worker at Whittlesey. This year, he focused on several key areas where the church's support can make a big difference. Firstly, a new volunteer leader and a helper joined Whittlesey's Sunday Children's Service, and it has been exciting to collaborate in reaching out to draw more families in. They planned four vibrant Messy Church sessions with the hope of attracting parents to volunteer alongside their children.

Discussions took place with a local youth centre about inviting young people with diverse needs to the church premises, where they explored ways to offer support and build connections.

They had a transformative project to redesign their pathway into a plant garden, a space that could encourage young people, both within and beyond their community, to participate and grow together, fostering a deeper sense of belonging. Tim began the year brimming with anticipation for

what God's kingdom can accomplish through these initiatives, and his eagerness and his commitment to see the church community thriving and making a positive impact has born much fruit.

Our Circuit Administrator, Sue Moore, continued in her role, which entails a variety of tasks including assisting the Superintendent Minister with his diary, producing the Preaching Plan and organising Circuit Meetings in her role as Circuit Meeting Secretary.

There is more information about Suzanne and Tim's roles later in this report.

1.6 *New appointments* **-** We started this Methodist year with just two Circuit Stewards, no Circuit Property Team Co-ordinator and no Circuit Treasurer, but we have been fortunate that two people have stepped forward to fulfil the roles of Circuit Steward (Paul Abel) and Property Team Co-ordinator (Rhod Eaton). Both worship at Whittlesey Queen Street Church, and they were elected in November 2023.

2 Mission and Outreach

This section includes different mission activities happening in the Circuit, and some examples of specific mission in individual churches.

2.1 *Mission in our Circuit*

2.1.1 We continued to run and support Foodbanks at Crowland, Dogsthorpe and Oundle. The number of users continued to be very high, so we are thankful to all concerned for their commitment to feed and support the many hungry individuals and families in our communities.

2.2.2 Church members at Southside Methodist Church continued to support the guests that resided in the homelessness pod in their church car park. The pods are provided by the local charity Light Project Peterborough and church members provide meals for the guests on a rota basis and give help, as needed.

Some church members are part of the Light Project Peterborough Steering Group ('Peterborough Christians for Social Action'), which is an ecumenical group, attending meetings and highlighting and contributing to local needs, liaising with the council and other local organisations to get things done and help to improve the lives of local residents. Some members are volunteers for the "The Garden House", which is a drop-in day centre for the project.

2.2.3 Individual churches raised money for particular charities in need of support including the Methodist Homes Association (MHA). Some churches kept MHA Sunday on 9th June (the theme shining a spotlight on dementia) or throughout that month; for example, Whittlesey had a special service, led by visiting preacher, Tony Hey, on 23rd June. The sermon video produced nationally was special to us as it was recorded in The Maples, our local MHA retirement living scheme, with MHA's long-standing patron and friend, TV and radio presenter, Pam Rhodes, presenting it and fronting the campaign.
Marion Mahan (Chaplain to The Maples), moved to Derby to her new role as MHA Area Support Chaplain and was replaced by Karen Hales. The residents are also supported by visits from two of our Circuit ministers – Revd Sarah Gower and Revd David Parkes, and several Circuit members. Joanna Parkin continued at The Maples in her role as Activities Co-ordinator.

2.2.4 As ever, the churches responded generously to Connexional Funds. Over £3500 was sent by the churches to the charities involved for Property, Presbyters and Deacons, LWPT, MHA, All We Can and Ministers' Housing. We have had Connexional Funds Officers in the past, and churches used to send their funds to the Connexional Funds Officer and they would divvy up the funds, as requested. After Sue Keeney stepped down from the role last year, we approached someone new to take it on; unfortunately, that did not work out despite our best efforts so, the church treasurers and now sending their churches' donations in individually.

2.3 **Mission Activities and Events in our Churches**

2.3.1 A wide range of regular groups met in our churches, and these included:

O*rton Waterville* continued to be a hive of activity. 'Orton Friends' (drop-in for the retired) continued to grow, meeting on Monday afternoons, enjoying chat, refreshments, games and challenges. The Stitches Knitting for Charity Group also grew, as did the list of charities. They supply Barnado's with everything from premature baby clothes to about age five, blankets for cribs, cots, beds, prams, pushchairs, separation blankets for prisoners, toys, boobs for ante-natal classes, knee blankets for two local nursing homes, worry monsters to Knit for Nowt in Beverley for use by counsellors around the country, memory box blankets for Sands, hats, scarves and gloves to the Mission for Seamen and Knit for Peace take anything else they have. The Chapel is also used by Peterborough Art Society for their committee meetings. Orton Waterville is an active member of Churches Together in the Ortons and a regular supplier to Peterborough Foodbank. They continue in close association with MHA The Maples.

Brookside Their morning worship has included a range of styles of worship, including café worship, All Age services and own arrangements led by church groups. Sunday Club met most weeks, except when there was All Age worship. They also had Messy Church and Café Worship sessions some Sunday afternoons. Joint morning services were held with Dogsthorpe Church. A mid-week Communion service was held monthly, and they have Tuesday Fellowship twice a month. Two Bible study groups meet - New Direction, which is an online weekly group, and Crossways, which meets face to face twice a month. In November 2023, they had a memorial service for bereaved family and friends. There is a PE4 partnership group with other churches in the area. The church's website is updated weekly. Their online notice sheet is sent out weekly and they have a monthly online newsletter.
Their team of pastoral carers supports members and adherents. Those who are unable to attend church are offered visits by Pastoral Assistants and home Communion if they would like it.
Fellowship, social events and fundraising - after church refreshments following each morning service, the money raised is given to chosen charities. Church groups include Craft and Chat, Men's group, Ladies' group, and wellbeing coffee morning.
Social events over the year included church lunches to celebrate their Church Anniversary and Christmas, a band concert, a Christmas Fayre and a coffee morning for Christian Aid.
Mission and outreach - their pre-school meets during term time. Boys' Brigade celebrated their 50th Anniversary this year. Guides, Brownies and Rainbows met in term time. Other groups who use the premises are - Gamblers Anonymous, art groups, choir, slimming group and exercise groups, The building is also used for music exams and as a polling station - it is good to engage with people who use our churches in these different and meaningful ways.

Although it was started during the pandemic Lockdown as an attempt to keep the 'fellowship" element of the church family going, after over 200 weeks there is still a desire for the Brookside Online Newsletter (now monthly), which is complemented by the weekly Notice Sheet for more immediate news and diary reminders. Thanks go to Chris Hardman for putting this together so professionally, to David for his proofreading and to all the regular contributors.

Brookside held a Remembering service in November, which was very moving and well attended. It is for people who have been recently bereaved, and it is held bi-annually.

Their warm space community hub is going really well – it is held on Fridays and there are hot drinks, jigsaws, books and games. A number of people come in and spend time together. They also have their fortnightly Coffee Morning, and a new fortnightly Bible Study group started in November is doing well. They had a successful Christmas Fayre is on 25th November.

Oundle have a service on the first and third Sundays and they continued with their "Gatherings" (times of fellowship, teaching and prayer) on the first and third Wednesdays, with eight ministers/local preachers invited to give reflections on a rota basis (Revds Langley, Janet, David Parkes, Dale Sherriff and Graham Tooth, Nigel Lightfoot, Monica Sturgess and Ann Tooth). Everyone on the Community Roll also gets a weekly email on a Saturday with detailed notices for the week. On the weekends when they are not meeting face-to-face (for a service), the email also includes an 'email service'. This is a service composed from 'The Vine at Home' but with the full Vine sermon. Hymns include links to YouTube and other parts are tailored to their own congregation.

The Gathering is proving to be a most valuable part of their life together - a time when they can share together more intimately than in a Sunday service (even with tea/coffee/chocolate biscuits after Sunday worship). The Gathering is much more informal and spontaneous and they value their fine cadre of leaders, some of whom they can engage with when they might not otherwise meet them (e.g. Rev Janet).

The Food Bank continued to operate from Oundle Methodist on Thursdays from 10.30 to 11.30am. It is part of the Trussell Trust network (Oundle are part of the "Stamford and Oundle Foodbank, but it was established by Methodist efforts and, initially, Methodist resources.

Oundle again supported the local Chattabox initiative for children and young people and attended its annual service in August at Oundle Primary School.

Crowland have put on various social events, such as Beetle Drives and concerts to raise money for their roof repairs. There has also been the opportunity for people to buy a roof tile for ten pounds and they get a certificate in return. They have Explorers; Toddlers group; Saturday morning coffee sessions with book stalls; Small fellowship / study groups: Wesley`s Wayfarers; Stepping Stones (A study group for young people). Their 'Who Let the Dads Out' project continues to be successful. They continued to have a good relationship and monthly joint services with Crowland Abbey in the neighbouring Anglican parish and via its thriving MAP (Methodists and Anglicans in Partnership).

Westgate New Church continued to alternate on the Preaching plan with having a C4 service, which is an own arrangement café-style service, and then a service led by a minister or local preacher on the alternate week. People enjoy this pattern and the varied input and voices that contribute.

Langley continued to attend Churches Together in Central Peterborough meetings as Westgate continued under his oversight. Our Churches Together groups in Yaxley, the Ortons, and Central Peterborough used the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), focusing on the 2024 theme 'The Good Samaritan', which encouraged us not to walk by when we see people in need, but to love them, engage with them and lift them up.

Negotiations and conversations are ongoing with the URC regarding the future oversight of Whittlesey and Westgate New Church once Revd Langley has left. (These are joint local Methodist/URC ecumenical partnerships).

Southside Although 'Footprints' no longer meets, 'Footsteps' continued, brilliantly led by Louise. Everyone who goes enjoys the different activities she organises. 'Footsteps' is a group for pre-school children (mostly up to 3 years). Mums and Dads are welcome at this group, which allows them the opportunity to socialise over refreshments whilst their children play, and there is some Christian input in little films and songs. Louise has also helped by selling tickets for Southside's fundraising events, and this is a great way to bring the community into church.

'Church 4 All' met on a monthly basis; they have found the older children are now busy doing other activities, although on occasions they have had everyone together, especially if it is a pizza night! Suzanne Delegate's vision is still the same - that 'Church 4 All' will one day be back to meeting on a weekly basis.

Whittlesey In September, Paul Abel was honoured to take on the duties of Church Secretary after Malcolm Boucher decided to step back in the Summer after many years of service, supported by the trustees. At the start of the new Methodist year we also welcomed Zoe Drury and Ejiro Maubane as new trustees and Ejiro has also became their new Cradle Secretary. In addition to Malcolm stepping back, they also gave thanks to Lyn and Tony Wright and Shirley Wilson, who continue working so hard as they do in other ways but decided to retire as trustees.

Rhod Eaton headed up the Property Team and is the liaison with the Finance Team, so helping the building of budgets for work that is needed to ensure their buildings continue to be fit for purpose. That purpose is primarily worship and the bringing to Christ of the next generation.

Tim Wong has explored which other groups are working for the good of Whittlesey's young people as well as working with the Girls' Brigade and their own Friends of God children. Members attended an inspiring meeting with Phoenix Youth Provision in early January, and they used the hall on Monday evenings with a session for young people (eleven to eighteen year olds), which majors on quieter activities such as craft and repairing things!
Tim also works with Churches Together in Whittlesey to bring Messy Church to Queen Street and they had six Messy Church sessions this year. Thanks go to Nick Drury as the Churches Together rep. They enjoyed the joint service they had in January. It is good to worship and have fellowship with other Christians in the town.

Christmas was fun as quite a few members worked to decorate the church. Tim had the Messy Church Christmas tree displayed at the St Mary's Church Tree Festival and both Rhod and Paul brought it back to the hall afterwards to be enjoyed by their many visitors from Slimming World, Girls' Brigade, Friday coffee morning, Saturday Friendship Club and the Film screening interval – such a super and varied number of things to get involved in throughout the week.
Zoe Drury took the lead in the 'Cake & Carols' event in early December and was keen to explore how this event can be enjoyed by a wider number and the wider community in future. Zoe also takes a joint lead with Whittlesey Lions, the Salvation Army and other Churches Together folk to bring the fantastic August Holiday@Home three days and this year the invited guests commented that it was a pity it was a whole year before the next one. So, on 5th February they had a Holiday@Home day with a sing-a-long from local musician and singer, David Bailey, and various activities in a mini-Winter version of the full-sized August event.

During Lockdown, Whittlesey set up a WhatsApp group to provide connection and pastoral care across a variety of age groups. Members have continued to use this forum as a means to support one another and to request and provide prayers for one another.

Their church magazine – 'Fresh Horizons' - started during Lockdown as a means to maintain contact with the church family and this is still going strong. Their film showings with refreshments served continue to be popular. Voluntary donations provide income for the church. They meet on Saturday evenings and show up to date films. This has been going for about five years. In the winter months they have nine or ten movies. Numbers were dwindling so they moved it to another day and now it is full every time.

Whittlesey are excited about how the Spirit is working in their church and how busy the buildings are, Thanks go to all those who volunteer and serve the church and do the Lord's work.

In the summer, during their FoG sessions, they explored themes of discipleship and God's all-encompassing welcome. There were exciting additions to their team – a new leader and a joyous baby baptism from the same family. At Summer Messy Church in July, they worshipped to celebrate God's creation in a fun way and families and young people appreciated the work of God in nature. (Tim and the Whittlesey Team put on several Messy Church sessions at Whittlesey. This is a Churches Together in Whittlesey and District (CTIW) event. Everyone was welcome, especially with families. This CTIW initiative has proved really successful).
They held a potluck lunch for FoG families, sharing delicious food and enjoying fellowship together.

This lunch also served as a warm welcome to the new leaders, who joined the FoG team this year. Since April, Tim has been supporting Churches Together in the Salvation Army Studio on Tuesdays. He has helped out at their Art & Craft group, and when the minister was on sabbatical, he also lent a hand at their toddler group for families. They spend time crafting together, enjoying a cuppa and sharing lots of fun and laughter. It is a fantastic way to build a community where everyone can share interests and support each other. Through prayer and working together with so many other friends at Queen Street they are building a vibrant church that is an exciting place to be with so much going on, all with Jesus at the heart.

Rhod and Tim launched their Community Garden development, and the young people came, encouraged by Tim. This is a Remembrance Garden for the church, developed with the youth of the church.

More on Tim's work with children and young people
With some of our children's leaders stepping down from their roles, Tim has taken on the responsibilities of overseeing the Sunday Children's service, known as "Friends of God." His role involves providing support to the leaders and nurturing relationships with the children. He also leads some of the sessions while they actively seek additional leaders to join their team. In addition, he actively participates in the Girls' Brigade activities, engaging with the girls and occasionally leading activities. Furthermore, he has been building relationships with them and extending invitations to attend their church activities, such as Messy Church.

Family work Tim is committed to nurturing a strong church community. He has visited families and church members who find it challenging to attend regularly. He has also kept in touch with families to keep them updated about church events and news.

One of their main priorities has been the youth at Whittlesey church. In the past months, Tim has organised three evening youth gatherings called "Come Dine with Us." Despite having a small youth group, he is dedicated to making their church more welcoming for them and building stronger connections within their church community. He has invited them to these gatherings, where he prepared meals to encourage bonding and to discuss how the church can support them better.

Community Engagement A significant portion of Tim's efforts have been dedicated to the revitalization of Messy Church in Whittlesey. Their inaugural Messy Church event took place in October, centred around the Harvest Festival. They welcomed twenty-two children along with their parents or carers, totalling more than thirty attendees. The event featured various activities with the support of volunteers from Churches Together in Whittlesey & District, including a time of celebration, worship songs, and the storytelling of the Parable of the Rich Fool building a larger barn, as recounted in the Gospel of Luke. Refreshments were offered and they enjoyed a wonderful time together.

They held a Churches Together in Whittlesey Messy Church on December 3rd, from 4-6pm, focusing on the theme of Christmas and the significance of Jesus as the Light of the World. They have received positive feedback from participating families and anticipate their continued engagement.

Tim has proactively collaborated with community members to gain deeper insights into the needs of their community. A noticeable gap has become apparent between the community's needs and the currently available services, particularly when it comes to youth and middle-aged children, ages six to twelve. He is committed to dedicating the time to identify these needs and, ideally, initiating projects that can effectively address and enhance the broader community. This effort serves as a demonstration of how the church can better serve them.

They had busy months over Lent and Easter. Here are some highlights:
Friends of God in Lent and Easter Their children's service, Friends of God, offered a variety of themes around Lent and Easter. For Mothering Sunday, the Girls' Brigade joined in a heartwarming activity, making candle jars that symbolised the light of faith. The young people participated in the church worship meeting through some engaging activities held at the back of the church on Palm Sunday. Easter Sunday was filled with joy as they decorated doughnuts together, a delicious way to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Easter Messy Church On Palm Sunday, they warmly welcomed twenty-three young people and twenty-one parents and grandparents to their Easter Messy Church. The theme for the day was "Hope," celebrating the resurrection of Christ. The festivities began with an Easter Egg Hunt, where children searched for eggs representing the twelve events of Holy Week. They also created a "Hope Hanger," featuring elements of Holy Week and Easter that families could take home as a reminder that our only hope comes from God. The families expressed their deep gratitude for the event, which provided a joyful space to celebrate Easter together. They are also incredibly thankful for their fifteen dedicated helpers from Churches Together in Whittlesey & District, whose time and wisdom are invaluable in bringing the Gospel to our guests.

Good Friday Service (Churches Together in Whittlesey & District) They had their outdoor Good Friday morning service with the Anglican, Catholic, Salvation Army and, of course, Methodist Church. They began with a "Walk of Witness" carrying the cross along two routes. This joint Churches Together service offered creative reflection on Jesus' death. During the service, Tim participated in a short drama where he portrayed a sinful human, depicting humanity's sin and God's act of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Warm hospitality followed with hot cross buns, hot drinks and warm chats at their Queen Street Church.

Elton Sunday worship in Elton Chapel continued on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, whether or not a preacher was able to be appointed to lead the service.
All midweek activities in the Chapel for villagers and wider afield were well attended. These continued to raise the profile and income of the Chapel and included: Weekly 'Knit and Natter', weekly Wednesday morning Cuppa & Chat @ the Chapel Hub, Wednesday Welcome afternoons with singing, cuppa & cake on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month (also attended by folk from around the Circuit), an Art Group, and ukulele lessons. A podiatrist gave professional foot-care on some Wednesday mornings, donating the consultation fees to the Chapel. The Chapel was registered as a 'Warm Hub' for the activities on a Wednesday. During the summer, a villager gave canoeing lessons on the adjacent River Nene, donating the income to the Chapel.
In August 2023 the Chapel benefitted from a Missional Grant of £1,000 from the Northampton District of the Methodist Church for the purchase of audio-visual equipment which was used successfully throughout the period for Wednesday Welcome, greatly increasing the enjoyment and active participation of all those who came.

The Chapel was an active participant in a 'Village Open Day' providing well-received refreshments on a Sunday afternoon in June. Also, from July to September, the Chapel was open to provide tea and cake to villagers and casual passers-by, especially walkers and cyclists.
Five 'Walks & Talks' were held based on the Chapel where local expert speakers took participants around the village and enlightened attendees about the archaeology, history, flora & fauna and trees of the village. The evenings ended with refreshments in the Chapel, and again the audio-visual equipment was used to good effect.
A Christmas Thrift Sale at the Chapel was well received locally and was financially beneficial. Once again, there was a very enjoyable and successful 'Cod and Carols' held in Elton Village Hall with Barnhill Band.
The organ has been played for some 'Wednesday Welcomes' and has this year has again received expert remedial attention from Brookside Methodist Church's organist. Elton resident and Chapel adherent, Robin Ackroyd, continued to clean the chapel regularly for which he was given an honorarium.
The annual fire extinguisher checks and the checks for the electrical equipment were undertaken. Also, the gutters were cleaned by a contractor. With those exceptions, all minor repairs were undertaken by villagers.
A member of the congregation together with a local paid bookkeeper continue to handle the recording of accounts. There was approximately £12,000 in the Chapel's Bank Account at the beginning and at the end of the period.
During the course of the year, the defibrillator fitted to an outside wall of the Chapel was taken out once but thankfully not used.

Back in January 2023, the Circuit Meeting gave authority for the CLT to take over the Church

Council at Elton because we had concerns about the capacity they had to function as a church. Revd David Parkes worked really hard to put in place a chapel hub to raise the profile of the chapel in the community and it being used for community events. The new church council is the Circuit Stewards, plus the ministers, plus one other representative from the church, and it was with regret that we voted to cease to meet. This was a sorrowful happening, but the legal position was untenable.
Then, on 22nd April 2024 there was an open meeting in the Chapel chaired by the Circuit Superintendent. Those present were six Chapel members (a seventh member gave her apologies), six members of the Circuit Leadership Team (including the Chair) and five villagers.
Following Devotions, the situation relating to the Chapel was described, viz there are fewer than the requisite twelve members of the Chapel, it is not possible to find the necessary office holders from amongst these people, and the annual income of the Chapel is insufficient to meet its commitments. Following robust discussion, it was regretfully agreed by those eligible to vote that the proposal for Elton Methodist Chapel be to 'cease to meet'. Five people were 'in favour', none were 'against' and two people abstained. The meeting closed with prayer for all affected and concerned by this momentous decision. At the time of this meeting, the Circuit Property Secretary already had oversight of the Chapel building and its utilities. This decision meant that the Peterborough Methodist Circuit then assumed full responsibility for Elton Methodist Chapel.
Thanks go to Revds Langley and Janet, and to Sue Holmes and Revd David Parkes who have been representing Elton Chapel, involved in gentle discussions, and journeying with the community. We have said to the community that, if there is a will, the Methodist Church is willing to explore doing a New Place for New People, but we are looking to find a different pattern of being church in this place as the current pattern is no longer viable there. So, we are journeying through those conversations. In July, the parish Council at Elton confirmed they would take Elton Chapel forward as a community asset. We pray for Elton's congregation, that they manage to find a spiritual home where they feel comfortable to continue their worship.

Yarwell Our Methodist ministers and Local Preachers continued to lead the afternoon service once a month for our Methodist members that attend St Mary Magdalene Church. We delight in this longstanding, gentle relationship and partnership we have with this Methodist class within this Anglican parish in the diocese of Ely, and are grateful to Revd Jane Tailby for her continued support.

Dogsthorpe continued to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank as a distribution outlet on Friday and Saturday mornings. The Pre-school continued to meet five days a week during term time. 'Coffee Stop' met every Monday morning and is a source of help to meet the needs of Mums and Tots, which Suzanne Delegate supports. The leaders help the children and parents to grow in confidence and there are good links with the primary school next door.
They have three choirs who use their premises for their rehearsals. They also have a band which rehearses on Thursday evenings. A small group of young people gather on Friday evenings with a schoolteacher for additional help with their education.

Christ Church held regular Messy Churches, which were well attended – there were 109 at the pre-Easter one. Sarah Bereznyckyj was commissioned as a school chaplain for the diocese of Ely and went into school with Revd Sarah Gower. Both were challenged by the deep and varied questions the children asked!
In addition to its Sunday 10am worship, Christ Church again held its annual Bereavement service in November, its Sunrise Easter morning service in the local community and its regular monthly Sunday afternoon services and evening Healing and Holy Communion services, and it continued as an active member of the ecumenical Churches Together in the Ortons.

*Yaxley T*heir bi-monthly coffee mornings are well attended by village people; there are usually thirty to forty people there, including helpers, with a good mix of ages. It is a lovely atmosphere. The Busy Bees baby support group started in 2021 - all the babies were born during Covid times, and the Mums really needed the support and to meet face to face. It has since evolved and several families have now had their second baby. They have from a few weeks old up to four-year-olds who are accompanied by Mums, Dads and grandparents, so it is a lovely mix. They keep to about twelve

families and that ensures everyone is included; they have small group chats each week and vary between music, sensory, story time and general play sessions. Several parents have joined their coffee mornings and their Nativity services and also support the collections for the food bank, clothing for the homeless and other things that are organised.
The Nativity they held in 2022 was attended by twelve people but, this year, they invited the Baby and Toddler group to take part – old and new members – and they had over sixty-five people, the youngest of whom was ten weeks old. Parents and grandparents came and enjoyed tea and mince pies afterwards. They said, "Thank you for inviting us". One grandad had not been to church to a Christmas service since he was a child. This made the church realise that they just need to invite people more, and they will respond.

2.3.2 As part of '*God for All',* we continued to be mindful of three areas of focus: New Places for New People, Evangelism and Digital Mission. Part of this is growing disciples and we believe we have done this through new members and people stepping up into new roles and into doing new things. We are grateful to Revd Kim Shorley from the district who has worked with various churches, liaising with them in providing different types of worship and activities. We have focused more on the things that are intentional, encouraging people in their faith. We focused more on our invitation, as that is the way the local church grows. Our churches build when we invite people to new things. A successful example of this is at Yaxley with their Nativity and Christmas carol services.

2.3.5 Revd Langley has sent out 'Bulletins' from time to time; these include his thoughts and reflections and guidance for the churches, including information on topical concerns and local and national developments. These help to inform people about issues and give the Circuit a sense of connection. We are always seeking to improve our communication and to ensure those who are not on email are informed and included. Our thanks to all who have provided up to date information and assistance to those in their churches, including those who have produced paper copies, church newsletters and written reflections from preachers to those not on email.

2.4 Worship, Services and Prayer

2.4.1 Some churches took part in the international 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative (9th to19th May 2024). Our thanks to our County Ecumenical Officer, Caroline Hutchings, for always keeping us informed of ecumenical initiatives, events and services in the local area. Church members took part in the ecumenical World Day of Prayer services taking place at local churches on 1st March. This year's theme was "I Beg You … Bear With One Another in Love." The service was prepared by Christian women from Palestine, and the theme was drawn from Ephesians 4:1-3.

2.4.2 The Circuit continued its subscription to The Vine's 'Twelvebaskets' (set services for Own Arrangements), and this has again been a valuable resource for the churches when preachers were unavailable for any reason.

2.4.3 Having revitalised our small group and small teams structure last year, with Revd Dale Sherriff's invaluable help and guidance, we saw many of these gaining new members and flourishing. Some that were started did not continue but experience was gained along the way. We were fortunate to have the support and wisdom of Rev Kin Shorley from the District in inspiring us to help our churches develop for new people in new places.

2.4.4 Members of the Circuit attended the many events organised by Churches Together in Central Peterborough (CTiCP) throughout the year, including the Advent Reflection Day at the Cathedral in December and the joint service as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th to 25th January) on the theme of the Good Samaritan. Also, the World Day of Prayer on Friday 1st March 2024, held at St Botolph's, Longthorpe, with a timely focus on Palestine. Many churches explored how they could use this more widely and spread it further into the community.

2.4.5 Thanks go to Matt Forsyth and Revd Langley who continued to lead Circuit Livestream worship and 'Morning Prayers'. Also to Nicky Ward, who continued leading Circuit online worship once a month. Thanks also to Sandra Hughes who still leads online Reflections on Friday mornings. There is

something provided every weekday. The Circuit Administrator contributed to the Livestream Team by liaising with Local Preachers and readers in helping plan the content for the worship leaders and their services. The readers are local preachers, church stewards and church members from across the Circuit, all adding a different voice.

A faithful number of people value being part of our online livestream community, supporting and being supported by others every day through our live 'Morning Prayers'. As these are also recorded, people can also catch-up later if this works better for them. Meanwhile, if people want to know more about where they can find their closest Methodist Church in the Peterborough area, they are directed to our Circuit website.

Our purpose on a Sunday for livestream prayers is to offer something for those who cannot make it to church because they are unwell, caring for others, working shifts or 'juggling family commitments'. We are not looking for large numbers, but some people do view these in addition to morning worship. Thanks again to those local preachers who offer to record their Sunday message for us so that we can achieve this and, of course, those who present the worship, and read for us.

We rejoice that we now have three Local Preachers "On Note"; One of our Local Preachers - Maureen Newcombe - has served "Fully Accredited" for seventy years. Her Recognition Service was at Christ Church as part of our Circuit Service on 27th May, 2024. Another preacher - Matt Forsyth - completed his course last year and, after his final interview at the Local Preachers' Meeting in January, is now A "Fully Accredited" Local Preacher. His Service of Recognition took place on August 25th, 2024 at Dogsthorpe as part of our Circuit Service.

We are pleased to report that Tim Wong was given a "note to Preach" and commenced the Local Preachers' Study Course. Zoe Drury continued with her journey of study as a Local Preacher.

We were delighted to vote in Maddie Whiting and Connie Hunt as new Local Preachers' Meeting reps to Circuit Meeting. it was good to widen our constitution slightly to include worship leaders in this role, as well as Local Preachers. Thank you to Nigel Lightfoot who continued as rep and as the Local preachers' meeting Secretary.

Our Leaders of Worship training is under review, and all Worship Leaders and Church Councils are respectfully reminded that it is important to be mindful of the requirement of ongoing opportunities for further training.

It will be noted that the list of active preachers on the Plan is not as great as it once was. There is ever a need for others who may feel "a call" to come and find out what is involved and if it is for people to pursue their inner voice.

In June, we held a couple of online meetings called "Local Preachers' Secretaries Drop-in". We underestimated the demand for these sessions, so we planned two more sessions in June. Each Zoom meeting was ninety minutes and included short introductions to topics of interest, time for informal discussion, and time for questions and answers. The sessions were informal and were held periodically through the year for as long as there is a need for them. Preachers were encouraged to keep informed with what is happening across the community of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders by reading the quarterly eNews.

As a result of the Sankofa meetings, two groups were formed – one called Faith and Finance, and the other, Belonging and Believing. We had conversations at the Local Preachers' Meeting about what a circuit believing and belonging group looks like and how we do this across the Circuit. Revd Langley's vision is to think about how we work together with membership classes and faith refreshers across the Circuit, rather than just locating them in one church on an ad hoc basis. Also to consider how we pool our resources for the good of all.

Livestream worship Here are our Livestream Statistics: These stats are for the Peterborough Methodist Circuit's livestream, rather than its linked channels, such as Revd Langley's profile, MAP

(Methodist and Anglicans in Partnership), Crowland or Churches Together in Whittlesey - worship is often relayed to these sites as well:

Facebook
As a circuit, 334 likes, 395 followers (front page)
Reached 6.2K people (a reduction of 21% on the previous year), 5.6K content interaction (almost double the interaction), 271 Click links (signifying three times the engagement), 12.K visits (up approaching seven times, and suggesting that the core number of individuals returning to the site is increasing. Followers were at +62 across the year (which is a reduction on the previous year for some 22%). We are seeing a loss of followers overall, whilst welcoming new followers, and evidence that the Facebook user base that exists is becoming more engaged.

Facebook analysis does not permit us to visit the changes in audience over the period but, since the lifetime of the site, the largest age profile is 65+ then 45-54 and 55-64. Below the age of 44 the distribution is skewed towards a higher proportion of 25-34 year olds viewing. Across the distribution more women are engaged than men, apart from below the age of 34. The major towns and cities from which people view are Peterborough (24%), Whittlesey (6.1%), Louth (3.7%), Crowland (3.5%), London (2.8%) and Spalding (2%).

YouTube
The YouTube stats are not as reliable (because we use YouTube as a back-up), but it does provide another way for people to engage.

2.4.6 Circuit Services were held on 25th February at Brookside: 26th May at Christ Church, including the Recognition Service for Maureen Newcombe, who celebrated seventy years as a fully accredited Local Preacher; 25th August at Dogsthorpe, including Matt Forsyth's accreditation as a Local Preacher, and on 26th Nov at Dogsthorpe, when Steven Pettican (CEO of Light Project Peterborough), was the speaker. Revd Langley asked him four questions: How has God provided during Steven's ministry and how has he witnessed this provision? How has God helped him through periods of challenge and change? How is vision important within that?

In terms of special services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day services were held at Christ Church, to which all were welcome.

2.4.7 Doing the Preaching Plan continued to be a challenge this year because of the availability of our preachers and supernumerary ministers, some of whom have ongoing health issues and family commitments. We continued to be more creative in our Plan-making, including holding more united services within church sections and introducing some monthly afternoon services in some churches. Thanks go to our worship leaders and other leaders who produce their own services using worship resources, such as 'The Vine at Home'. In addition, this year, we reorganised the churches on the Plan so that they reflect the pattern of mission (underpinned by joint worship) that we are seeing. There are three natural areas; River North (Dogsthorpe, Brookside), River South (Southside, Orton Waterville, Yaxley), and East/West Partnership (Crowland, Oundle, Westgate New Church, Whittlesey, Christ Church - with a small group at Yarwell). We are encouraging the churches in these areas to think about how they might work in increased partnership. We take care in leading worship because what we pray, preach, and say, shapes how people think.

We decided that, whilst we need to think about finance, the focus in churches needs to be on growth, and helping people put their faith in Jesus and follow. We decided we do need a plan moving forward - a vision for everyone to catch - but growth will always be at its core. Looking to the future, we met as a Circuit to discuss different scenarios going forward to make the way ahead affordable and practicable. A lot of work has been done to plan for Scenario 2, and Scenario 1 - which is what 2 or 1 'ministers' across the Circuit looks like, so that we are fully prepared for the future. Our superintendent encouraged us to help congregations focus on the positives, focusing on new people who are coming to faith, newcomers who are now contributing to the life of the church, and new possibilities. And, on finance, he encouraged us to focus on the whole area of offering,

which is about the time, energy, and financial gifts that we give to God. We give thanks that the District is supporting us in the appointment of a superintendent. We are looking at what grant funding is available from the URC. As worship leaders and preachers, we started to encourage people to be generous in their giving, to know that what they give is between them and God, and to stress that whatever they give enables the mission of the local church.

The scenarios opened up questions about how lay people may be able to serve in these ways:

Link Preachers - one of the outcomes from our 'Reimagine' focus a few years ago was that, if preachers gave us enough appointments, we could link them with a single church for two or three appointments a quarter. This is currently in place with Monica Sturgess at Oundle, and Nigel Lightfoot at Westgate New Church, but there is still this opportunity for preachers to develop a closer working partnership with a single church.

Lay Presidency - we explored this with our URC churches; it is part of their tradition but, moving forward, we are considering inviting a local preacher for a dispensation to preside at Methodist Communion services.

Lay Worker roles - If we do not find a URC minister, funding may open up for a further lay worker beyond the assistance that Suzanne gives (which would transfer over to supporting the Superintendent for a period).

Suzanne started to lead 'Lay Worker led' services on the Plan in the smaller churches to assist Revd Janet. Suzanne is supporting/coordinating the church in OAs. In so doing, this will help her make a tighter link between worship and mission in those centres. Suzanne is also an experienced Authorised Lay Minister in the Church of England.

Although the Plan is a challenge, we rejoice in that that we have new worship leaders and preachers in training. It was announced that Matt Forsyth will be installed as Vice-President of the Methodist Conference for the Connexional year 2025/6. We continue to celebrate Judy Robinson at Dogsthorpe and Maddie Whiting at Brookside who are training as Worship Leaders. We rejoice that our preachers "On trial" continue to make steady progress: Zoe Drury, from Whittlesey, and Paul Watkins from Southside continued to journey as a Preachers On Note. Thanks go to our mentors of those in training – Steven and Susan Halford, Nicky Ward and Nick Drury.

Thanks go to our three ministers, three supernumeraries, eleven active Local preachers (and three on note or on trial) and fourteen Worship leaders who lead or input to our Circuit worship. We are also grateful to our regular visiting preachers: Nigel Taylor from CROPS (Christian Options in Peterborough Schools), and Moyra Collins (Local Preacher from a nearby circuit). We were blessed last year to have visiting preachers from other circuits, Including Tony Hey who faithfully and humbly regularly supported and inspired us, and from churches who did appointments on our Plan, including Yvonne Laws, an elder, from St Andrew's URC. We were pleased to welcome Revd Kim Shorley from the district who started doing appointments for us from our September to November Plan.

We continued to include 'Prayer Themes' in the Plan document; this year we prayed for our local preachers, worship leaders, ministers, supernumerary ministers, church stewards, circuit stewards, lay workers, children and young people contacts, our District Chair and District Office staff.

3 Staffing and Appointments, Stewards and Ministries

3.1 Sue Keeney, Sue Holmes and Paul Abel were re-elected as Circuit Stewards at our July meeting. Sue Keeney has now served twelve successive years as a Circuit Steward. Huge thanks to Sue.

3.1.1 Sue Keeney, Nigel Lightfoot and Mick Goodman were re-elected at our July Circuit Meeting as our representatives to District Synod. Nicky Ward stood down and we thank her for her faithful service. Synod members were reminded of this year's Connexional Presidential theme, which draws on the words from the book of Isaiah: "Learn to do what is right, seek justice, defend the oppressed" and, at the Methodist Conference in June 2024, the President (Revd Canon Helen Cameron) reminded

us that justice is what love looks like in public.

3.2 Suzanne Delegate continued in her role as Back of Beyond (BoB) Project Co-ordinator for Westgate New Church, which helps anyone in need. This group continues to grow and thrive, with every week having twenty plus people eating there. There are thirty-one now registered and coming on a regular basis, twenty-two being the average number, with Sometimes as many as twenty-seven people attending. They had Christmas lunch and Suzanne included various things to make the day a special experience for people. She continues to do her weekly 'Pause for Thought', which is overtly Christian and well received. This is sometimes read from her Bible or is something that she feels God is asking her to share. It has sparked religious conversations around the table and given an opportunity for people to ask Revd Langley questions they have around the Bible. Sometimes Langley is in the 'Hot seat' with questions being thrown at him. Suzanne sees this as a very positive movement. People are interested and this is encouraging. Bob is by far one of the most successful groups she has coordinated. Other highlights this year:

- They have monthly services and often have conversations around 'Our Faith.'
- It feels like a church family and everyone looks out for each other, with friendships developing and people seeing each other on other days apart from Thursdays.
- They have managed to accumulate a pot of money, used for doing special themed events around Easter and Christmas, so making these times extra special.
- Some people who go to Bob attend other churches, some have not got any church connection at all, some are at serious risk of isolation.

3.3 Suzanne Delegate continued in her role as Lay Pastoral Assistant (LPA) role to Revd Janet.

- Her relationship has grown within three schools within the Circuit. She is a prominent presence with school and has built good relationships with students and staff, being able to offer pastoral care and prayers to both children and adults. She has started volunteering for CROPS as a mentor in the primary sector.
- Suzanne has been put on the plan to help with Own Arrangements by doing a service and, through this, relationships have grown between her and local churches, and it enables her to widely advertise groups and events that are happening around the Circuit. These services have been well received with positive feedback.
- 'Breathing Space' was a new initiative formed at Orton Waterville. It was a reflective space for people to think and reflect whilst doing a craft. Unfortunately, this group was not well attended but, the people who did attend enjoyed this space.
- Being able to visit various groups has helped Suzanne to grow the community at Bob. She has recently been asked to talk with the POSH Academy, and this generated three new people to attend BoB.

3.4 As a valued member of CLT we congratulated Revd Sarah Gower as Christ Church was given parish status within the partnering Anglican Church organisation. She was officially welcomed as "Incumbent" in their celebratory Covenant Service in January.

3.5 Several members attended our District Chair (Revd Canon Helen Cameron's) Leaving Service in Oxford on Sunday 9th June, taking a cake to share. We are very grateful for the ministry, wisdom and guidance that Revd Helen has provided. She has been very supportive.

3.6 Some of us attended the Welcome Service in Northampton of our new District Chair, Revd Dr Sonia Hicks on 3rd August.

4 Safeguarding

4.1 David Whiting continued as our Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Thanks go to all the Safeguarding

Team – David, Connie Hunt, Revd Janet Titterton and Revd Langley.

4.1.2 Three people from the Peterborough Circuit completed the online version of 'Creating Safer Spaces' Advanced Module (CSSAM). Five people from three of our churches have attended a "Creating Safer Spaces Foundation Module" course at Whittlesey Queen Street Church and Brookside Methodist church.

4.1.3 A Circuit-wide record of DBS checks was compiled and all our DBS and Safeguarding training was up to date.

4.1.4 We communicated that we are in need of more trainers to assist in the giving of the 'Creating Safer Space' foundation module course and would value more trainers generally.

4.1.5 The Circuit Safeguarding Policy for 2024 was amended and updated and agreed at our March Circuit Meeting.

4.1.6 The Circuit continues to abide by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and keeps contacts and posters accurate and up to date. All the churches are up to date and compliant with the District GDPR requirements. Some church reps attended the Zoom training sessions offered and led by the District Data Champion.

4.1.7 Since the last Circuit Meeting, two further people have taken the CSS Foundation Module course. We now have another qualified trainer to help when running a Foundation course, which will enable us to be more flexible when fixing dates for the course and lighten the load on the rest of the team.

District announced two dates on which they will be running the gathered session part of the Advanced Safeguarding course (CSS-AM).

4.1.8 Last year, as part of the Methodist Church's response to the recommendations of the independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse: Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings', an internal audit of all Methodist districts by the Safeguarding Committee was undertaken. The results from the Church Safeguarding Audit were collated and sent to District and, in combination from insights from other circuits, used to shape our immediate focus and changes to local policy. The results came through this year, and they showed that the audit was a very worthwhile exercise; in general, all our churches were shown to have a good knowledge of what is required and were applying them in a satisfactory fashion.

5 Finance

5.1 The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2024 were audited and approved. We agreed our updated Reserves Policy in January 2024.

5.2 Income for the year was £202,817. The expenditure for the year was £201,512. Our reserves increased by £1,305.

5.3 We had a revaluation of some of our shares because of Covid. Our Circuit Treasurer updated our 'Circuit Reserves Policy', and this was unanimously agreed at our January 2024 Circuit Meeting.

5.4 We have benefitted from regular income from the rental of the Birchtree venue manse, and not too much in terms of associated costs.

5.5 We know that times are challenging for our churches in the Circuit, and we are grateful for the shares that are received, with many churches continuing to match what they gave the previous year. However, our treasurer advised that, year on year this does have a detrimental effect on the budget and five-year forecasts. Ultimately it is not sustainable, and we really need churches to consider year on year increases in giving.

5.6 Huge thanks go to our Circuit Treasurer, Karen Armstrong, and our Circuit Book keeper, Mark Bedford, for all their hard work in producing documentation, summaries and financial projections for our Circuit Meetings, vision days and working party meetings, and in working with the CLT in producing questions and in drawing together the responses for the survey we sent out to the

congregations regarding the future of the Circuit. Thanks also to Karen for attending meetings, along with Revd Langley with the URC to discuss the future oversight of our churches in local ecumenical partnerships and how this would work financially and in practice, and trying to determine what staff and grant support might be available, affordable for the URC, and for us to look at our model of working.

Giles Armstrong produced a helpful document called '5-7 Year Strategy' including the useful 'Current Revised Outlook' to help us with our financial forecasts and planning ahead and deciding on the future pattern of ministry that is achievable.

5.6 *Mission policy* In this challenging year, we were grateful for our Mission policy which is continually held under review. Also, our helpful five-year projected budget ('Five-year projections: Projected Costings for 2021 – 2026') which has helped us to plan ahead and be aware and prepared regarding what the position will look like in the not-too-distant future, looking further ahead in terms of being able to sustain a minister.

5.7 Giles stood down as Circuit Treasurer. We are very grateful to him for all his hard work. With our Circuit finances looking increasingly challenging, we decided we needed to recruit a new treasurer as soon as possible and put on sessions for people to come and talk about the future. Thank you to Karen for taking up this role. Rev Langley put together some helpful resources to guide and inform us: 'What is Circuit and how do we all work together?' (This includes a question and answer sheet for local churches). And a 'Pointers for Thinking' sheet which included helpful guidance on what polity will and will not allow us to do.

5.8 We are, again, indebted to Giles and Mark for all their hard work throughout the year, particularly the helpful financial options they produced for us and the helpful financial projections. We were pleased to vote in our new Circuit Treasurer, Karen Armstrong, at our May 2024 Circuit Meeting.

6 Property

6.1 Mick Goodman and Simon Stewart continued on the Property Team and we were pleased to elect Rhod Eaton as our new Property Team Co-ordinator in November 2023.

6.2 Whittlesey's plans to modernise the front of the building so it is more effective for mission continued They also created a memorial garden – a 'Garden of Remembrance' – they entered this into the Dobbies Community Prize Fund competition and they won and received a prize. The children have been planting seeds and have learned how to produce food and they have learned all about the cycle of growing and providing. The garden was formerly blessed by Revd Langley at a ceremony held there and enjoyed by everyone concerned.

6.3 We continued to let the Dogsthorpe manse in Birchtree Avenue. As last year, the rental income from this was used for work in the Circuit, and specifically for the Lay Pastoral Assistant role.

6.5 Quinquennials were carried out and a quinquennial company found. Rhod liaised skilfully with the churches, providing assistance and encouragement, and ensured all the annual property returns were submitted and in time.

6.6 All of the churches' property annual returns were completed. Rhod visited all the churches in the Circuit to complete our 'Property Checklist'. He also compiled a useful Funding' database, providing specific areas and contacts which will be a helpful tool when we are looking for companies to carry out particular types of work.

6.7 We invited the Peterborough Fire Service's Fire safety Officer to come and make recommendations on our churches' indoor fire doors and their current condition in terms of the new regulations. Whittlesey started putting together a 'Funding Directory', so they will now be able to produce a 'database' not only at local level, but also to produce a national list of funders and charities to approach for funding contributions for all Churches to access. Rhod negotiated changes of utilities supplies in three churches and all quotes received have shown significant savings in terms of usage relating to cost and have proved to be a great benefit.

6.8 Progress regarding the sale of Ailsworth chapel has been slow. This is ongoing and we extend our thanks to Paul Hutchings who has greatly helped with these proceedings and has also been a big support and source of advice for Rhod Eaton as he stepped into his new role as Circuit Property Co-ordinator.

In conclusion

Just as we have all been affected by the pandemic and the following global uncertainties and economic turmoil, so have the eleven churches of Peterborough Circuit and our Circuit itself been impacted. In the Circuit's consultation with its churches, it was encouraging to have a lot of people attending the three Vision Mornings and to have the opportunity to learn and have a voice as to the changes that will most certainly have to occur in the next couple of years. Change can be daunting and challenging, but change can also be exciting and worthwhile as we seek to steward resources to best serve Jesus' teachings and our Father's plan for us.

Although, this year, we have certainly been going through a busy period of change and looking forward, one of the significant highlights has been the way people have pulled together and worked faithfully together in stepping up and in supporting each other through the challenges. Despite the uncertainties and difficulties, there has been a lot of positivity and willingness to take on new roles and discuss new and different ways of doing things, joining in discussions and prayer to seek God's will and keep Jesus at the centre of all we think, do and plan.

With the wisdom and guidance of our ministers and Circuit Stewards, we have been encouraged to really focus this year on what the Bible teaches us about teamwork and working as *one.*

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms". (*1 Peter 4:10*)*

We appreciate that everything we have is a gift from God. Everything we have from God is intended to be used for His will, which is to love one another, take care of other people, and share our unique gifts. Together, as a team, we have endeavoured to act as good stewards of God.

The Circuit Leadership Team is grateful to everyone for their support, prayers and contributions throughout this uncertain, busy and challenging year. As we give thanks for this year, and look ahead to a new one, we close with some prayers:

We give thanks for….

The new people who have stepped forward to serve in our Circuit Leadership, and within local churches, and their modelling what it means to 'give' themselves to the Lord's work.

Our livestream, our desire to engage with New Places for New People, and our lay employees as they find fulfilment in their roles, especially as they also open up New Spaces for New People.

We pray for….

Our focus as we press home the truth that we are called to help people give their lives to Jesus.

Our honest conversations within as we discern how God is leading us to reshape our circuit.

Our willingness to embrace change, which is part of life and our discipleship.

People to see the potential and have hope for the future.

Father, we thank You for the Peterborough Circuit. May we honour You by keeping Jesus at the centre as we look to our Father and remain open to the work of Your Holy Spirit. Reveal to us the

riches You have given us to serve You faithfully.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Signed: *L Mackrell-Hey*

Revd Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey
Chair and Superintendent of the Methodist Circuit:
The Peterborough Methodist Circuit of Churches

Date: *11th June, 2025*

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2024

District	Circuit no	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number 1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

REVD DR LANGLEY MACKRELL-HEY

REVD JANET TITTERTON

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY

MRS S HOLMES

MR PAUL ABEL

Treasurer:

MRS K ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds	Circuit Model Trust Fund	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
a1	**RECEIPTS**		£	£	£	£		£
a2	Assessment/Share		138,434			**138,434**		128,243
a3	Capital receipts			10,171		**10,171**		(6,874)
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		3,461	4,736		**8,197**		7,738
a5	Grants		8,000			**8,000**		3,000
a6	Other receipts		32,515	5,500		**38,015**		18,295
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**182,410**	**20,407**	**-**	**202,817**	(a8)	**150,402**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		131,646			**131,646**		100,350
b3	Manse Costs		14,641			**14,641**		15,486
b4	Administration etc		6,947			**6,947**		6,087
b5	District Assessment		31,571			**31,571**		30,170
b6	Grants & donations		-			**-**		12,500
b7						**-**		
b8	Other payments		10,991	5,716		**16,707**		17,150
b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**195,796**	**5,716**	**-**	**201,512**	(b9)	**181,743**
	SECTION C							
c1	**NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR**	(a7-b9)	**- 13,386**	**14,691**	**-**	**1,305**		**(31,341)**
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		110,134	162,087		272,221	(c6)	303,562
c3	**Sub total**	(c1+c2)	**96,748**	**176,778**		**273,526**		**272,221**
c4	Transfers and adjustments		20,000	(20,000)		-	(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	(c3+c4)	**116,748**	**156,778**		**273,526**	(c8)	**272,221** (c6)

	SECTION D		
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**		
d1	Balance brought forward from last year	-	-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations	-	-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations	-	-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**	-	-

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E **Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts		Payments		Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments		Opening balances		Closing balances	
e1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
e9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	202,817	(a8)	201,512	(b9)	1,305		(c7)	272,221	(c6)	273,526	(c8)
e10	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	202,817		201,512		1,305	-		272,221	(x)	273,526	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**TOTAL PAYMENTS**								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2024	OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	101,120		92,071	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	9,014		24,677	
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	162,087		156,778	
f6	Other funds				
f7	**SUB TOTAL**	272,221	(c6)	273,526	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	272,221	(x)	273,526	(y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

		At 31 August 2024	At 31 August 2023
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	1,077,650	1,049,317
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer [signature] Date 24/10/24

Name MRS KAREN ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on 24/10/24

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting [signature]

Name of the Chair of the meeting REV DR LANGLEY MACKRELL

Date 24/10/24

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Peterborough **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2024

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consid audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and th 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 Report

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 (other than that disclosed below*):

(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;

31-Aug-24

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I have/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name: M. J. RUFFLES

Signature: M. J. [signature]

Relevant Professional qualification or body: FCA ICAEW

Address: 4 BARON COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZA

Date: 30/09/24

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2024

District	Circuit no	23/21

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REVD JANET TITTERTON

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

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MRS S HOLMES

MR PAUL ABEL

Treasurer:

MRS K ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

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PETERBOROUGH Circuit

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(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I have/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name: M. J. RUFFLES

Signature: M. J. [signature]

Relevant Professional qualification or body: FCA ICAEW

Address: 4 BARON COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZA

Date: 30/09/24

THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales - Charity number 1135613

Accounts

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Peterborough Methodist Circuit
for the church year 1st Sept 2022 to 31st August 2023
(Registered Charity No 1135613)



Produced by the Peterborough Circuit of the Methodist Church
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Our Mission Statement

"The Peterborough Methodist Circuit aims to be the people of God within our communities, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and showing God's love through worship, witness and service."

We seek to discover the needs of contemporary society and respond to it; working with our ecumenical partners towards creating relationships within the communities and sharing the word of God with those around us.

We seek to utilise and ensure the abilities and skills of lay people fully in the Circuit and encourage others to explore and offer themselves for service at all levels as equal partners in our work.

As a Methodist Circuit, we put into action the different elements of our Methodist Calling in our Worship, our Learning and Caring, our Service and our Evangelism, always striving to put Jesus first.

We have a heart for nurturing and shaping disciples. We are deeply committed to evangelism and social outreach. We have seen great things by working in partnership with other denominations.

Our vision statement for our children's and young people's ministry

'Providing loving and caring ministries that children and young people may come to know Jesus Christ'

Trustees during the year	
Revd Langley Mackrell-Hey (Chair)	Jo Marshall-Sully
Giles Armstrong	Valerie Octon
George Barber	Sylvia Parker
Sarah Bereznyckyj	Revd David Parkes
Heather Black	Cathy Ruffles
Anne Brown	Margaret Smith
Margaret Brown	Revd Douglas Stevens
Stephen Brown	Simon Stewart
Sue Gage	Monica Sturgess
Michael Goodman	Revd Janet Titterton
Revd Sarah Gower	Revd Graham Tooth
John Hewitson	Denise Watson
Sue Holmes	Elizabeth White
Trevor Howlett	David Whiting
Sue Keeney	Nicky Ward
Christine Kell	Peter Williams
Sarah Kelly	Wendy Willis
Nigel Lightfoot	

1 Our Circuit

1.1 Encompassing the heart of Peterborough and extending into three counties – Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire - we minister in the city, in towns, and in villages.
There are twelve churches in the Peterborough Circuit and one of these churches (Yarwell), is an Anglican Church, and Methodist ministers or Local Preachers lead the service there once a month. The Yarwell congregation is a class of Elton and receives support from the congregation there.
Three of the churches: Whittlesey, Westgate New Church and Christ Church are Local Ecumenical Partnership's (LEPs).

1.2 Trustees of the Circuit Meeting met four times during the year: In October 2022 and in January, March and August 2023. Our inspiring Circuit Meeting Devotions were led by: Revd Janet Titterton on the theme of "Treasures", based on Matthew 13:44-53; Nigel Lightfoot (Local Preacher) on the theme of "Where to now?", based on John 14: 1-6; Zoe Drury (Preacher On Note) on the theme of "Follow Me…Follow the Leader: A journey with Jesus reflecting on the leadership I received … what kind of superpowers does Jesus ask of you as a leader?'; and Tim Wong (our Children, Family and Community Worker) on his new role and about being willing servants for God; In addition, at our March meeting, we welcomed Lynne Booker from the Refugee Council, who explained the situation in Peterborough with refugees and asylum seekers and the number of ways in which we can reach out to them and support them locally, as individuals and as churches.

1.3 **Different Ways of working**
Some of the new and different services and activities we put on in a variety of creative ways as a result of Covid continued, particularly midweek worship and live daily online Morning Prayers and online recorded Sunday worship. Morning Prayers continue to be a helpful discipline to many.

Some churches showed the livestream whilst they gathered, accessing YouTube or Facebook and the monthly podcasts which Revd Janet Titterton produced, with people able to comment on them with someone in the background. These options have proved helpful to smaller gatherings.

We are still providing Circuit online worship every Sunday morning and online 'Morning Prayers' four times a week, having built up a thriving online community, many of whom contribute to the services via live chat, sharing prayer concerns and supporting one another. The Morning Prayers are live and the Sunday worship is pre-recorded as we now need our preachers in the churches on Sunday mornings. The advantage of livestreams is that we can put prayers on straightaway, and this is a comfort and strength to people. Sharing live means people build in community together and feel able to share in this way. We have been blessed also with people in the background who have been able to respond to posts and prayer requests through their natural discipleship - thanks go to Helen and Simon Stewart for their continued work with this.

1.4 **Circuit Strategy**

Revd Langley reminded everyone that reviewing our Circuit Strategy had been a standing item in the agenda, but now we needed to develop a new strategy rather than a review. With impetus from the churches, in the light of our financial situation, meaning we have been having to delve into our reserves, we started to have discussions about our situation and start developing a new strategy for our future, a future that will be sustainable.

With our Circuit Mission policy already in place, we have a track record of recognising where the shortfalls are in terms of oversight, where the opportunities might be for roles, and responding by shaping new appointments. For example, we realised the need for lay pastoral support, BoB at Westgate New Church needing to press forward and find a co-ordinator (delayed three years), and Whittlesey drawing from its bequest to appoint a Children, Family and Community Worker.

Also, in terms of circuit policy, we had introduced a rolling five-year financial projection (in operation for some years now). We are quite unique as a circuit in having this.

Our Circuit Mission Policy is on our web site. We humbly recognise that we have emerged from Covid, and we have supported the churches as best we could through the most challenging times. Our web site also shows the work we have done in the past to review our mission in the past.

The Circuit staff have been thinking continually about strategy at staff meetings. We agreed to look at one model – the Circuit as a Single Church. Staff had some deep reservations about this but Langley talked us all through it, the pros and the cons.

As a circuit, we began work on developing a strategy that looks forward one, three and five years - and for this not just to look at finance, but also resourcing in terms of people, and what the picture looks like and how we plan for the future even though it is difficult. We have reached the point where we need to confer more and understand where the future takes us. As we can only do this well if we have everyone involved so, he encouraged people to offer to serve as circuit stewards, and someone to offer as Circuit Treasurer, as Giles signalled he would be standing down, so we can review finances across the churches, and then we can look to develop a far richer strategy as we look towards the future.

1.4.1 As Revd Viv Smith left in August 2022, we decided we would go straight for a stationing appointment starting from September 2022. We were aware the previous year that the stationing process had already started and the stationing matching group had met quite a few times. However, encouraged by our District Chair, we got to work on applying for a new minister and entered the stationing process at the later stage. We put together a profile to submit to the April stationing matching group to see if there was a match for us. We were fortunate to have a match. Following a visit to the Circuit and meeting with church representatives and the Circuit Invitation Committee, Revd Janet Titterton accepted the invitation to serve in the Peterborough Circuit from September 2022.
Revd Janet's Welcome Service was held at Brookside Methodist Church on 27th August 2022.

1.4.2 Revd Janet has the oversight of the Methodist churches at Brookside, Dogsthorpe, Elton, Orton

Waterville, Southside and Yaxley. In this section of churches, there are a lot of different activities and needs and Revd Viv had already expressed that it was probably too much for one person, as it is difficult to work on a regular basis with the many and varied organisations that meet in the premises, and suggested we realise this when looking at our restructuring.

Revd Viv had said she could do with an assistant to help her so the thought of a Lay Pastoral Assistant (LPA) came to mind. This person will not take over the pastoral leader responsibilities, but will be an assistant to the presbyter. The LPA will have an involvement in the life of the Church and take on roles specific to a church's needs, i.e. regularly attend parent and toddler groups, visit families being baptised. It is about having someone to directly assist the minister and to follow up on baptisms and funerals and looking at groups which can be offered something more. The March Circuit Meeting agreed to recruit for a two-year fixed position with the possibility to extend, and we started the recruitment process.

1.5 In terms of Circuit staffing, with the lockdown easing, our CLT started the process of creating a lay worker post (Children, Family and Community Worker) and the funding for this is in place for Whittlesey. It includes a grant from the East Midlands URC Synod. Interviews took place on 18th March and Tim Wong was appointed to the role on 3rd July. He was soon making an impact with the young people and the wider church.

The congregation at Queen Street, Whittlesey has been an invaluable source of kindness, enabling Tim to fulfil his new role. This is a fresh role to Queen Street Church. He is able to be creative and come up with new ideas. From the outset, Tim got involved in the church's activities. One of these is 'Friends of God', which is like Sunday school for children during the Sunday service. The children have their time to learn during the sessions, and then they come back to tell the congregation what they have learned. He arranged a meeting with all the leaders of this group to let them have a space to share their ideas. They have lots of experience and really work hard to teach the children well. We are working towards having enough helpers in the future, and trying to work out how to handle the changing number of people who come and the different ages they are.

Tim noticed there was something missing in how we connect with the young people, so he started "Come Talk with Us", which is a group where teenagers come together to cook, eat, and talk. For each session, he asks a church member to share their life stories, career or faith, which helps the teenagers learn important things about life. But, not all the teenagers come every time, which can be tricky to deal with.

He has brought back Messy Church. This was an event in the past involving a lot of people and families in the community. Now, it is a joint project with the other churches in Whittlesey. It needs a lot of people to help and resources too, and it is not something one church can do alone. It is to show what a church looks like to our community. We want to show that it can be fun, interesting, and sometimes a bit messy. It is an outreach work that we can connect with families and children in our community. It helps us build relationships that show how much Jesus loves everyone.

2 Mission and Outreach

This section includes different mission activities happening in the Circuit, and some examples of specific mission in individual churches.

2.1 *Mission in our Circuit*

2.1.1 We continued to run and support Foodbanks at Crowland, Dogsthorpe, Oundle and Westgate New Church. The number of users continued to be very high, so we are thankful to all concerned for their commitment to feed and support the many hungry and poor individuals and families in our communities.

2.2.2 Due to the Government regulations concerning Covid-19, the local Winter Night Shelter for the homeless, led by local charity Light Project Peterborough, was again unable to take place. However, Light Project Peterborough has set up some homelessness pods outside a few churches in Peterborough and one of these is at Southside, in their church car park. Church members provide a meal for the guest on a rota basis and provide support, as needed.

Several church members sit on the Light Project Peterborough Steering group ('Peterborough Christians for Social Action'), attending meetings and highlighting and contributing to local needs. Some Circuit members volunteer for the "The Garden House", which is a drop-in day centre for the project.

2.2.3 Individual churches raised money for particular charities in need of support including the Methodist Homes Association (MHA), and some churches kept MHA Sunday on 11th June. It was based on 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 27: "There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body." The MHA material focused on recognising the importance that, to have a fulfilling life, we need to be in community with one another. Monica Sturgess ensured that copies of the 'Heart and Soul' magazine went out to the churches. Churches engaged in many forms of outreach and charitable giving, i.e. at the Orton Waterville 'Stitches' group supported Knit for Peace (distributing to those in need in the Uk and refugees abroad), Sands memory boxes, Barnardo's, Mission to Seamen, Knit for nowt (charity providing "monsters" for use by counsellors) local nursing homes and Footsteps.

2.2.4 As ever, the churches responded generously to Connexional Funds. £6470 was sent to the charities involved, allocated as follows: Property £1600; Presbyters and Deacons £589; LWPT £852; MHA £1142; All We Can £1344; and Ministers' Housing £943. We are grateful to Sue Keeney, Our Connexional Funds Officer for organising and administering this. Sue stood down as Connexional Funds Officer in August 2023. Thanks go to Sue for her service and support, which has been much appreciated.

2.3 *Mission in our Churches*

2.3.1 A wide range of regular groups met in our churches, and these included:

At Orton Waterville,'Orton Friends' (a drop-in for the retired) continued on Monday afternoons. The Stitches Group made things to help numerous charities (see item 2.2.3 above). Orton Waterville had their first book group. Twelve people came. It was well received. They are doing particular themes, rather than titles, and the theme for November, for example, was war and remembrance. It could be anything from fiction to biography or history, and they try and make the theme appropriate to the month. The group meets on the first Thursday of every month from 10 until 11.30am.
Orton Waterville had a successful Bible Month in June, and we prayed for them as they continued to reach out into the local community. They have games evenings (Scrabble) and other games planned). They have Occasional coffee mornings on Friday mornings.

At Brookside numerous activities have taken place: Brookside Pre-school, which meets each weekday during school terms; 'Ladies' Evening', which meets on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm; Men's Club, which meets on the third Monday of the month at 7.30pm; Crossways Bible study group, which meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 10am; The Craft and Chat group meet on first and third Tuesdays of each month at 2pm; Tuesday Fellowship meets on second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 2.30pm; A Communion service is held at 1.45pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month; Coffee & Conversation (their 'well-being' coffee mornings) are fortnightly on Wednesdays between 10.00am & noon; Rainbows, Brownies and Guides meet every week on Wednesdays in term-time from 4.15pm onwards; Film Night is on the third Wednesday of each month at 7pm; The 'New Direction' Bible study group meets via Zoom on Thurs at 10.30am; Boys' Brigade meetings are on Thursday every week during term-time from 6pm; Brookside Community Hub is open every Friday during the winter months, providing a warm space and friendship, hot drinks and snacks, from 9.30am to 3pm. This started in October; Lend-a-Hand days are held on the 1st Saturday of each month from 10am (The Property Team invites volunteers to give two hours for doing essential maintenance and improvements). Refreshments are served after each morning service to enable the congregation to meet informally. Groups meet together to enjoy a variety of activities and build friendships and support networks.

Brookside also held a Lent course where they showed 'The Chosen' videos. It was a very interesting

way of learning about the life of Jesus.

Since March 2020, a weekly Church Newsletter has been circulated to members and friends online, or by post for those without computer access. Grateful thanks again to Chris Hardman who puts this brilliant newsletter together.
And thanks to Joanna Parkin for setting up their Well-being Coffee Mornings, ('Coffee and Conversation'). These are a drop-in for coffee, chat and prayer and are once a fortnight. Church members and people from the local community come along.

The Boys' Brigade did a Great Big Brekky in March, raising money for the Unite Camp. Revd Janet continued in her role as the Boys' Brigade Chaplain here. We give thanks for that and for all the BB leaders.

Brookside has also held other events, such as concerts, and The Brekky in May raised money for Christian Aid Week. Cathy Ruffles said Claire Holden from Brookside again organised the *shoeboxes* (Operation Christmas Child - a project of Samaritan's Purse) and liaised with other churches.

At Oundle, they continued with their bi-monthly "Gatherings" (times of fellowship, teaching and prayer), with eight local preachers and ministers invited to give reflections on a rota basis). Oundle continue to meet on the first and third Sundays of the month, and are really feeling very fulfilled by having their weekday gathering. The Trussel Trust Food Bank continues to operate every week on the premises. An advisor from Citizens' Advice now attends each session, offering advice to clients.

At Crowland: They have Explorers; Toddlers group, Saturday morning coffee sessions with book stalls; Small fellowship / study groups: Wesley`s Wayfarers; Stepping Stones (A study group for young people). They have regular Messy Church. Their 'Who Let the Dads Out', project, which started last year, has been successful. It focuses on trying to improve the relationships between children and their fathers/lads/dads/father figures); they have Community Larder, Family Eats, and there are ongoing explorations around starting a men's shed project. They held a railway exhibition in October for their roof fund.

Five new people committed themselves to do a six-week course of faith discussion in May and became new members. They all came into the church purely and simply through their Coffee Mornings. The course enabled them to ask questions and get to know one another, but the lovely thing is that they naturally just wanted to become members of this loving, Christian community.

Revd Langley updated the 'Finding Faith Course' that he wrote originally in 2018, and used this at Crowland. The course ran for six or seven weeks and is aimed at helping people discover faith for the first time, or refresh their faith. It is equally helpful for people who have journeyed in faith for some time - it takes a different look at some of the challenges of living by faith in a modern world - and destroys a few myths on the way. The really good news is that people are being attracted back to church. Whilst we are not talking about people with no prior experience of faith, some are returning to church after a long time and the issue is to discern their needs. Often people have already received a welcome from the church and feel part of things before he even gets there. Some would appreciate a refresher in faith. Others are well settled in their faith and need a 'welcome to planet Methodism (or Methodism/United Reformed Church)' conversation. Some simply transfer from other Methodist Churches.

Revd Charles, the Priest at Crowland Abbey, left, and we prayed for his successor who will serve as part of his ministry within a neighbouring parish, and for the work of MAP (Methodists and Anglicans in Partnership), which is growing.

At Westgate New Church, they continued to alternate on the Preaching plan with having a C4 service, which is an own arrangement café-style service, and then a service led by a preacher on the alternate week. People continue to feel really uplifted by this pattern.

Langley continued to attend Churches Together in Central Peterborough meetings as Westgate is now under his oversight. Our Churches Together groups in Yaxley, the Ortons, and Central Peterborough focused on that material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), focusing on racial justice as 2023 was the thirtieth anniversary of Stephen Lawrence's death. Churches were also invited to engage with the material as part of Racial Justice Sunday on 23rd April.

At Whittlesey, there are lots of new families coming and families from diverse ethnic backgrounds, which is amazing for a market town. Some have no Christian background at all, some have a background nominally or otherwise from a different Christian denomination and some are Methodists who have come to us from other places. The challenge is how we meet their needs, but it is a good challenge to have.

Zoe and Nick Drury ran a Lent course on 'Les Misérables'. People came along who do not normally attend their Bible group. It was very encouraging. Church reps heard at Circuit Meeting about the different Lent courses churches were running and arranged to share information, notes and resources.

We are always seeking to engage with others outside of ourselves, and amazing work has been done by Churches Together in Whittlesey and District, which emerged from the Covid pandemic, determined to look afresh at how as churches we can support each other. Revd Langley shared with us two online articles: 'Churches Together, What's the Point?', and 'We Believe: Churches Together in Whittlesey and District - for God's sake'. In the latter, there is a statement of faith and values, and he offered the below to us as a reflection of the good things that are happening and the joy that people are experiencing in meeting together.

During Lockdown, Whittlesey set up a WhatsApp group to provide connection and pastoral care across a variety of age groups. Members have continued to use this forum as a means to support one another and to request and provide prayers for one another. at this time.

Their church magazine – 'Fresh Horizons' - started during Lockdown as a means to maintain contact with the church family and this is still going strong. Their Film showings with refreshments served continue to be popular. Voluntary donations provide income for the church.

At Elton, there is good and bad news: The Chapel building is Grade 11 Listed, in a Conservation Area. They are great in faith but small in numbers, with a declining congregation through age, ill health or members moving away. Therefore, to comply with both Methodist requirements and Charity Commission rules, they have realised that they may have to apply to 'cease to meet' and form a Fellowship instead. They continued to meet for worship on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, whether or not a preacher was able to be appointed to lead the service.

A successful Quiz for villagers took place in October 2022 and an equally successful indoor Boot Sale to raise funds for the Chapel and for defibrillators in the village took place in March 2023.

In addition to the existing 'Knit and Natter' group, mid-week activities for villagers and wider afield have expanded tremendously raising the profile and income of the Chapel with: Ukulele lessons, weekly Wednesday morning Cuppa & Chat @ the Chapel Hub, Wednesday Welcome afternoons with singing, cuppa & cake on the first and third Wednesdays of each month (also attended by folk from around the Circuit), and an Art Group alternate weeks. A podiatrist gives professional foot-care on Wednesday mornings, donating the consultation fees to the Chapel. The Chapel is registered as a 'Warm Hub' for the activities on a Wednesday. The Chapel benefitted from a Missional Grant of £1,000 from the Northampton District of the Methodist Church for the purchase of audio-visual equipment which has been used successfully for Wednesday Welcome. During the summer, a villager gave canoeing lessons on the adjacent River Nene, donating the income to the Chapel. From June to September, the Chapel was open to provide tea & cake to villagers and casual passers-by, especially walkers and cyclists. Three 'Walks & Talks' were held focussed on the chapel where local expert speakers took participants around the village and enlightened attendees about

the archaeology, history and old buildings of the village. Once again, there was a very successful 'Cod and Carols' held in Elton Village Hall with Barnhill Band. These activities are planned to continue in 2023-24: The organ has been played for some 'Wednesday Welcomes' and has received expert remedial attention from Brookside's organist. No major repairs have been undertaken; minor repairs have been undertaken by villagers.

Sadly, as the year went on, Elton chapel struggled to fill its church vacancies and is considering options that will enable it to continue a worshipping presence in the village. An open meeting, which those living in the village were invited to attend, was held in December with Rev Langley, Rev Janet, Matt Forsyth, Rev David Parkes and two Circuit Stewards in attendance. While there have been some offers of help from the village, particularly to help with some aspects of property, decisions still need to be made that will enable worship to continue.

At our Circuit Meeting we highlighted how we need to provide further support for Elton and Revd David Parkes has been doing an excellent job in journeying with a group of people from the village, where Simon Stewart has been present as our lead Circuit Steward. Revd Janet continued to discern the best way to come alongside the members and support them, and Revd Langley, as superintendent, is discerning the best way for us to move forward as a circuit with oversight. Services at Elton continue, although we are reflecting continually on what the members need.

A focus group was formed and this met on 4th January to look at how the building could be utilised. They also met on 1st February. There was a good core of people from the community at the focus groups, and they came up with a raft of ideas regarding how the building can be used and perhaps for some sort of mission. At the January Circuit Meeting, the CLT proposed that Elton cease to meet and the meeting voted unanimously in favour, but with much reluctance. Property Matters now come under the oversight of the new church council and the Circuit agreed to take on the responsibility for key areas, i.e. finance, property, safeguarding and legal matters.

A newly formed Church Council meeting was held at the chapel. The chapel building was being used by a number of groups and funds were starting to come in from these. One of the groups is ‘Wednesday Welcomes’ that seeks to meet the needs of those suffering with Dementia. Playing music is a key part of the activities and we are grateful for the awarding of a start-up grant from the District that has enabled the large screen TV to be purchased and set up for use of this group and others.

There are some future activities planned such as an art group starting in September and Walk and Talk within the village, culminating with refreshments at the chapel (the first of these was held in July and was oversubscribed).

At Southside, they continued their outreach for children: Suzanne Delegate has been the Children Ministry Worker there for four years. She runs three groups: The ‘Church 4 All’ group meets on Tuesday afternoons – this is alternative worship for all age groups. They have Christian festival services along with regular socials where they all enjoy a meal together. This group is aimed for families with school age children, although they do have families come with younger children, and sometimes they have people come from their Sunday congregation, so this is a Church for all, and all are welcome.

Her vision has always been to bring all age groups together as one family and, whilst they still have a Sunday congregation and a Tuesday congregation, both do come together more often than they used to. She is keen to get families from the Circuit involved in this group. Although we are many churches, we are still brothers and sisters in Christ. ‘Footprints’ is a mum and under one’s group and ‘Footsteps’ is a toddler group. Both are growing and there is definitely a community feel with both groups.

Yarwell continued to meet as part of what feels like a 'small group church' that energises everyone. We give thanks for our gentle and easy work in partnership with the parish.

At Dogsthorpe, they have Mums and Tots group on a Monday morning and this is continuing to prove successful. A link has been formed with the school next door. Being aware of the cost-of-living

crisis, both at the church and the school, they worked closely together so that now the school supports the Breakfast Club that the church runs to try and give some of their more vulnerable families some extra support. A member of the school staff goes across to support the church so that means the Breakfast Club gets an extra volunteer and the families have somewhere else warm to go on a day when we are already heating the church for a long-term let. It makes sense all round to do that joined up thinking to be able to support some quite vulnerable families within the community.

There is continued outreach through the Food Bank two mornings a week. Citizens Advice and Care Zone attend on a Friday Morning. They have the U3A 'Sing Something Simple' choir which meets on a Monday Afternoon. U3A 'Rhythmaires Choir' meets on Tuesday Mornings. 'Rhapsody Choir' meets on a Tuesday Evening. The U3A 'Singing Songs of Praise' meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month in the mornings. A Big Band meet on a Thursday Evening. The church holds a "Family Night" on a Friday Evening. There is also a Craft Meeting which meets one evening a week. A very successful Pre-School meets every week day. The Thursday House group continued to meet weekly from 7.30 to 9pm. All of these events contain outreach contacts and engage with the community. They seek to minister across all ages.
Dogsthorpe had a really good Covenant Service followed by a meal. This was the first time they had met together as a church family since Covid. They catered for fifty people and welcomed two new people who they know through the Food Bank.

At Christ Church, they went back to having quizzes face to face, having had them online during Covid. Each person prepared a round each to make it less work for just one person. They had excellent pizzas from the local fish and chip shop. It was really good to be together in person again. Before Christmas, they had a Messy Church which was bursting at the seams with people and massively successful. They have lots of new families. They had another successful one on the Friday of the February half-term and they had a Good Friday Messy Church. They continue to learn and have fun together.

At Yaxley, in March, they held their first Coffee Morning for three years. It was packed with old and new faces. About thirty people were there at one point, including two mums from their Busy Bees group. People really enjoyed being together again. These happen every other month on the second Saturday of the month at 10am.
The very successful baby support group (the 'Busy Bees Baby Group') continued and was oversubscribed. This group had started just after the first Lockdown and it has altered as it has gone on. They had tiny babies to start with and they are now starting to get the second ones that have been born. It has been very well supported and they have kept the numbers small as that was what they wanted. Some mums and dads are helping, and Yaxley are really pleased that it means so much to them that they want to do that, and they want it to continue.
Yaxley received outstanding support from the other groups that operate in the church – the singers and the Busy Bees, for projects that have run over the last two Christmas periods: In 2021, they received warm clothing to send to the Garden House and in 2022 they received food parcels for the Food Bank at St Peter's. They had tremendous support for both ventures from the village.

2.3.2 The Circuit Meeting continue to address the 'God for All' strategy, which is significant both financially and in terms of mission strategy in the next decade to twenty years in the life of the Church.

2.3.3 As a Circuit, we continued to review our Mission Plan. Revd Langley continued to work closely with Crowland and Whittlesey in developing their mission plans and it has been a very rewarding time. We are going through the Mission Action Plan with the building works that are going on at Whittlesey's works. (There is a suggested way of working through a Mission Action Plan on the Circuit web site). MAPs help churches going from nothing to discerning what their vision might be. Part one of the plan was the appointment of Tim Wong as Children, Family and Community Worker. Part two was a desire to do something more with the front of the building. Some immediate things need to be rectified but we are also thinking about access, visibility and how we use the front entrance. This is under continual development.

2.3.4 As part of '*God for All',* Revd Langley had three areas of focus: New Places for New People, Evangelism and Digital Mission. He shared his future vision of evangelism and growing disciples: By

2023, What do we need to let go of so we can take other stuff on?; by 2024, focus on more of the things that are intentional, encouraging people in their faith; and by 2025. We need to think where's our journey and where are we heading? He continued to work on these areas and focus in that direction. He shared with the Circuit that, however it is done, we need to focus on our invitation, as that is the way the local church grows. We can yearn for a programme but ultimately, we need to build our churches by inviting people to new things. Churches have since been doing this. A successful example of this is at Yaxley with their 'Busy Bees Baby Group' – please see item 2.3.4 above.

2.3.5 Revd Langley has sent out 'Bulletins' from time to time; these include his thoughts and reflections and guidance for the churches, including information on topical concerns and local and national developments. These help to give the Circuit a sense of connection.

We are always seeking to improve our communication and to ensure those who are not on email are informed and included our thanks to all who have provided up to date information and assistance to those in their churches, including those who have produced paper copies, church newsletters and written reflections from preachers to those not on email.

2.4 Worship, Services and Prayer

2.4.1 Some churches took part in the national 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative from 18th to 28th May 2023. Our thanks to our County Ecumenical Officer, Caroline Hutchings, for always keeping us informed of ecumenical initiatives, events and services in the local area. Church members took part in the ecumenical World Day of Prayer services taking place at local churches on 3rd March. This year's theme was 'I have heard about your faith' and the service was prepared by people of Taiwan.

2.4.2 The Circuit continued its subscription to The Vine's 'Twelvebaskets' (set services for Own Arrangements), and this has again been a real Godsend for the churches when preachers were unavailable because of illness etc. Oundle has based their midweek gatherings on these materials and invited preachers to come and preach, so enabling its congregation to benefit from a variety of preaching. Out thanks go to Revds Langley and Janet, Revd David Parkes, Revd Dale Sherriff and Revd Graham Tooth, and to Nigel Lightfoot, Monica Sturgess and Ann Tooth for supporting Oundle in this way. Church stewards and contacts faithfully worked to make The Vine material available to people in their churches.

2.4.3 Our Pioneer Hub Café worship went back to meeting in person, at Southside, rather than via Zoom every month, enabled by Revd Langley. The hub is for everyone busy in the life of the church who wants to relax and receive prayer. It is there as a space and it is a place to retain contact. However, as the year went on, we found this afternoon gathering was not really meeting people's needs and the attendance was not high, so we removed the hub meeting from the Plan, but the hub will continue to exist as a means of contact and helping people. It is now more about how we bring people from the Church into new groups. All churches are different, but our problem is how we incorporate new members because we have so many. It is about putting a small group structure in place to support people and that is way beyond what just ministers can offer.

2.4.4 Revd Dale Sherriff guided us in working on a way of enabling what we have and what we hope to have in the form of small groups and small teams – those that already exist and those we want to be able help churches develop for new people in new places. The first stage, by December 2022, was to identity those groups and teams and for us to look at what we can do to help them. (Groups are defined as those groups of people that gather together for things like Bible study or prayer or for Messy Church, or home group gatherings. Teams are those people, either within a church or across the Circuit, who work in the same areas i.e., Treasurers, Local Preachers, Worship Leaders).

Thanks also go to Anne Yeoman from Brookside who did a lot of work in identifying those groups primarily based in our 'Circuit Directory'. Anne and Dale identified forty-five different ways of gathering initiatives across the Circuit. Because of the pandemic, we did not know how accurate those details were and Dale asked the churches to look at information about their gatherings and whether they are still up to date and accurate.

Dale started his report with 'CPD - 500 Nature and Purposes' because it explains something about

the remit we are engaged in. The Circuit is the primary unit in which local churches express and experience their interconnection in the Body of Christ for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help. 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, 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. So, our remit is to be able to offer as the Circuit to the local churches, be they single denomination or local ecumenical partnerships, to develop a hybrid network, connecting groups and teams that are already gathering, and using a variety of places and online platforms, in order to better resource and support all. (Hybrid means what we are doing face to face and what we are doing online). So, we will grow networks where we encourage and support and resource one another, rather than just having one little group trying to do all these things.

The impetus comes out of recognising the changes in attitudes to gathering and to ways of gathering, resulting in people perhaps not physically gathering at all, but happy to gather online, and a whole variety in between, and that is how we live now. It also comes out of conversations with many people who do not want to continue in one particular way or group setting. This is not a matter of timing – this is a conscious decision because they have actually discovered that in meeting in other ways, they are better able to worship and to serve God and to live out their discipleship. So, they identified these groups and teams, and they then identified those leaders of those different ways of gathering and those who facilitate and they got a picture of the differing ways in which we gather, the purposes of our gathering and the frequency of our gathering. With the initial scan of the data which showed there are forty-five ways in which churches are engaged in groups outside of Sunday worship, some had been running for a while, others were quite new.
Perhaps one of the most interesting and positive findings from Anne's research is that some small groups or teams have become 'Crossing Places' where people have joined groups or teams from other churches within the Circuit, because they share the same desires, needs or focus, and some of that is happening because of the online or just through conversations. So, what we have is a lovely blend of people gathering from different churches on a regular basis and finding fellowship in that new way.

The reason we are doing this is because we want to uncover new initiatives or hoped for initiatives, and there are those we do not yet know about, and we have two goals in mind: One is that we want to develop a diversity of small groups and teams to involve new people in new places, but we also want to develop a diversity of small groups and teams that are already established but that we can perhaps help to invite and reach new people.

It is important that what we do, we are together, and we are all given the same chance, the same resources and the same support. So, all the information that we can gather will help us as Circuit to do that.

We are also blessed enormously by the fact that we are a circuit that is deeply connected to three major denominations – Anglican, Methodist and URC. On top of that we are regularly resourced from all the materials that organisations like Churches Together in Britain and Ireland produce. There are so many resources out there and there are so many ways we can find support and we can offer it, but we need the information as our first platform. Small groups are so important because they can become praying places. They are the key to growth. Investment in small groups is significant and it was our major area of growth during Covid. As well as showcasing the many small groups and teams in our Circuit at our Circuit Service, the groups were also the subject of our Prayer Themes at the top of our Preaching Plans throughout the year.

2.4.5 Thanks go to Matt Forsyth and Revd Langley who continued to lead Circuit Livestream worship and 'Morning Prayers'. Also to Nicky Ward, who continued with leading Circuit online worship once a month. Thanks also to Sandra Hughes who still leads online Reflections on Friday mornings. There is something provided every week day. The Circuit Administrator contributed to the Livestream Team by liaising with Local Preachers and readers in helping plan the content for the worship leaders and their services. The readers are local preachers, church stewards and church members from across the Circuit, all adding a different voice.

A faithful number of people value being part of our online livestream community, supporting and being supported by others every day through our live 'Morning Prayers'. As these are also recorded, people can also catch-up later if this works better for them. Meanwhile, if people want to know more about where they can find their closest Methodist Church in the Peterborough area, they are directed to our Circuit website.

Our purpose on a Sunday for livestream prayers is to offer something for those who cannot make it to church because they are unwell, caring for others, working shifts or 'juggling family commitments'. We are not looking for large numbers, but some people do view these in addition to morning worship. Thanks again to those local preachers who offer to record their Sunday message for us so that we can achieve this and, of course, those who present the worship, and read for us.

Here are our Livestream Statistics, put together in March 2023: These stats are for the Peterborough Methodist Circuit's livestream, rather than its linked channels, such as Revd Langley's profile, MAP (Methodist and Anglicans in Partnership, Crowland or Churches Together in Whittlesey - worship is often relayed to these sites as well).

<u>Facebook</u>
As a circuit, 334 likes, 395 follows (front page)
Last three months - reached 4,724 people (plus 1,904 though advertising), 33 new followers, 804 page visits, 29 new interactions with people 'liking' the page
Audience - gender breakdown - low views for under 45s, roughly equal genders, more views 45+, with more male viewers than female. Highest proportion of viewers is at 65+ with more men than women.
Most engaging broadcast - morning prayers, 22nd December, 16 viewers throughout (others pop in and pop out), 55 comments/prayers, we know of 20 others who watched for at least a minute, and 36 who will have seen Morning Prayers are happening, and moved on. Audience retention for live broadcasts is high - around 30% - if you consider these are morning prayers and people often have to leave.

<u>YouTube</u>
The YouTube stats are not as reliable (because we use YouTube as a back-up), but it does provide another way for people to engage.

2.4.6 Circuit Services was held at Christ Church on 27th August, when Suzanne and Tim, gave their testimonies; Dogsthorpe on 26th February; Brookside on 28th May; and Christ Church on 27th November (Advent Sunday); This service was to celebrate who we are (and by that he means all of us – three denominations et al), and how we gather. We heard stories and we celebrated new initiatives around the Circuit including those two wonderful ongoing activities happening in Crowland, and the reason they are successful is because they are brought to us and serving their communities by the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church working together. They would not be possible without that.
So, we celebrated that as a Circuit. We celebrated our Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, and we renewed the relationship and promises that our Local Preachers and Worship Leaders make. We reflected on our ecumenical nature, our mission together and our hope for the future. We heard people's stories in this service, stories from groups, from the churches in word, in picture and in other creative ways. Churches did displays about their small groups and people shared their initiatives and talked about them.

Circuit services have become a regular fixture on the Plan, taking place on the last Sunday of the Plan. As well as helping reduce the pressure on preachers, they are much valued as a time to come together and worship en masse as a circuit. With thanks to Brookside, Christ Church and Dogsthorpe for hosting. As so many people attend, they need to be held in the bigger churches. We will soon be looking at somewhere even bigger if we continue to grow! People are really benefiting from coming together.

In terms of special services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day services were held at Christ Church, to which all were welcome.

2.4.7 Doing the Preaching Plan has been quite a challenge this year because of the availability of our preachers and supernumerary ministers - they give so much and some journey with ongoing health issues and family commitments. Their gift to us is humbling. We have had to become more creative in our Plan-making, including holding more united services within church sections and introducing some monthly afternoon services in some churches. We are grateful to our worship leaders and other leaders who craft their own services using our worship resources, including 'The Vine at Home'.

Although the Plan is a challenge, we rejoice in that that we have new worship leaders and preachers in training. Matt Forsyth has been drawing together his prior learning and will soon complete his Local Preacher training. And, we continue to celebrate Judy Robinson who has started training as a Worship Leader and Maddie Whiting from Brookside who is still training as a Worship Leader). Zoe Drury continues to journey as a Preacher On Note and Paul Watkins from Southside also started as a Preacher On Note. We always welcome anyone who senses a call to lead worship or preach and, on 20th November, we held our first fellowship meal for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, which was also an opportunity to bring in anyone new who was interested in preaching or worship leading. It is hoped to hold further gatherings in the future at various venues. The object of these gatherings is to have a time of fellowship and sharing around a light lunch.

Thanks go to our mentors of those in training – Steven and Susan Halford, Nicky Ward and Nick Drury.

We were pleased to welcome to our Plan, from Equipping the Saints/Good News for Everyone, Tim and Tope Pearson *and,* from CROPS (Christian Options in Peterborough Schools), Nigel Taylor. In recent years, of course, we have seen huge benefits from supporting and working in partnership with organisations where we share a common interest and aim. We are blessed to have three visiting preachers from other circuits who regularly do appointments on our Plan.

We continue to include 'Prayer Themes' within the Plan document; this year we have prayed daily in this way for our small groups in the Circuit, our local preachers and worship leaders, our ministers and supernumerary ministers and our church stewards.

2.4.8 In the last two years we have had twenty-three new members across the Circuit. Membership is a show of commitment to a local congregation as a base from where we think about what it means to put our faith in action. We rejoice that several have been confirmed.

2.4.9 The January Circuit Meeting formally adopted the Connexional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report. This helps to prevent things like unconscious bias. Our Circuit Stewards had to do the EDI training (equality, diversity and inclusivity and unconscious bias) as part of stationing and the Methodist Church's recruitment process. Local Preachers were also asked to do the JDS training and to reflect back. Circuit Stewards and Church Stewards are next to do the training. It is all good practice as it improves our inclusivity.

3 Staffing and Appointments, Stewards and Ministries

3.1 Simon Stewart, Sue Keeney, Christine Kell and Sue Holmes all continued as Circuit Stewards for this year. Sue and Sue were re-elected to the Circuit Stewarding Team at our August Circuit Meeting. Simon decided to stand down and was given a vote of thanks for all the hard work he has done, and for all the extended time he has given as a Circuit Steward. Christine Kell also stood down and was thanked for her loyal years of service.

3.1.1 Sue Keeney, Nigel Lightfoot, Mick Goodman and Nicky Ward continued as our representatives to District Synod.

3.1.2 Marion Mahan continued as Chaplain to our local MHA (Methodist Homes Association) retirement

living scheme, The Maples. The residents are also supported by visits from two of our ministers and several Circuit members.

Nigel Lightfoot continued in the role of Local Preachers' Secretary.

3.2 We advertised for a *Back of Beyond (BoB) Project Co-ordinator for Westgate New* Church in September. This role was initially termed as a Friendship Club, but we decided on a Project Co-ordinator, helping those in need. The interviews were held on 12th November and Suzanne Delegate was appointed. She started work on 4th January. Suzanne reports to Revd Langley as Line Manager with support from the Westgate New Church trustees. The position has been funded by generous grants from the East Midlands URC Synod, the Northampton Methodist District and Westgate New Church. The BoB project is open to anyone including those at risk of isolation. Thanks go to all involved in the recruitment process from the updated Job Description, advertising the vacancy, receiving the applications, assessing who should be called for interview, being part of the interview assessment event and decision on who to appoint, preparing contract documentation and the induction process.

BoB had a really good start. Suzanne introduced a structure for the morning which works well. When people arrive they sit in the 'Refreshments' area, connecting with each other. Suzanne has introduced a 'Pause for Thought', which gently introduces some Christian content. Everyone engages with this and are very happy for her to read from her Bible, which then often encourages further conversations when we are all sharing a meal. We have had one member clearly inquisitive about our faith (and theirs), and we are now in talks about starting a separate group where we can offer a space for questions to be answered around the Bible, spirituality and what it looks like to be a Christian. We are hoping to offer this out within the circuit to other outreach groups!

Suzanne serves a two-course cooked meal and this seems to be gratefully received. On average, at the start of the project, there were between six to twelve people coming. On the whole, the group has become a great space, and we hope that they all feel love, warmth and welcome.

As the year went on, the project grew and continued to grow. From the outset, none of us really knew what the group might look like and we continued to pray and let God have His way. We soon had twenty-seven people on our roll. Each one of these have sat at our table and have eaten with us; About 95% of these people live on their own, and a small number live on the fringe of society - Back of Beyond (or BoB) as we like to call it. We have welcomed people of all walks of life into our space. Suzanne's 'Pause for Thought' soon became a Christian based link to the Bible and very intentional, and was well accepted by all; it has raised conversations and questions about what it means 'to be a Christian' and to 'walk on a faith journey'. This group is definitely 'Church done differently'.

During our first year, we have had regular attendance of around twenty-five people. This is the core group with many others coming intermittently. After a successful Maundy Thursday service, where we shared Holy Communion, which was very special, it was agreed that we would hold a monthly service at BoB before lunch. This has been well received.
We now have someone come in once a month to do crafts with the group, we also play board games once a month and we are going to be introducing speakers too. It was recognised that that it was time to move the group forward by changing things. It is refreshing that the group is not just about the food anymore, but about being together as a church family. Relationships have formed, friendships have developed and there is a sense of community.

We now have thirty-three active members of this church family and, it is definitely a church community. There is one regular volunteer but, during the session, people who are able love to help with table setting, clearing away and serving hot drinks. This gives people a sense of purpose, and some would say 'a reason to get up on a Thursday morning'. We had a wonderful Christmas meal, where Suzanne served a three course Christmas Lunch. Everyone had a wonderful time; it was lovely to provide this space as, or some of them, Christmas Day was going to be spent alone. The last Thursday before Christmas we held a Christmas Party, and a Christmas buffet, we played appropriate games for the mobility of the group and everyone was very happy when they received

prizes too!

During the last few months, we have had people hospitalised, through ill-health or operations. We have also experienced bereavement. As a church family we have been able to send cards and flowers, and Suzanne has done several pastoral visits, either because she felt the need to or because she had been asked.

Suzanne's vision for this group is to continue to grow and nurture it. She hopes everyone feels loved and welcomed. It would be great to set up a space for those who are questioning their faith and want to learn more, and to have regular services would be an actual blessing.

3.3 Suzanne Delegate was appointed to the new as Lay Pastoral Assistant role and started her job on 19th June. Suzanne has slotted easily into her role as LPA to Revd Janet. They meet on a regular basis, and their understanding of each other's needs are good.

She has tried to identify where she is best placed, and one thing that all churches seem to require is provision for children. She has built a relationship with local schools and schoolwork is quite prominent within her role. She regularly ministers Collective Worship in three different schools around the Circuit, recognising the importance of building relationships with staff and children.

Rev Janet has allowed me to shape my role, using my strengths. One of my focuses has always been around children and young people. School work is quite prominent within my role, and she now regularly ministers Collective Worship in three different schools around the Circuit, recognising the importance of building relationships with staff and children.

She has created a Bible Craft club in one of the schools as a lunchtime activity and has a cohort of twenty children that consistently attend. They set themselves a Lent challenge, talking about God's Creation. She set a Poster competition, for children to express the importance of water, how we can save it and protect our planet. Following on from this, she was invited by the school to spend an afternoon with a class of children during their Religious Education studies, and she took groups of children on a Nature Trail to talk about God's Creation.

She visits another school on a weekly basis to read the 'End of school' story. This school has had a visit to one of our local circuit churches. Relationships with schools grow stronger. With fifteen children attending a lunchtime group that she runs.

She has also supported Revd Janet with school educational visits. They talked about different elements within the Church; the children were very engaged and asked a lot of questions. She taught the children an 'action' worship song and read a Bible story. At the end of March, she went to Dogsthorpe Methodist Church to welcome a local nursery to talk about Easter.

She organised a 'Youth Gathering' for all young people in December. This was advertised around the Circuit. Many of the churches highlighted that there was a need for this provision around our circuit. She would love to bring the young people in the Circuit together on a monthly basis. She is investigating this in more in-depth and maybe this will be a space where we can encourage our young people to bring along friends. This is something she and Tim Wong can work closely together with. These young people are the future of the Methodist Church. We need to nurture them and give them space for them to grow in faith.

She tries to attend as many outreach and community groups around the Circuit as possible - mainly the Dogsthorpe Breakfast group, Brookside Chat and Coffee group and, on occasions, the Community Hub. She has started a Bible lunch time group in Yaxley. She is helping Dogsthorpe to develop a Toddler Group, supporting them during the school holidays with their Breakfast Club. She been able to do some networking around the Circuit and it is great to see familiar faces that now also attend BoB.

The 'Pause for Thought' that she writes for BoB, now serves multiple church newsletters. She has been asked for pastoral visits, which she feels very humbled by. We have lots of people in our community who are feeling overwhelmed, lonely and just need a listening ear and someone to pray for them. It is great to be able to network around the Circuit, identifying people that could use groups at local churches, as is supporting group leaders in their work.

4 Safeguarding

4.1 David Whiting continued as our Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Thanks go to all the Safeguarding Team – David, Connie Hunt, Revd Janet Titterton, Revd Langley and Janet Rich.

4.1.2 Twenty-two people from the Peterborough Circuit completed the online version of 'Creating Safer Spaces' Advanced Module (CSSAM). Twelve people from four of our churches have attended a "Creating Safer Spaces Foundation Module" course at Southside Methodist Church.
Twenty-two people signed up for the February face-to face CSSFM Safeguarding Foundation course at Dogsthorpe, eleven people from the Circuit completed the Zoom version of the course in February.

4.1.3 A Circuit-wide record of DBS checks was compiled.

4.1.4 We communicated that we are need of a trainer to assist in the giving of the 'Creating Safer Space' foundation module course, and would value more trainers generally.

4.1.5 The Circuit Safeguarding Policy for 2023 was amended and updated and agreed at our March Circuit Meeting.

4.1.6 The Circuit continues to abide by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and keeps contacts and posters accurate and up to date. All the churches are up to date and compliant with the District GDPR requirements. Some church reps attended the Zoom training sessions led by the District Data Champion.

4.1.7 As part of the Methodist Church's response to the recommendations of the independent inquiry into 'Child Sexual Abuse: Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings', an internal audit of all Methodist districts by the Safeguarding Committee was undertaken.

4.1.8 The results from the Church Safeguarding Audit were collated and sent to District, and we await any feedback. The audit was a very worthwhile exercise; in general, all our churches were shown to have a good knowledge of what is required and were applying them in a satisfactory fashion.

5 Finance

5.1 The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2023 were audited and approved.

5.2 Income for the year was £150,402. The expenditure for the year was £181,743. Our reserves decreased by £31,341.

5.3 With the Russia and Ukraine situation, we expect more adverse effects and quite a significant reduction in the value of our reserve funds. Our Circuit Treasurer updated our 'Circuit Reserves Policy', and this was unanimously agreed at our January 2023 Circuit Meeting.

5.4 We have benefitted from regular income from the rental of the Birchtree venue manse, and not too much in terms of associated costs.

5.5 We know that times are challenging for our churches in the Circuit, and we are grateful for the shares that are received, with many churches continuing to match what they gave the previous year. However, our treasurer advised that, year on year this does have a detrimental effect on the budget and five-year forecasts. Ultimately it is not sustainable and we really need churches to consider year on year increases in giving.
CLT did look at moving away from the share system to an assessment-based calculation, using similar methods applied by the District used to calculate what each Circuit has to pay to the work of the District. Before it could be brought to the Circuit Meeting the pandemic came and so was put on hold. It should be noted that the first call for a church is to meet the assessment, in the same way that the first call of the Circuit is to meet the District assessment.

5.6 *Mission policy* We have a Mission policy which is continually held under review. We have our helpful Five-Year projected budget ('Five-year projections: Projected Costings for 2021 – 2026') and this helps us to plan ahead and be aware and prepared regarding what the position will look like in the

not-too-distant future, and looking further ahead in terms of being able to sustain a minister.

5.7 We are, again, indebted to Giles and Mark for all their hard work throughout the year.

6 Property

6.1 Mick Goodman and Simon Stewart continued on the Property Team. With the lack of a Property Team Co-ordinator, Revd Langley also dealt with property matters, which was an added responsibility, whilst we looked for someone else to be the team co-ordinator. We were delighted when Rhod Eaton took this on in November 2023.

6.2 Property schemes – Brookside fitted a new roof because of longstanding leaks. Money to fund this came from a loan from the Circuit, grant applications and their own successful fundraising efforts. Whittlesey formerly agreed a title for its work: 'Fresh Horizons'. There are two tiers to this scheme: A: To appoint a Family and Community Worker as a people resource and B: To modernise the front of the building so it is more effective for mission. As outlined earlier in the report, they went ahead straightaway with employing a Community Worker.

6.3 We continued to let the Dogsthorpe manse in Birchtree Avenue. As, last year, the CLT requested that rental income from the rental of the Birchtree Avenue manse be used for work in the Circuit, this was put into the Lay Pastoral Assistant role.

6.5 Quinquennials were carried out at Crowland and Dogsthorpe. Quinquennials were done at the Gunthorpe Road and Fleming Court manses.

6.6 Regarding Westgate New Church, significant refurbishment has been going on in the Christian Bookshop. £100,000 of work has been put into that building by the URC, and a smaller amount from the local congregation, which is a reflection of how well they have managed their finances and also the particular model of mission they operate. They rent out the bookshop.

6.7 A defibrillator was affixed to the outside of the chapel at Elton.

6.8 Progress has been made regard the sale of Ailsworth chapel. The solicitors have been liaising with Trustees for Methodist Church purposes (TMCP) and the surveyor regarding the best way of selling the property. We have now been granted permission to sell.

6.9 Revd Langley e-mailed all Church Property Secretaries, particularly in relation to ensuring that Safeguarding, GDPR and Insurance notices were displayed, and that Health and Safety Surveys, Risk Assessments, Letting Agreements, and Key holder Agreements were all in place. This was very much a team effort, and is already part of our working but, it was good preparation for the circuit safeguarding audit that took place after Easter. This was part of the District Safeguarding Audit where the District was resourcing its safeguarding and looking at how it was supporting the circuits.

In conclusion

One of the significant highlights this year are the challenges that have emerged and the positive ways being discussed in which our Circuit Life can change, develop and become more relevant in serving the opportunities coming out of those changes. The Circuit Leadership Team is grateful to everyone for their support, prayers and contributions throughout this busy and challenging year. As we give thanks for this year, and look ahead to a new one, we close with some prayers, starting with this one from Revd Janet Titterton:

Father,
We come to the end of our year with a note of thankfulness. We thank you for Your Holy Spirit. We thank You that, through Your Spirit, You call so many people to serve You so faithfully in so many different ways, large and small, seen and unseen in our churches and in our circuit and in our community beyond our walls. We pray Your Holy Spirit will continue to call and to challenge that others might respond, that others might say yes to what it is You are asking them to do, so that we can continue to serve, to grow and to reveal Your kingdom in our lives and in our churches. As we go forward, help us to praise You for all that is past and to trust You for all that is to come.
In Jesus' name, Amen

We continue to give thanks for many blessings:

We celebrate how small groups across the Circuit are helping people find a new depth of fellowship and support, and we pray their faith in Jesus will grow.

That our aim to have our three lay worker appointments filled by the end of this year has been fulfilled.

The continued service of some of our churches by way of Warm Hub and Foodbank facilities.

The good news that we now have a new Circuit Property Steward together with an additional Circuit Steward.

That in times of challenge and austerity, new and innovative ideas are realised.

Seeing new people come to church (in person and online), and witnessing existing members growing in their faith and learning new skills.

New groups and new initiatives being set up in our churches.

Our District and the wider Connexion in all their resourcing of us.

We continue to pray:

For those who have been baptised and confirmed.

That our faith in Jesus will grow.

For those who attend our small groups – that they will invite others.

For us to notice and maximise people's talent and guide people into the right roles, and for guidance on how we bring them into leadership roles in our churches and in our circuit.

For our thoughts on how we can make the best use of our resources.

We end with the following prayer – a challenge to think about what we should do as a community of faith:

What do you ask of us Lord? You know our possibilities, you know our frailties, our weaknesses, our prejudices. Yet, You still call us to Your work. You challenge us to stand against injustice; to overcome our fears; to act as Your hands; to be Your voice; to be Your ambassadors on earth, emulating your preference for those living in poverty and the marginalised. With You in us and beside us we can fulfil what You ask of us. Amen.
(Hilary Evans, ex-President of Methodist Women in Britain, 2021-2022)

Signed: *L Mackrell-Hey*

Revd Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey
Chair and Superintendent of the Methodist Circuit:
The Peterborough Methodist Circuit of Churches

Date: 28th June, 2024

CIRCUIT
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
ACCOUNTS

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2023

	District	Circuit no	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number	1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

REVD DR LANGLEY MACKRELL-HEY
REVD JANET TITTERTON
REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY
MRS CHRISTINE KELL
MR SIMON STEWART
MRS S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds £	Circuit Model Trust Fund £	Restricted Funds £	Totals this year £		Totals last year £
a1	**RECEIPTS**							
a2	Assessment/Share		128,243			128,243		135,595
a3	Capital receipts			- 6,874		- 6,874		(10,943)
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		2,727	5,011		7,738		6,432
a5	Grants		3,000			3,000		
a6	*Other receipts*		18,295			18,295		62,988
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**152,265**	**- 1,863**	**-**	**150,402**	**(a8)**	**194,072**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		100,349.60			**100,350**		90,930
b3	Manse Costs		15,485.97			**15,486**		9,114
b4	Administration etc		6,087.17			**6,087**		4,300
b5	District Assessment		30,169.76			**30,170**		17,556
b6	Grants & donations		12,500.25			**12,500**		
b7						-		
b8	Other payments		11,110.81	6,039		**17,150**		19,841
b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**175,704**	**6,039**	**-**	**181,743**	**(b9)**	**141,741**
	SECTION C							
c1	**NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR**	**(a7-b9)**	**- 23,439**	**- 7,902**	**-**	**- 31,341**		**52,331**
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		136,571	166,991		303,562	(c6)	251,231
c3	**Sub total**	**(c1+c2)**	**113,132**	**159,089**		**272,221**		**303,562**
c4	Transfers and adjustments					-	(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	**(c3+c4)**	**113,132**	**159,089**		**272,221**	**(c8)**	**303,562** (c6)
	SECTION D							
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**							
d1	Balance brought forward from last year					-		-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations					-		-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations					-		-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**					-		-

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts		Payments		Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments		Opening balances		Closing balances	
e1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
e9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	150,402	(a8)	181,743	(b9)	(31,341)		(c7)	303,562	(c6)	272,221	(c8)
e10	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	150,402		181,743		- 31,341	-		303,562	(x)	272,221	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	TOTAL RECEIPTS		TOTAL PAYMENTS								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2023	OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	120,600		101,120	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	12,972		9,014	
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	169,990		162,087	
f6	Other funds				
f7	**SUB TOTAL**	303,562	(c6)	272,221	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	303,562	(x)	272,221	(y)

SECTION G

	OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES	At 31 August 2023	At 31 August 2022
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	1,049,317	878,820
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer  Date 23/1/24

Name MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on 23/11/23

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting 

Name of the Chair of the meeting L A J MACKRELL-HEY

Date 30/11/23

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

PETERBOROUGH **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2023

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consid audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and th 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.

CIRCUIT
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
ACCOUNTS

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2023

District	**Circuit no**	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number 1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

REVD DR LANGLEY MACKRELL-HEY

REVD JANET TITTERTON

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY

MRS CHRISTINE KELL

MR SIMON STEWART

MRS S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds	Circuit Model Trust Fund	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
a1	**RECEIPTS**		£	£	£	£		£
a2	Assessment/Share		128,243			**128,243**		135,595
a3	Capital receipts			- 6,874		**- 6,874**		(10,943)
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		2,727	5,011		**7,738**		6,432
a5	Grants		3,000			**3,000**		
a6	Other receipts		18,295			**18,295**		62,988
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**152,265**	**- 1,863**	**-**	**150,402**	(a8)	**194,072**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		100,349.60			**100,350**		90,930
b3	Manse Costs		15,485.97			**15,486**		9,114
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b7						**-**		
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b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**175,704**	**6,039**	**-**	**181,743**	(b9)	**141,741**
	SECTION C							
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c4	Transfers and adjustments					-	(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	(c3+c4)	**113,132**	**159,089**		**272,221**	(c8)	**303,562** (c6)
	SECTION D							
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**							
d1	Balance brought forward from last year					-		-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations					-		-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations					-		-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**					-		-

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E **Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2023 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

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e1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
e9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	150,402	(a8)	181,743	(b9)	(31,341)		(c7)	303,562	(c6)	272,221	(c8)
e10	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	150,402		181,743		- 31,341	-		303,562	(x)	272,221	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**TOTAL PAYMENTS**								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2023

		OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	120,600		101,120	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	12,972		9,014	
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f6	Other funds				
f7	**SUB TOTAL**	**303,562**	(c6)	**272,221**	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	**303,562**	(x)	**272,221**	(y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

		At 31 August 2023	At 31 August 2022
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	1,049,317	878,820
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer | Date

Name: MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address: 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting

Name of the Chair of the meeting

Date

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

PETERBOROUGH **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2023

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consid audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and th 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 Report

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 (other than that disclosed below*):

(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;

- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I have/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name M.J. RUFFLES

Signature M. J. R...

Relevant Professional qualification or body FCA ICAEW

Address 4 BARON COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZE

Date 04/10/23

THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales - Charity number 1135613

Accounts

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Peterborough Methodist Circuit
for the church year 1st Sept 2021 to 31st August 2022
(Registered Charity No 1135613)



Produced by the Peterborough Circuit of the Methodist Church
Circuit Office, Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough PE4 7TG
Email: pborocircuitoffice@gmail.com Tel: (01733) 328192

Our Mission Statement

"The Peterborough Methodist Circuit aims to be the people of God within our communities, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and showing God's love through worship, witness and service."

We seek to discover the needs of contemporary society and respond to it; working with our ecumenical partners towards creating relationships within the communities and sharing the word of God with those around us.

We seek to utilise and ensure the abilities and skills of lay people fully in the Circuit and encourage others to explore and offer themselves for service at all levels as equal partners in our work.

As a Methodist Circuit, we put into action the different elements of our Methodist Calling in our Worship, our Learning and Caring, our Service and our Evangelism, always striving to put Jesus first.

We have a heart for nurturing and shaping disciples. We are deeply committed to evangelism and social outreach. We have seen great things by working in partnership with other denominations

Our vision statement for our children's and young people's ministry
'Providing loving and caring ministries that children and young people may come to know Jesus Christ'

Trustees during the year	
Revd Langley Mackrell-Hey (Chair)	Jo Marshall-Sully
Giles Armstrong	Valerie Octon
George Barber	Revd David Parkes
Sarah Bereznyckyj	Janet Rich
Heather Black	Cathy Ruffles
Anne Brown	Margaret Smith
Margaret Brown	Revd Vivienne Smith
Stephen Brown	Revd Douglas Stevens
Sue Gage	Simon Stewart
Michael Goodman	Monica Sturgess
Revd Sarah Gower	Revd Graham Tooth
Susan Halford	Denise Watson
John Hewitson	Elizabeth White
Sue Holmes	David Whiting
Trevor Howlett	Nicky Ward
Sue Keeney	Peter Williams
Christine Kell	
Sarah Kelly	
Nigel Lightfoot	

1 Our Circuit

1.1 Encompassing the heart of Peterborough and extending into three counties – Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire - we minister in the city, in towns, and in villages.
There are 13 churches in the Peterborough Circuit and one of these churches (Yarwell), is an Anglican Church, and Methodist ministers or Local Preachers lead the service there once a month. The Yarwell congregation is a class of Elton and receives support from the congregation there.
Three of the churches: Whittlesey, Westgate New Church and Christ Church are Local Ecumenical Partnership's (LEPs). We have seen great things by working in partnership with other denominations. We have a heart for nurturing and shaping disciples. We are deeply committed to evangelism and social outreach.

1.2 Trustees of the Circuit Meeting met five times during the year: In September and November 2021 and in March, June and August 2022. Our Circuit Meeting Devotions were very inspiring and thought-provoking, and were led by: Our District Mission Enabler, Matt Forsyth, on 'Embracing Sankofa'; our Superintendent Minister, Revd Langley, on God's faithfulness and our mission; Revd Viv Smith on 'Kindness and Humility'; and Ian Price on 'Following The Herd' (The Herd' is at Oundle - a joint project in collaboration with Oundle and a local youth group. Ian has really helped us to recognise how we can be involved in supporting others that we do not have an immediate connection with).

1.3 **New Ways of working**

The Coronavirus still being present has forced us to continue to work differently as a Circuit. We have again responded well to the many challenges we have encountered and our report shows how we have adapted our ways of working, and put on new and different services and activities in a variety of creative ways. Everyone has stepped up, learned new skills and embraced all kinds of technology, often surprising themselves, and gaining confidence along the way. All of our churches have reopened, but smaller churches such as Elton, Westgate New Church and Yaxley have taken more time to get back to normal due to the shape of their buildings in terms of mitigating risk and the availability of people.

Revd Langley encouraged churches to see livestream as a congregation in its own right. Some churches showed the livestream whilst they gathered, accessing YouTube or Facebook and the monthly podcasts which Revd Viv produced, with people able to comment on them with someone in the background. We also started to offer recorded worship once Revd Langley was back leading worship in churches. These options have proved helpful to smaller gatherings.

We are still providing Circuit online worship every Sunday morning and online 'Morning Prayers' four times a week, having built up a thriving online community, many of whom contribute to the services via live chat, sharing prayer concerns and supporting one another. The advantage of livestreams is that we can put prayers on straightaway, and this has been a great comfort to people who have felt surrounded in prayer at a really difficult time, including friends and neighbours of our church members who have been heartened by our prayers and presence on social media. Sharing live means people build in community together and feel able to share in this way. We have been blessed also with people in the background who have been able to respond to posts and prayer requests through their natural discipleship - thanks go to Simon and Helen Stewart for their work in this regard.

As we felt our way out of lockdown, our policy was to be adaptable and flexible. We have had a mix-hybrid Church (an idea which originated in the Pioneer Hub) and services in person where churches felt safe to have these.

Some churches, because they could not come together or did not feel comfortable doing so, made their principal service a Zoom service. These were added to the Plan and church stewards liaised with the local preachers, juggling together all their different gifts and skills in providing content and relaying it.

1.4 **Circuit Strategy**

It soon become apparent, in discussions with Revds. Langley and Viv and the CLT last year that the oversight of the churches and Circuit responsibilities being undertaken was not equal. Therefore, our September 2021 Circuit Meeting included a proposal to reorganise the pastoral oversight of the churches, as well as a proposal that we have a co-superintendency in the Circuit (Revd Viv bringing invaluable experience as Superintendent in her previous Circuit).

Revd Langley shared how enthused and excited he was at the prospect of extending his time with the Circuit, with a change in how the churches are shared between Revd Viv and himself, a new way of working in the form of co-superintendency, and a different focus across the Circuit. Circuit Meeting members were sent a paper laying out the proposal and explaining what co-superintendency is, its advantages and how it will work within our circuit.

Our churches are currently divided as follows:

- Revd Viv – Ailsworth, Dogsthorpe, Orton Waterville, Southside, Yaxley

- Revd Langley – Brookside, Crowland, Elton, Oundle, WNC, Whittlesey and Yarwell, and livestream

To give a fairer balance, it was proposed that Elton and Brookside come under Rev Viv's oversight and pastoral charge. This was unanimously agreed.

Both Revs Viv and Langley have enthusiasm for co-superintendency and how it can work. They work well together and their different skills and competencies and sharing these around the Circuit rather than within their sections, will really benefit the whole Circuit and all the churches in the Circuit. Everyone voted in favour that there is co-superintendency in this circuit.

Revd Viv had said she could do with an assistant to help her so the thought of a Lay Pastoral Assistant (LPA) came to mind. This person will not take over the pastoral leader responsibilities, but will be an assistant to the presbyter. The LPA will have an involvement in the life of the Church and take on roles specific to a church's needs, i.e., regularly attend parent and toddler groups, visit families being baptised. It is about having someone to directly assist the minister and to follow up on baptisms and funerals and looking at groups which can be offered something more. The March Circuit Meeting agreed to recruit for a two-year fixed position with the possibility to extend, and we started the recruitment process.

1.4.1 There were changes to our Ministry Plan for 2021-2022. After much thought and prayer, Revd Viv Smith decided she needed more time to support her family, so her appointment was curtailed in summer 2021. There was a process we had to follow to go through the curtailment. The Circuit Invitation Committee agreed the wording of the curtailment: "Following discussions with the presbyter and District Chair, the Circuit was advised that the Revd Vivienne Smith wishes to curtail her appointment in the summer for personal reasons and for her desire to assist her daughter's ministerial training. It is with great sadness that we accept this curtailment. Vivienne has made a very positive impact on the Circuit so far and we will miss her greatly."

In a packed Dogsthorpe, Revd Viv's Leaving Service took place on 24th July 2022, and she left in August 2022. We are extremely grateful to Revd Viv for her ministry and all she brought to the Circuit.

1.4.2 Looking at the options for the future, the Circuit Invitation Committee decided that we would go straight for a stationing appointment starting from September 2022. We were obviously aware that the stationing process had already started and the stationing matching group had met quite a few times. However, with a stationing matching group happening in April 2022, and encouraged by our District Chair, we got to work on applying for a new minister, and entered the stationing process at this later stage. We put together a profile to submit to the April stationing matching group to see if there was a match for us. We were fortunate to have a match. Following a visit to the Circuit and meeting with church representatives and the Circuit Invitation Committee, Revd Janet Titterton accepted the invitation to serve in Peterborough from September 2022.

Revd Janet's Welcome Service was held at Brookside Methodist Church on 27th August 2022. Revd Langley presided and the preacher was the Revd Canon Helen Cameron. The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress (Cllr Nick Sandford and Alderman Bella Saltmarsh), were in attendance. People shared fellowship over refreshments after the service.

1.4.3 Revd Janet will have the oversight of the Methodist churches at Brookside, Dogsthorpe, Elton, Orton Waterville, Southside and Yaxley. In this section of churches, there are a lot of different activities and needs and Revd Viv had already expressed that it was probably too much for one person, as it is difficult to work on a regular basis with the many and varied organisations that meet in the premises, and suggested we realise this when looking at our restructuring.

Revd Viv had said she could do with an assistant to help her so the thought of a Lay Pastoral Assistant (LPA) came to mind. This person will not take over the pastoral leader responsibilities, but will be an assistant to the presbyter. The LPA will have an involvement in the life of the Church and take on roles specific to a church's needs, i.e. regularly attend parent and toddler groups, visit families being baptised. It is about having someone to directly assist the minister and to follow up on baptisms and funerals and looking at groups which can be offered something more. The March Circuit Meeting

agreed to recruit for a two-year fixed position with the possibility to extend, and we started the recruitment process.

1.5 The Circuit Invitation Committee met last year to discuss Revd Langley's reinvitation to remain in the Circuit. Revd Langley and his wife had offered three more years and the Circuit Invitation Committee considered the offer and accepted it. The Circuit Invitation Committee met over a period of time to go through the invitation process and it believed the Reasoned Statement was an accurate reflection of the discussions that took place during that consultation period. Our District Chair presided at our September 2021 Circuit Meeting and members voted that Revd Langley be re-invited as Superintendent Minister for a further three years. As well as being Superintendent, Revd Langley is also involved in Evangelism, Digital Mission and is the New Places for New People lead within God for All.

1.6 Despite unprecedented challenges (not least being superintendent and the sole Methodist minister in t the Circuit for a year, and his current load of six churches, a further congregation, and our livestream presence, we have retained effective oversight of the Circuit wherein ministerial support for individuals and groups is available to those who request it, and worship and preaching has been more accessible in person, in print, and online. Revd Langley acknowledged the tremendous support provided by our supernumerary ministers, the wise counsel of Revd Sarah Gower, and the invaluable support of Sue Moore, and her excellent co-ordination as our Circuit administrator.

1.7 In terms of Circuit staffing, with the lockdown easing, our CLT is making significant progress with leaders from Whittlesey in creating a lay worker post. This will be a Children, Family and Community Worker and the funding for this is in place for Whittlesey.

1.8 *North Westgate Development*
David Buttery at Joliffe-Daking is now working on our behalf looking at suitable alternative sites for the Westgate New Church congregation to move to. One site was mentioned as being available, but it did not fit in with the requested 'two buildings, one site' strategy.

1.9 Westgate New Church put the final touches together for their recruitment campaign for our Back of Beyond (Bob) Project Co-ordinator for their Friendship and outreach project, with a view to advertising this in September 2022. BoB is already up and running as a drop-in and everyone is welcome, but we need someone with experience to help, to advertise what is happening and help us to make connections in the community. This will be an important part of Westgate's mission to the city centre.

2 Mission and Outreach

This section includes different mission activities happening in the Circuit, and some examples of specific mission in individual churches.

2.1 *Mission in our Circuit*
This has obviously been affected greatly by the pandemic but here are some examples of what we have been able to do, despite the restrictions and ongoing concerns about Covid:

2.1.1 Despite the lockdowns, we continued to run and support Foodbanks at Crowland, Dogsthorpe, Oundle and Westgate New Church. The number of users was very high so we are thankful to all concerned for their commitment to feed and support the many hungry and poor individuals and families in our communities.

2.2.2 Due to the Government regulations concerning Covid-19, the local Winter Night Shelter for the homeless, led by local charity Light Project Peterborough, was again unable to take place. However, our Southside, Brookside, Crowland and Dogsthorpe churches, who were host churches for the project in previous years are hoping regulations will change as the pandemic eases. In the meantime, Light Project Peterborough has set up some homelessness pods outside a few churches in Peterborough and one of these is at Southside, in their church car park. Church members provide a meal for the guest on a rota basis and provide support, as needed.

Several church members sit on the Light Project Peterborough Steering group ('Peterborough

Christians for Social Action'), attending meetings and highlighting and contributing to local needs. Some Circuit members volunteer for the "The Garden House", which is a drop-in day centre for the project; this continued to open throughout the lockdowns with strict safety measures in place. The Government awarded funds for rough sleepers to be put into hotel accommodation and the staff and volunteers facilitated this and gave support.

2.2.3 Our Missions and Ministries Team normally has an annual Mission focus. Unfortunately this did not happen due Covid-related difficulties. However, individual churches did raise money for particular charities in need of support including the MHA, and some churches kept MHA Sunday on 12th June.
Churches engaged in various forms of charitable giving, i.e. at the Orton Waterville 'Stitches' group much time, energy and love was spent in knitting blankets, hats and other items for people in need.

George Barber from Brookside cycled a very impressive 63 miles in one day for the Brookside roof fund, raising £1400. He appeared in the 'Peterborough Evening Telegraph'.

2.2.4 As ever, the churches responded generously to Connexional Funds. £5940.00 was sent to the charities involved, allocated as follows: Property £1500.00; Presbyters and Deacons £544.00; LWPT £797.00; MHA £982.00; MRDF £1229.00; Ministers' Housing £880.00. We are grateful to Sue Keeney, Our Connexional Funds Officer for organising and administering this.

Last year, the Missions and Ministries Team took a beneficial fresh look at how the team operates. The team reviewed its purpose and it was relaunched with the arrival of Revd Viv and, although the team has not met latterly because of health issues, much of what was focused on has been happening, for example:

The value of 'Morning Prayers' online is being affirmed.
We have been finding ways in which to engage with those who work – having worship material available for them as and when they have time.
We have started a "Share Jesus" course to encourage the sharing of faith in our everyday lives. (We started to hold small group meetings for those who feel it would work best for them. Nicky Ward and Revd Langley are running this).
We are affirming the value of Circuit Services – online and face to face.
We are continuing to ask the whole Circuit to hold all youth work in their prayers.

Reflecting on what has happened, a lot of work has been done. In the Circuit, there are three spaces where new ideas and wisdom are instilled, apart from the Circuit meeting of course, and they are: The Local Preachers' Meeting, the Pioneer Hub, and, the Missions and Ministries Team where ideas are filtered down. We hold these three together and are working on how we feed in ideas from one to the other. (Ideas filter their way down from the Pioneer Hub and, during the lockdowns when the Pioneer Hub met online, new things were started because of discussions at those meetings and existing things developed significantly).

2.3 *Mission in our Churches*
We are pleased that more events happened in our churches and they did so with the proper Covid safety measures in place. Some things continued to be held online.

2.3.1 A wide range of regular groups met in our churches, and these included:

At Orton Waterville, the Knit and Natter group met regularly. 'Orton Friends' (a drop-in for the retired) started on Mondays. Eighteen people turned up. The Stitches Group partnered with Barnardo's and helped them to supply clothing and blankets etc. to families who are struggling in all manner of situations. They are supplying directly through Barnardo's to those in need. The ladies also knitted Separation Blankets, which go to women who are about to go to prison and be separated from their babies. The idea is that, when they have the baby, the baby will have been wrapped in the blanket for a couple of hours and the baby is taken into care and the blanket goes to the mother in prison. Many of these children will be fostered or may go back to their mothers eventually.

At Brookside During the year, regular activities were gradually resumed, appropriate risk assessments having been made. Social distancing remained in place in the Sanctuary, hand sanitising and masks were available, but otherwise visitors were not required to undertake special measures. Weekly Morning Worship, and monthly Messy Church and Café Worship took place through the year. New Direction, an online bible study group, meet weekly over Zoom. There is also now a regular mid-week communion held on a monthly basis on a Tuesday afternoon, which began in February 2022.
Pastoral care of church members and contacts is undertaken by volunteers who meet regularly for mutual support. To enhance this work, a member has been commissioned as Pastoral Assistant to the Minister, responding to requests for visits to the long-term sick and housebound and to those in extra need, doing hospital visits, taking Home Communion and having a prayer ministry. Two members have been commissioned for Bereavement Support and Baptism Support.
Requests for prayer will be met by appropriate individuals or groups, or included in worship services. A drop-in Wellbeing Coffee Morning has started once a fortnight to offer conversation, quiet activities and prayer, and this is for anyone in the local community.
Since March 2020, a weekly Church Newsletter has been circulated to members and friends online, or by post for those without computer access.
Fellowship Refreshments are served after each morning service to enable the congregation to meet informally. A programme of activities to promote fellowship is organised throughout the year.
Brookside Men's Group meets monthly and a new monthly Brookside Ladies Group was formed in October 2021. Both groups meet together to enjoy a variety of activities and build friendships and support networks. They are open to all and both have members who do not attend church.
The Tuesday Fellowship meets fortnightly and provides opportunities for outreach and fellowship.
Other events organised by our Events Committee and other groups included a band concert, Acapella choir and afternoon tea, a Big Brekkie (profit to Christian Aid), and a church family picnic.
Brookside Church Council runs a pre-school, which is open thirty hours weekly, 8.30am to 2.30pm. It is managed by a Committee of elected Church Council members and has a graduate manager and qualified staff. The pre-school has the use of the main hall, two classrooms and a large, secure outdoor space, plus toilet and kitchen facilities.
The Youth Club, which meets weekly, restarted in October 2021 with five young people at present.
The Boys Brigade meets weekly in the church building. It has sixteen regular attendees. They are managed by members of the church.
Girl Guiding provides Rainbows, Brownies and Guides weekly in term time. In addition to the church groups and activities the premises are regularly used by groups such as Gamblers Anonymous, Slimming World, art groups, sewing groups and music examination boards. The church is used as a Polling Station.
An effort is made annually to raise money for Christian Aid through events such as Big Brekkie. Money is raised for Action for Children, particularly at Christmas time. Groups and individuals are encouraged to take turns to provide after church refreshments to raise money for their group or different charities. A group of people continues to provide cakes for the homeless on a fortnightly rota.

At Oundle, they continued with their bi-monthly “Gatherings” (times of fellowship, teaching and prayer), with eight local preachers and ministers invited to give reflections on a rota basis). Oundle are now meeting on alternate Sundays and are really feeling very fulfilled by having a weekday gathering.
Their Food Bank is growing so much that it is becoming difficult to house all the users in it.

At Crowland: Explorers; Toddlers group, Saturday morning coffee sessions with book stalls; Small fellowship / study groups: Wesley`s Wayfarers; Stepping Stones (A study group for young people). They also restarted Messy Church. They have set up a project called ‘Who Let the Dads Out’, which is focused on trying to improve the relationships between children and their fathers. It is under the umbrella of a charity called Care for the Family. It can be difficult talking about men and fatherhood in our current climate, but there is work to be done to encourage positive relationships.

At Westgate New Church, they continued to alternate on the Preaching plan with having a C4

service, which is a café-style service and then a service led by a preacher on the alternate week. People feel really uplifted by this pattern.

Langley started to attend Churches Together in Central Peterborough meetings as Westgate is now under his oversight.

At Whittlesey, during Lockdown, they set up a WhatApp group to provide connection and pastoral care across a variety of age groups. Members have continued to use this forum as a means to support one another and to request and provide prayers for one another at this time. Its effectiveness includes connecting people who can no longer attend church and to provide instant connectivity when needed. During Lockdown, they also used Skype as a virtual forum to invite church members to gather together on a Sunday when there was no church meeting together. This provided an opportunity to connect with church family, request prayer support and guard again isolation. IT literate church members set up others' online tablets and laptops to access and use these mediums.
Their church magazine started during Lockdown as a means to maintain contact with the church family. Tony Wright is the editor and he had them printed at their local college and distributed via the pastoral visitors whilst the church was closed. On the occasions when the college was closed he used a local print shop. Now they are available at the start of each month and the name of the magazine has been changed to "Fresh Horizons" to reflect the new shoots of growth in numbers and initiatives, including their search for a Children, Family and Community Worker.
Film Evenings were started by Tony four or five winters ago, chiefly to provide a cinema facility for their town, with movies being screened fortnightly through the months of October to April. Rhod and Claire Eaton now alternate with Lyn and Tony Wright, with refreshments served during the intervals. No actual charge is made for admission. Voluntary donations provide income for the Church. They average around fifty folk each time and, of course, give outsiders a view of their buildings and, hopefully, they may decide to worship with them in the future!

A Ukraine family attends the church. They are living with a church family. Whittlesey has started a Ukraine Hub for Ukraine families within Whittlesey. It meets on Thursdays from 11.30am to 130pm. They have coffee and talk to each other and they are learning to speak English. It is going very well. People in the Circuit were informed about the information from Churches Together in England about Ukraine, and on the work being done and how we are able to help. Revd Langley encouraged every church in the Circuit to register online with Sanctuary The work might involve picking up refugees from the airport, providing transport for them to vital services or providing a space for them.

At Elton, there is good and bad news: The Chapel building is Grade 11 Listed, in a Conservation Area. They are great in faith but small in numbers, with a declining congregation through age, ill health or members moving away. Therefore, to comply with both Methodist requirements and Charity Commission rules, they have realised that they may have to apply to 'cease to meet' and form a Fellowship instead. Discussions are ongoing with the CLT.
Whether or not they had a preacher, they continued to meet each Sunday once Covid rules were lifted. A long-standing 'Knit & Natter' group continued to meet on Tuesday afternoons in the chapel. They had a concert with the group 'Frumenty' in September 2021, which was very enjoyable. They invited Elton villagers to join them for a most enjoyable 'Cod and Carols' Christmas meal. The biggest event of the year was a free Bird Festival on Saturday 23 April 2022 in the Chapel, with world-class speakers and experts. Day-long refreshments were provided and they raised money for building repairs identified in the Quinquennial report. They had a write up in the Peterborough Evening Telegraph.
They were happy to host the All Saints' church congregation for the five weeks that the Parish Church was out of commission for electrical work. Ironically, urgent repairs to their own Chapel, to be paid for by funds raised through activities and donations, were not carried out. Outstanding work includes the sills to the stained glass windows which risk deteriorating to the point where the glass could fall out on to passers-by. The Chapel directly abuts Chapel Lane. As their Treasurer has moved north, they have appointed a member of the congregation with a local book-keeper paid to handle the recording of accounts. They have approximately £11,000 in the bank, to go towards the

required building repairs, which could amount to £14,000.

Elton resident and Chapel adherent, Robin Ackroyd, is paid a nominal sum for cleaning the chapel weekly. The organist deemed the organ did not require its annual tuning, but this may be required towards the end of 2023. The annual fire extinguisher and electrical equipment checks were carried out on time. A fridge was kindly gifted to the chapel by the family of a deceased member.
Church Steward Anne Brown took part in two Safeguarding seminars organised by the Circuit, so was appointed Church Safeguarding Officer. With regret, they accepted the resignation of long-standing steward Pat Bourne who moved house. Future plans, regardless of any new status from 2023, include a quiz for villagers in October 2022, participation in the 2023 Elton May Day festivities and a joint indoor Boot Sale with the Parish Church to raise funds.

At Southside, their 'Church 4 All' group meets on Tuesday afternoons. This group is aimed for families with school age children, although they do have families come with younger children, and sometimes they have people come from their Sunday congregation, so this is a Church for all, and all are welcome.

2.3.2 At Dogsthorpe, the Mums and Tots group has begun on a Monday Morning and is proving successful, and a link has been formed with the school next door and a representative attends the Monday Morning group. There is continued outreach through the Food Bank two mornings a week. Citizens Advice and Care Zone attend on a Friday Morning. They have the U3A 'Sing Something Simple' choir which meets on a Monday Afternoon. U3A 'Rhythmaires Choir' meets on Tuesday Mornings. 'Rhapsody Choir' meets on a Tuesday Evening. The U3A 'Singing Songs of Praise' meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month in the mornings. A Big Band meet on a Thursday Evening. The church holds a "Family Night" on a Friday Evening. There is also a Craft Meeting which meets one evening a week. A very successful Pre-School meets every week day. All of these events contain outreach contacts and engage with the community.

2.3.3 *At Christ Church*, they have continued to 'go into school' via recordings and messages throughout the lockdowns and have had a service with the school every Thursday. They restarted their Toddler group in May 2022 and it is lovely to be back.

2.3.4 *At Yaxley,* Coffee Mornings have successfully re started every other month on the second Saturday of the month at 10am.
The very successful baby support group (the 'Busy Bees Baby Group') continued.
Yaxley also have a thriving Facebook page and has regularly watched the Circuit online worship.

2.3.5 The Circuit Meeting continue to address the 'God for All' strategy, which is significant both financially and in terms of mission strategy in the next decade to twenty years in the life of the Church. Revd Langley did a Discipleship Course in July 2022.

2.3.6 As a Circuit, we continued to review our Mission Plan. Revd Langley continued to work closely with Crowland and Whittlesey in developing their mission plans and it has been a very rewarding time.

2.3.7 Revd Langley and Nicky Ward, in conjunction with 'Good News for Everyone' ran an Evangelism course at Westgate New Church during March and April 2022.

2.3.8 Evangelising online, last year, Revd Langley did two e-drops which went out as part of his 'Monthly Bulletins'; one was done by him and one by Revd Viv. The first one was on gentle evangelism and invitation. The second one was on inviting people to church and growing our church communities. This year, in November 2021, he did some e-drops and podcasts and some Evangelism Shorts.

In December 2021, he did a series of Christmas Shorts online including on Facebook:
On 18th Dec: 90 seconds on the truth of Christmas.
On 20th Dec: During 'Morning Prayers'. 'Psalm 96; Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for He is coming. Praying through the BBC headlines'.
On 22nd Dec, during 'Morning Prayers'. 'Isaiah 9:2-7; The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Praying through the Sky News headlines'.
On 23rd Dec, during 'Morning Prayers': 'Livestream Prayer: Titus 2:11-14; For the grace of God has

appeared. ITV news headlines'.
On Christmas Eve, he did a Nativity Service online at 4pm: 'We've Lost Jesus' – aimed at children. Also on Christmas Eve at 8pm, he did a 'Carol Service online: Carols and Reflections' for everyone.

We had Christmas Poetry online on Christmas Day – written and read by poets in the Circuit.

On 31st December, we had 'Grateful Heart – an invitation for anyone to post prayers of Thanksgiving on Facebook'

On 1st January 2022, we had 'New Year, New Resolution – and invitation for anyone to share and ask for prayer support with their New Year's resolution on Facebook'.

2.3.9 Revd Langley shared his future vision of evangelism and growing disciples: By 2023, What do we need to let go of so we can take other stuff on?; by 2024, focus on more of the things that are intentional, encouraging people in their faith; and by 2025. We need to think where's our journey and where are we heading?

2.4 Worship, Services and Prayer

2.4.1 Some churches took part in the national 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative from 26 May to 7 June 2022. Our thanks to our County Ecumenical Officer, Caroline Hutchings, for always keeping us informed of ecumenical initiatives, events and services in the local area.

2.4.2 The Circuit continued its subscription to The Vine's 'Twelvebaskets' (set services for Own Arrangements), and this has again been a real Godsend for the churches when they had to close during the lockdowns or when preachers were unavailable because of illness etc. Some churches have based their services on these materials and invited preachers to email weekly reflections to be included in these services, so enabling preachers to still contribute, and congregations to continue to have contact with preachers and benefit from a variety of preaching. Church stewards and contacts faithfully worked to make The Vine material available to people in their churches.

Although we have streamed our services online and held services via Zoom and Facebook, we have not wanted older people or anyone to feel left out because they do not have a computer so, churches have used 'The Vine' resources and made this available to their congregations. Some churches have printed and delivered hard copies of their church magazines and newsletters to keep everyone in the loop. Pastoral visitors have printed material for those they visit.

2.4.3 Our Pioneer Hub Café worship has continued, meeting via Zoom every month. Our thanks to Revd Dale Sherriff for leading and enabling these.

2.4.4 Revd Dale Sherriff spoke at our Circuit Meeting about the Pioneer Hub and the Small Group Network. The Hub is back to meeting face to face, in person.
They continued meeting via Zoom through both lockdowns and they had some really useful and helpful conversations, and continued to look at things whilst lockdowns were on. We are now in a place where the pioneer hub is taking some interest and involvement in what It is happening with small groups and small teams across the Circuit.

This also links with the initiative that the District is undertaking – New People for New Places (NPNP), and what we are trying to do in this circuit is something that may be a model that the District can then build on that we can offer them. The Pioneer Hub in the Circuit is held in very high regard by our district and is seen as quite a forward thinking group. Our work with the churches and finding out about their small groups is tremendously useful work, and there is great potential, not just for us, but going beyond the Circuit.

One such small group is Whittlesey, where they are having a wonderful Café Church on a Sunday afternoon, which is really well attended. It is about three times the size of some of our churches that meet on a Sunday morning. It is a wonderful occasion and a great atmosphere and people are being ministered to wonderfully.

Small groups are also important because they can become praying places. They are the key to growth.

2.4.5 Thanks go to Revd Dale Sherriff, Matt Forsyth and Revd Langley who continued to lead Circuit Livestream worship and 'Morning Prayers'. Also to Nicky Ward, who started to lead Circuit online worship once a month from 5th Sept 2021. Thanks also to Sandra Hughes who now leads online Reflections on Friday mornings. There is something provided every week day.

Matt Forsyth continued as our Digital Livestream Producer.

A faithful number of people value being part of our online livestream community, supporting and being supported by others every day through our live 'Morning Prayers'. As these are also recorded, people can also catch-up later if this works better for them. Meanwhile, if people want to know more about where they can find their closest Methodist Church in the Peterborough area, they are directed to our Circuit website.

2.4.6 A Circuit Service was held at Crowland on 13th February. This was also Crowland's Church Anniversary and our District Chair, Revd Helen Cameron, was the preacher. Due to concerns still about Covid safety, this was a hybrid service – some people attended in person and some via Zoom. After much hard work and preparation, we were delighted and relieved that the live Zoom technology worked extremely well!
We had good feedback about the service. Crowland is not known for its mobile reception so we are pleased it was a success. The CLT would like to see these services continue so we are looking to see how we put these into the Plan.

A 'Revive' Circuit Service was held at Dogsthorpe on 27th March at 4pm. It was a time for people to come and have a space to worship and receive ministry and a time of prayer, where we allowed the Holy Spirit to come. Tim and Tope Pearson from 'Good News for Everyone' (formerly Gideons UK) are working with us via 'Equipping the Saints', and they gave their testimony.

2.5 Our Focus as a Circuit

2.5.1 Online worship has been a significant success and that is why we are continuing our Circuit worship on Sunday mornings. This is now pre-recorded as Revd Langley and the preachers who lead have to be present in the churches, but preachers and church stewards and church members contribute via reflections and readings.

2.5.2 The January Circuit Meeting formally adopted the Connexional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report. This helps to prevent things like unconscious bias.

2.5.3 Having concern for our planet, we set up a Circuit Climate Awareness group last year to keep everyone aware and informed of climate issues. Churches were encouraged to Climate Sunday on 5th September. Circuit members were emailed resources, news and events and Revd Langley included climate issues in his 'Weekly Bulletins'. Climate documents were added to our Circuit web site, with direct links from the Homepage, including to the 'Climate Action Briefing paper'. People were encouraged to click on 'Climate Action Methodist Church' with its commitment to climate action including 'Worship', 'Commit' and 'Speak up', and lots of wider advice.

Climate Sunday is not just one day, so individuals, churches, local communities and families were encouraged to think about what they can do and action and to think about what, as a church, locally we can do to encourage our communities and our churches to be involved in climate change.

3 Staffing and Appointments, Stewards and Ministries

3.1 Simon Stewart, Sue Keeney, Christine Kell and Sue Holmes all continued as Circuit Stewards for this year. All these stewards were re-elected to the Circuit Stewarding Team at our June Circuit Meeting.

3.1.1 Sue Keeney, Nigel Lightfoot, Mick Goodman and Nicky Ward continued as our representatives to District Synod.

3.1.2 Marion Mahan continued as Chaplain to our local MHA (Methodist Homes Association) retirement living scheme, The Maples. The residents are also supported by visits from two of our ministers and several Circuit members.

From a local preaching training perspective, In January 2021, Nigel Lightfoot took on the role of Local Preachers' Secretary. We are very grateful to Susan Halford who previously and excellently fulfilled this role for seven years.
Matt Forsyth continued on trial and was still committed to his local preaching. Matt also continued as District Mission Enabler, and has been very helpful and supportive towards the Circuit this year. Maddie Whiting is in training to be a Worship Leader at Brookside. Laura Martin continues her studies as she journeys the road to ordination.

One of our Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meetings this year was addressed by Marion Mahan. Several of our preachers visit The Maples periodically to lead a time of fellowship with some of the residents. Marion expressed her gratitude on behalf of herself and the residents as this proves to be a positive connection appreciated by residents who attend.

The Circuit Plan continues challenging, owing to the fact that a number of our preachers are no longer as active as they once were. We remain grateful for those who appear on our visiting preachers list. Some churches have invited local visiting preachers to preach or give their testimony. We have asked people in the Circuit to remain prayerfully aware for anyone in their churches who may feel called to investigate a possible calling to this ministry, either as a Worship Leader or a Local Preacher.

Revd Langley and Viv had pastoral conversations to journey with those preachers to see where they are. Between them, they have visited and shared with every local preacher this year. Sandra Hughes, for example, has mobility issues and a conversation with her led us to see how she could be part of our online ministry, and because she already commits to a facebook group in Whittlesey, she will be offering some thoughts and reflections online on Fridays. We would like preachers to be in churches and leading worship, but actually they can still minister and function in other settings.

3.2 The Young Leaders' Scheme, organised by the District came to an end. Revd Langley and Christine Kell met with our Circuit Social Media Enabler, Grace Sherriff, over the past year every four weeks, just to keep in touch with how things were going and to discuss and plan her next steps.
As it was a new experience for her, she valued the direction. They had their final meeting on 17th August 2021 and this was some of the feedback from Grace:

She felt she had not accomplished what she wanted to do due to lockdown, and was a little disappointed that she was unable to meet face to face with any young people during the period of the scheme.

Being able to talk and interview different people gave her an overview of the Church as a whole. One of her quotes was "It was good to be able to contribute when I belong to a church that is not Methodist."

She did feel valued in the role, and especially welcomed the feedback from individuals in the churches. She also felt appreciated, and it was helpful to see the value that people put on young people.

Grace's recommendations for any future schemes: Lockdown was a hindrance and perhaps this was not a good time to be starting something new. However, she could see advantages to the scheme, especially for someone who is rooted in one of the Circuit churches being part of the role.

We thanked Grace for all she has done.

3.3 Not seeing one another has made communication difficult. However, Revd Langley has been keeping everyone abreast of what is happening through what were 'Weekly Bulletins', now 'Monthly Bulletins'. Via these, he has regularly provided guidance for the churches following the different regulations and Covid-19 guidance that were issued by the Government and the Methodist Church, as well as providing thoughts and reflections. People appreciate the bulletins in terms of finding a

sense of connection. As a Circuit, Revd Langley thinks we should recognise that we have responded well through the lockdowns and adjusted well, and that bodes well when we think about how we adapt ourselves for mission. We have reshaped things to achieve our mission in different ways even though we have not been able to meet. We have responded to the challenges brought by the pandemic really well. There are always things we can do better but, when we look back, it is amazing how our churches have responded, both in paper and online, in the scope of pastoral care and the deepening of the pastoral relationships between people.

Our thanks to all who have provided up to date information and assistance to those in their churches, including those who have produced paper copies, church newsletters and written reflections from preachers to those not on email.

During the lockdowns, local preachers continued to support the churches by providing typed reflections for circulation. This has been a great encouragement and support to those smaller churches who were not able to re-open for a long time.
Some preachers also continued to provide recorded reflections for inclusion in our Circuit online worship (livestream and recorded). This is still continuing and is much appreciated, especially by those unable to get to church for various reasons.

4 Safeguarding

4.1 We welcomed David Whiting as our Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Thanks to all the Safeguarding Team, and especially to Phillip Assensoh, for their help, guidance, and patience as David settled into the role.

4.1.2 Connie Hunt, Janet Rich and Revd Viv all did the 'Training the Trainers' training so they can train people to do the Foundation course.

People in the Circuit did the Foundation training or the Advanced training, as appropriate.

Twenty-one people from the Peterborough Circuit completed the online version of 'Creating Safer Spaces' Advanced Module (CSSAM), with a further person signed up for the course currently being offered in May.

Twenty-two people signed up for the February face-to face CSSFM Safeguarding Foundation course at Dogsthorpe, Eleven people from the Circuit completed the Zoom version of the course in February.

4.1.3 A Circuit-wide record of DBS checks was compiled.

4.1.4 The Circuit Safeguarding Policy for 2022 was amended and updated and agreed at our march Circuit meeting.

4.1.5 The Circuit continues to abide by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and keeps contacts and posters accurate and up-to-date.

5 Finance

5.1 The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022 were audited and approved.

5.2 Income for the year was £194,072. This included a £50,000 legacy for Whittlesey that came through the Circuit accounts. The expenditure for the year was £141,741, giving us a £2,331 surplus to reserves (the £50,000 legacy being ring-fenced for the Whittlesey layworker).

5.3 The Circuit policy on reserves, at 6 months, was unchanged.
With the Russia and Ukraine situation, we expect more adverse effects and quite a significant reduction in the value of our reserve funds. We are mindful that 'Circuit Reserves Policy' needs to be updated and the CLT agreed to bring an updated Reserves Policy to the autumn 2022 Circuit Meeting.

5.4 We have benefitted from regular income from the rental of the Birchtree venue manse, and not too

much in terms of associated costs.

5.6 We continue to look at how to improve the income from Circuit churches and how best to replace the current method of meeting costs of running the Circuit. We have relied too long on Circuit reserves and this needs addressing. A steep rise in costs from the District is impacting our circuit and our churches, and we are putting plans in place as to how we meet these costs in the most effective way, and in a way that is manageable for each of our churches.

Obviously, some of the churches have been hit quite hard through the Covid-19 crisis. We started to get an overview of churches' positions so we can see what next year might look like, and then update our budget accordingly. We asked the churches in January what they think their financial concerns will be.

5.7 Our treasurer (Giles Armstrong) and Book keeper (Mark Bedford) put together a helpful five-year plan: 'Five-year projections: Projected Costings for 2021 – 2026'. This is proving to be extremely helpful as we look ahead to what we can afford in the future with regards to staffing and to applying for grant applications which require matched funding. One of the requirements when applying for grant applications, as we have done this year, is to include a copy of our Circuit Mission Policy and Circuit Strategy, which we have updated. There was a positive discussion at one of Revd Langley's Superintendents' meetings about how the Mission Policy actually sets our culture.

5.8 We are exceedingly grateful to Giles and Mark for all their hard work throughout the year.

6 Property

6.1 Mick Goodman continued on the Property Team. Our Property Team Co-ordinator, Paul Hutchings, had resigned on 19th August last year after a very busy year. He was thanked for his sterling work, and we are still looking for someone else to take on this role.

6.2 Two property schemes were registered – one at Whittlesey for improvement to its front entrance and improved access, and one at Brookside to fit a new roof because of longstanding leaks. Brookside requested a £5000 loan from the Circuit and applied for grants and raised a lot of money themselves

6.3 We continued to let the Dogsthorpe manse in Birchtree Avenue and the income from this was all ring-fenced for the Welland project. We had new tenants.

Due to the recruitment freeze in the Connexion, we were not able to progress the Welland Pioneer Worker vacancy, but we have been looking at staffing overall as a circuit and whether or not we can make this a full-time role with other responsibilities. However, it has become clear that other organisations have been meeting the needs of the in Welland and, with the passing of time, the CLT believe that there is no need to recruit to the role, but rather seek to offer assistance where it is required and work in partnership with the churches working in Welland. This year, the CLT requested that rental income from the Manse is now to be used for work in the Circuit, in this case the Lay Pastoral Assistant role, and that this takes effect from when Anita Gordon's time in the role ended.

6.5 Quinquennials were carried out at Ailsworth, Whittlesey and Yaxley.

6.6 Elton is struggling to afford the amounts needed for necessary building costs and, although there is a real heart and faithfulness there, they are struggling to find officers to fulfil essential church roles. The CLT is walking with them at this difficult time and doing all it can to help.

6.7 The District Executive has given permission for Ailsworth to cease to meet. At our November meeting, members reluctantly and unanimously gave their permission for Ailsworth to be sold. It is a requirement of the Charity Commission that we have to sell a building to the highest bidder. Work has commenced on reviewing the sale options for the chapel. Although they are in agreement with the closure, this whole process has deliberately taken place slowly in order to allow the faithful Ailsworth members to process what is happening. Revd Viv has been alongside them at this difficult time.

In conclusion

We believe we have kept the Church alive and active throughout the continued Covid-19 difficulties, and we have again done so through working and learning together, and supporting and encouraging each other, and in reaching out to those in our communities – in person and virtually/online. The Circuit Leadership Team is grateful to everyone for all their contributions and support in what has been another challenging year. We have seen the flowering of some of the seeds that were planted and we move forward with renewed hope and enthusiasm, and with thanksgiving.

We continue to give thanks for many blessings:

The increase in the scope and depth of our pastoral care.

Our ability to recognise where there is need, discern where God is leading us and to respond well, often with results that we could have never envisaged.

The continuance of our online ministry that has reached those who cannot connect with Church easily because they are unwell, care for others or work shifts.

Our District and the wider Connexion in all their resourcing of us.

We continue to pray:

For our focus on the themes within God For All, especially small groups, evangelism, digital mission, and New Places for New People.

For our thoughts on how we can make the best use of our resources.

That our churches see the benefits of purposeful meetings and mission planning.

It has been another year of joys and sadnesses but, we end with some of the joys:

Meeting again in person as a big congregation to worship together at our Circuit Services.

Seeing new people come to church (in person and online), and witnessing existing members growing in their faith and learning new skills.

New groups and new initiatives being set up in our churches.

We think it fitting to end with the following prayer, which we submitted to the 'Methodist Prayer Diary' this year:

God of all,
By the power of Your Spirit, give us a hope that will drive us forward, believing that we can make a difference. Give us the hope and faith that we need to entertain new ways of working.
Give us the boldness we need to overcome our anxieties.
Above all, help us to be attentive to how even the smallest changes in our own thinking and our gestures can set in motion a great outpouring of Your presence and purpose in the lives of others.
Amen

Signed: L Mackrell-Hey

Revd Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey
Chair and Superintendent of the Methodist Circuit:
The Peterborough Methodist Circuit of Churches

Date: 29th March, 2023

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2022

	District	Circuit no	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number	1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

REVD DR LANGLEY MACKRELL-HEY

REVD VIVIENNE SMITH

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY

MRS CHRISTINE KELL

MR SIMON STEWART

MRS S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022 | PETERBOROUGH | Circuit

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds	Circuit Model Trust Fund	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
a1	**RECEIPTS**		£	£	£	£		£
a2	Assessment/Share		135,595			**135,595**		127,383
a3	Capital receipts			- 10,943		**(10,943)**		27,015
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		2,175	4,257		**6,432**		4,418
a5	Grants							
a6	Other receipts		62,988			**62,988**		11,557
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**200,758**	**- 6,686**		**194,072**	**(a8)**	**170,373**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		90,930			**90,930**		66,745
b3	Manse Costs		9,114			**9,114**		14,056
b4	Administration etc		4,300			**4,300**		7,045
b5	District Assessment		17,556			**17,556**		30,853
b6	Grants & donations		-					
b7								
b8	Other payments		13,530	6,311		**19,841**		15,701
b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**135,430**	**6,311**		**141,741**	**(b9)**	**134,400**
	SECTION C							
c1	**NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR**	**(a7-b9)**	**65,328**	**- 12,997**	**-**	**52,331**		**35,973**
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		71,243	179,988		251,231	(c6)	215,258
c3	**Sub total**	**(c1+c2)**	**136,571**	**166,991**		**303,562**		**251,231**
c4	Transfers and adjustments					-	(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	**(c3+c4)**	**136,571**	**166,991**		**303,562**	**(c8)**	**251,231** (c6)

	SECTION D		
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**		
d1	Balance brought forward from last year	-	-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations	-	-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations	-	-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**	-	-

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E **Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2022 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts		Payments		Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments		Opening balances		Closing balances	
e1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
e9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	194,072	(a8)	141,741	(b9)	52,331		(c7)	251,231	(c6)	303,562	(c8)
e10	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT	194,072		141,741		52,331			251,231	(x)	303,562	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	TOTAL RECEIPTS		TOTAL PAYMENTS								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2022	OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	54,834		120,600	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	13,410		12,972	
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	182,987		169,990	
f6	Other funds				
f7	SUB TOTAL	251,231	(c6)	303,562	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT	251,231	(x)	303,562	(y)

SECTION G

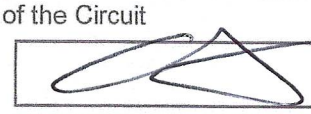
	OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES	At 31 August 2021	At 31 August 2022
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	807,000	878,820
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer  Date 13.10.22

Name MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on 13.10.22

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting 

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey

Date 13.10.22

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Peterborough **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees conside audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and tha 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 Report

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 (other than that disclosed below*):

(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;
- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I ~~have~~/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name: M. J. RUFFLES

Signature: M. J. Ruffles

Relevant Professional qualification or body: FCA ICAEW

Address: 4 BARLOW COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZZ

Date: 24/09/22

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2022

	District	Circuit no	23/21

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REVD VIVIENNE SMITH

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

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MRS CHRISTINE KELL

MR SIMON STEWART

MRS S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022 | PETERBOROUGH | Circuit

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c4	Transfers and adjustments					-	(c7)	
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PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

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SECTION G

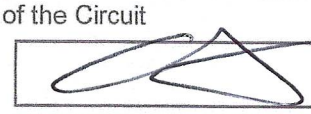
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Signature of Treasurer  Date 13.10.22

Name MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

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Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey

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** Please circle as appropriate*

Name: M. J. RUFFLES

Signature: M. J. Ruffles

Relevant Professional qualification or body: FCA ICAEW

Address: 4 BARLOW COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZZ

Date: 24/09/22

THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales - Charity number 1135613

Accounts

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Peterborough Methodist Circuit
for the church year 1st Sept 2020 to 31st August 2021
(Registered Charity No 1135613)



Produced by the Peterborough Circuit of the Methodist Church
Circuit Office, Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough PE4 7TG
Email: pborocircuitoffice@gmail.com Tel: (01733) 328192

Our Mission Statement

"The Peterborough Methodist Circuit aims to be the people of God within our communities, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and showing God's love through worship, witness and service."

We seek to discover the needs of contemporary society and respond to it; working with our ecumenical partners towards creating relationships within the communities and sharing the word of God with those around us.

We are seeking to utilise and ensure the abilities and skills of lay people fully in the Circuit and encourage others to explore and offer themselves for service at all levels as equal partners in our work.

Our vision statement for our children's and young people's ministry

'Providing loving and caring ministries that children and young people may come to know Jesus Christ'

Trustees during the year	
Revd Langley Mackrell-Hey (Chair)	Jo Marshall-Sully
Giles Armstrong	Laura Martin
Philip Assensoh	Valerie Octon
George Barber	Revd David Parkes
Sarah Bereznyckyj	Janet Rich
Heather Black	Cathy Ruffles
Sue Gage	Margaret Smith
Elizabeth Gee	Revd Vivienne Smith
Michael Goodman	Revd Douglas Stevens
Revd Sarah Gower	Simon Stewart
Susan Halford	Monica Sturgess
John Hewitson	Ann Tooth
Sue Holmes	Revd Graham Tooth
Trevor Howlett	Denise Watson
Paul Hutchings	Elizabeth White
Sue Keeney	David Whiting
Christine Kell	Nicky Ward
Sarah Kelly	Peter Williams
Nigel Lightfoot	

1 Our Circuit

1.1 Encompassing the heart of Peterborough and extending into three counties – Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire - we minister in the city, in towns, and in villages.
There are 13 churches in the Peterborough Circuit and one of these churches (Yarwell), is an Anglican Church, and Methodist ministers or Local Preachers lead the service there once a month. The Yarwell congregation is a class of Elton and receives support from the congregation there. Three of the churches: Whittlesey, Westgate New Church and Christ Church are Local Ecumenical Partnership's (LEPs). We have seen great things by working in partnership with other denominations. We have a heart for nurturing and shaping disciples. We are deeply committed to evangelism and social outreach.

1.2 Trustees of the Circuit Meeting met four times during the year: In September 2020 and in January, April and June 2021. Our Circuit Meeting Devotions are a great source of inspiration and learning and, this year, they were led by: Our Superintendent Minister, Revd Langley, using prayers from the Iona Community; and by three Local Preachers on 'Unity', on 'Mental Health' and on 'Climate Awareness'. Three of these meetings were held via Zoom due to the Covid-19 safety regulations.

New Ways of working

The Coronavirus still being present has forced us to continue to work differently as a Circuit. We have again responded well to the many challenges we have encountered and our report shows how we have adapted our ways of working, and put on new and different services and activities in a variety of creative ways. Everyone has stepped up, learned new skills and embraced all kinds of technology, often surprising themselves, and gaining confidence along the way. Although most of our churches reopened by Easter Sunday, Westgate New Church (WNC) and Yaxley opened later in the year. These churches have a particular struggle due to the shape of the building in terms of mitigating risk and the availability of people.

In the second lockdown, many preachers, quite rightly, said they did not feel confident in going out or felt more comfortable to remain local, and some had ill health. This did present some challenges in covering appointments on the Preaching Plan, but some of the churches eased out of lockdown through alternate weeks and that worked well. As preachers felt more secure and as the vaccine rolled out, some preachers were able to offer more. Our emphasis on the Plan was in encouraging the churches to retain a link with the local preachers as this is very much part of our tradition.

Revd Langley started leading livestream worship with WNC once a month and he encouraged churches to see livestream as a congregation in its own right. Some churches showed the livestream whilst they gathered, accessing YouTube or Facebook and the monthly podcasts which Revd Viv produced, with people able to comment on them with someone in the background. We also started to offer recorded worship once Revd Langley was back leading worship in churches. These options have proved helpful to smaller gatherings.

We have endeavoured to strike the right balance, mindful that we do not want to lose people from our regular online communities, but also wanting to encourage people back to church. Revd Langley put together the 'Peterborough Online Church' document and asked people to send in their comments. It gave people reassurances about the balance we are trying to achieve between providing services in person and online services.

We are still providing Circuit online worship every Sunday morning and online 'Morning Prayers' four times a week, having built up a thriving online community, many of whom contribute to the services via live chat, sharing prayer concerns and supporting one another. The advantage of livestreams is that we can put prayers on straightaway, and this has been a great comfort to people who have felt surrounded in prayer at a really difficult time, including friends and neighbours of our church members who have been heartened by our prayers and presence on social media. Sharing live means people build in community together and feel able to share in this way. We have been blessed also with people in the background who have been able to respond to posts and prayer requests through their natural discipleship - thanks go to Simon Stewart and to Helen Stewart for their work in this regard.

As we felt our way out of lockdown, our policy was to be adaptable and flexible. We have had a mix-hybrid Church (an idea which originated in the Pioneer Hub) and services in person where churches felt safe to have these. As we looked at the new things that have happened since the pandemic, we have reviewed the increase and scope of our pastoral care. Reviewing our livestream, we need to be doing it as it enables us to connect in all sorts of ways and we encouraged our local churches with the capacity of Zoom to connect with people via worship or livestream or whatever. This means we are still connecting with people who are not connecting with the local church because they are some distance away or because they struggle to connect or because they are caring for others or doing shift work. We are trying to ensure that none are lost.

Some churches, because they could not come together or did not feel comfortable doing so, made their principal service a Zoom service. These were added to the Plan and church stewards liaised with the local preachers, juggling together all their different gifts and skills in providing content and relaying it.

We are delighted that some people, having worshipped firstly with us online, are now attending church in person within the Circuit. Dogsthorpe Methodist have welcomed a number of new people

since they reopened -a mum and dad and four children, another family, and another mother with her daughter. They are attending enthusiastically. Dogsthorpe realizes the importance of listening to these families and listening to what they bring. Brookside have three people - two had come independently, and one had come in relation to a Messy Church. They have a new person associated with Boys' Brigade who wants to become part of the church. A new person has joined the congregation at Orton Waterville.

Circuit Strategy

1.1.1 There were changes to our Ministry Plan for 2020-2021. Unfortunately, Revd Shameela Jameelee-Samuel suffered a period of ill-health from April through to the end of August 2020, and the Circuit curtailed her appointment in September 2020. The decision to curtail was mutual. That same month we quickly began work on applying for a new minister, and entered the stationing process as a priority. We were delighted that Revd Vivienne Smith started with us on 19th April 2021, after her Welcome Service, via Zoom, the previous day. We are extremely grateful to Revd Viv and her previous Circuit that she was able to join us early, which was an immense help for Revd Langley (our Superintendent Minister) and for the Circuit as a whole.

1.1.2 It soon become apparent, in discussions with Revds Langley and Viv and the CLT that the oversight of the churches and Circuit responsibilities being undertaken was not equal. Therefore, we planned our agenda for the September 2022 Circuit Meeting to include a proposal to reorganise the pastoral oversight of the churches, as well as a proposal that we have a co-superintendency in the Circuit (Revd Viv bringing invaluable experience as Superintendent in her previous Circuit).

The Circuit Invitation Committee met this year to discuss Revd Langley's reinvitation to remain in the Circuit. All churches in the Circuit were consulted over June and July. Revd Langley and his wife offered three more years and the Circuit Invitation Committee considered the offer and accepted it. Our District Chair will preside at that September 2021 Circuit Meeting when his proposed re-invitation as Superintendent Minister for a further three years will be decided.

1.1.3 We have continued discussions this year on the needs of the churches and how the Circuit can help. And, regarding Westgate New Church (WNC), more progress has been made in building relationships with other local agencies and with the United Reformed Church as the proposed move is discussed. The North Westgate Development has again affected our plans in moving forward. We continued discussions and negotiation with the developers regarding a site for a new church building as part of this new development. The trustees are looking for a one site, two buildings option within the city of Peterborough.

We are always mindful in our discussions that we also seek a platform for the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church for mission in the city of Peterborough. We now have property representatives of the URC East Midlands Synod and Northamptonshire Circuit taking an active interest and providing advice.

Our 'Mission Statement and Action Plan' demonstrates how the church sees itself, and its vision for the city centre. We see the potential for WNC as a base for pioneer work, community work and mission. The BOB project - 'Back of Beyond' - has received funding from both denominations and we are looking for volunteers to co-ordinate the running of this at WNC. The funding is going towards a part time paid Support Worker.

The council and developers have signed an agreement for work to commence, however this will take years. Westgate New Church has been identified as one of only two churches in the District to take part in some national schemes: 'New Places, New People' and 'Church on the Margins'. This gives additional resources to the church to meet missional needs in the city. This is still early days and only at the vision stage but it is an exciting prospect for the church and the area.

We had three meetings with the other directors, who are the main tenants, and have reached a

really significant point and there is now a consensus to work together. WNC have appointed David Buttery to assist them in the sale and in negotiation with the developer. He is a quantity surveyor who will be able to push the negotiations forward, and do the discussions with the developer on our behalf. He will know the legalities of the situation, and hopefully knows areas of Peterborough City Centre that might be suitable locations for a new church building. WNC see themselves as a city centre church and they want to be part of the new development and in the city centre. They want a venue ideal for making new disciples and new Christians.

2 Mission and Outreach

This section includes different mission activities happening in the Circuit, and some examples of specific mission in individual churches.

2.1 *Mission in our Circuit*

This has obviously been affected greatly by the pandemic but here are some examples of what we have been able to do, despite the restrictions:

2.1.1 Despite the lockdowns, we continued to run and support Foodbanks at Crowland, Dogsthorpe, Oundle and Westgate New Church. (In the heart of lockdown Dogsthorpe became the Foodbank host for the whole of Peterborough). The number of users rose dramatically so we are thankful to all concerned for their commitment to feed and support the many hungry and poor individuals and families in our communities.

2.2.2 Due to the Government regulations concerning Covid-19, the local Winter Night Shelter for the homeless, led by local charity Light Project Peterborough, was again unable to take place. However, our Southside, Brookside, Crowland and Dogsthorpe churches, who were host churches for the project in previous years are hoping regulations will change as the pandemic eases. In the meantime, church members have been involved in initial discussions regarding homelessness pods which Light Project Peterborough wish to set up at different venues in and around the city.

Several church members sit on the Light Project Peterborough Steering group ('Peterborough Christians for Social Action'), attending meetings and highlighting and contributing to local needs. Some Circuit members volunteer for the "The Garden House", which is a drop-in day centre for the project; this continued to open throughout the lockdowns with strict safety measures in place. The Government awarded funds for rough sleepers to be put into hotel accommodation and the staff and volunteers facilitated this and gave support.

2.2.3 Our Missions and Ministries Team normally has an annual Mission focus. Unfortunately this did not happen due to the difficulties of the Covid pandemic. However, individual churches did raise money for particular charities in need of support including the MHA, and some churches kept MHA Sunday on 13th June.

Churches engaged in various forms of charitable giving, i.e. at the Orton Waterville 'Stitches' group, much time, energy and love was spent in knitting blankets, hats and many other items for people in need. Stitches continued with its activities during lockdown, meeting via a Zoom forum once a month from March 2021 (thanks to Helen Crofts) to stay in touch and up to date with needs. Items were gathered and sent to Sands (bereavement charity), Knit for Peace (charity working at home and abroad), and Knit for Nowt (charity supplying counsellors with resources). Local nursing homes were pleased to receive items once restrictions could be eased.

2.2.4 As ever, the churches responded generously to Connexional Funds. £6,160 was sent to the charities involved.

Sue Keeney became our Connexional Funds Officer in September 2020.

2.2.5 The Missions and Ministries Team meetings have been rather disjointed over the last eighteen months, so they felt it would be beneficial to take a fresh look at how this team operates. They had produced a more clear-cut remit for the team and that was ratified by the Circuit Meeting in June 2019, but it had not been implemented in the intervening time. The team encouraged all the churches to send a representative to the meeting in April 2021 when the team reviewed its purpose. The team was relaunched with the arrival of Revd Viv at a very positive meeting in May 2021, with a blank canvas and much enthusiasm, with the chair feeding directly back to the CLT. The following

was discussed:

- The value of 'Morning Prayers' online should be affirmed.
- Finding a way in which to engage with those who work – having worship material available for them as and when they have time.
- Exploring ways to encourage worship at work and evangelism in the workplace.
- Possibility of "Share Jesus" course to encourage sharing of faith in our everyday lives.
- Affirm the value of Zoom sessions for families – worship and meetings.
- Hard look at our midweek ministry – letting some things go so we can take other things to a deeper level.
- Releasing some from administration duties to centre focus on pastoral connections and individual needs for worship.
- Affirm the value of Circuit Services – online and face to face.
- Explore the possibility July of an open air Circuit meal and Holy Communion.
- The value of telephone ministry should be affirmed.

Out of those thoughts have come three projects:

Open Air Service - planned for July. During a time of worship, we would eat together – and share in Holy Communion as part of that eating. A time to pause and consider.

Talking Jesus course to encourage us in our confidence when talking about faith in everyday situations
The material for Talking Jesus is available in the Circuit so we use what we have for this. We envisage this happening in the late autumn – possibly September. It is a six-week course, and material will be made available to at least two churches to hold small group meetings for those who feel it would work best for them. Nicky Ward is willing to head up this course on Zoom for those who would prefer that format.

Working with Young People
We asked the whole Circuit to hold all youth work in their prayers. We plan to instigate research into what the young people want/need, and to look at potential leaders and their requirements in training or guidance. This will then be fed to CLT and plans made to accommodate as much as possible.

This fresh start has injected new energy into the team. The team is a simple way of being aware of what each church is already doing, what works and why it works, what doesn't and why but, also to come together and celebrate that God is working His purposes out. It is a good way of circulating information down, including things from Conference etc. and it gives people a chance to speak, and discuss reports that come from Conference and it keeps people up-to-date with mission initiatives. It enables us to hear what the churches need in the way of training and resources to help them minister to their own churches and to reach out into the communities.
It continues to be a valuable group. Primarily, it has been a Circuit focus on mission here and overseas, and that is what it was originally embedded in, and the remit has broadened. The group is another way for the CLT and the Circuit to get a feel of the thoughts of those in the churches, for example, the 'Peterborough Online Church' document which goes to the CLT and the Local Preachers' Meeting, but it would ordinarily go to the Missions and Ministries Team too to get a barometer of people's thinking. Also, you are trying to communicate down this desire for equity, livestream, paper worship etc., and the team is another group of people from different churches to hear that.

The team's remit is:

- To be stepping stones between Conference, Circuit Meeting and local churches.
- To encourage local churches to join in with God in Mission.
- To provide a Circuit Mission focus annually and facilitate a Circuit Mission Service.
- To signpost resources for Mission and Ministry.
- To identify and facilitate training courses requisite within the Circuit such as Stewarding,

Safeguarding, Property and Pastoral Care.

- To share and consider Circuit matters of Ministry such as configuration and pastoral cover.
- To provide an overview on the shape/need of Ministry across the Circuit.
- To helpfully engage with reports from Methodist Conference or other bodies requiring a Circuit consensus response and to make recommendations to the Circuit Meeting.
- To keep notes of meetings etc., and make available to CLT.

This team has achieved a lot over the years, getting down to a lot of fundamental issues relating to the two remits of mission and ministry. Ministry is evolving very quickly to serve the present age our calling to fulfil (Wesley's remit), and it behoves us to draw in the new aspects of ministry. Great ministry is being done through the telephone and through Royal Mail etc.

2.3 *Mission in our Churches*

Most of our churches reopened on Easter Sunday, with a slow return of church members following lockdown, but there was an understandable wariness about meeting together and holding social gatherings and events. Events that did happen did so with the proper Covid safety measures in place. Some things continued to be held online:

2.3.1 Before the pandemic hit, a wide range of regular groups met in our churches, and these included: *At Orton Waterville*, Knit and Natter; *At Brookside*: Tuesday Fellowship; Messy Church; PE4 ecumenical events; Brookside pre-school; Toddlers group; Word Alive; Keys; Youth club, Boys' Brigade, Men's group, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides meet on the premises and have close contact with the church. *At Oundle*, Bible Study group; Clergy Prayers. *At Crowland*: Explorers; Toddlers group, Saturday morning coffee sessions with book stalls; Small fellowship / study groups: Wesley`s Wayfarers; Stepping Stones (A study group for young people). *At Westgate New Church*, Circuit Intercessions. *At Whittlesey*, Network Group, Little Fishes. *At Elton,* the 'Cheeky Monkeys' toddlers' group, including forging links with the mums and encouraging them in the Christian faith.

2.3.2 At Dogsthorpe, although it is very much a team effort, thanks go to Sue and Alan Gage for all the work they have done in enabling people to join in worship from home via Zoom, enabling the preacher to be seen and be heard and the congregation to be together, but apart. With the service taking place in person and also being streamed, it has been great for preachers and people to be there and part of the congregation, but knowing that it was far bigger than they could see. In being done in house and out of house at the same time, preachers have finally mastered the art of being in two places at once!

2.3.3 At Brookside, the thriving pre-school has restarted. Revd Langley went back to Boys' Brigade and to the Air Cadets in Orton Waterville. The support from Boys' Brigade has been brilliant, including online resources. The senior group were having an organised debate and learning skills about how to share a point of view, and argue a point, and how to debate and listen.

2.3.4 Once we realised that we were still going to be having lockdowns, some groups continued to meet via Zoom or Facebook, including Zoom study groups and WhatsApp groups. These included: 'New Direction' (the Brookside Bible study group) which changed to meeting via Zoom at 10.30am on Thursdays. A warm welcome was given to anyone. At Dogsthorpe, the Thursday House group met weekly via Zoom from 7.30 to 9pm. At Whittlesey, they started a weekly Zoom meet-up, 4pm on alternate Sundays for sharing, fellowship and prayer and a WhatsApp group for sharing and encouragement.

Dogsthorpe carried on serving the community in a number of ways: They held a Foodbank distribution point on a Friday and Saturday. They had Blood Donor Sessions, The Pre-School continued to meet during second lockdown rulings. They had Worship Services via Zoom, a Saturday Morning Zoom Lent course, and a Wednesday Morning Zoom Prayer Group. Occasional Church meetings were held via Zoom, there was a twice monthly Saturday Morning Bible Study via Zoom when not in Lent. Regular contact has been made via link leaders with members of the church family, making sure nobody was left feeling isolated.

The Wednesday morning Prayer Group tried a hybrid for those wanting to meet face-to-face. They tried to gently encourage those who have been shielding and who may want to come and meet face to face in the open. They met outside Dogsthorpe Methodist Church and they were able to link up

through the Wi-Fi on Zoom for those who were not able to join them. It was a really good, prayerful time, and they planned to do this once a month as a hybrid and keep their Wednesday morning as Zoom for the time being.

2.3.5 Christ Church have continued to 'go into school' via recordings and messages throughout the lockdowns and have had a service with the school every Thursday.

2.3.6 There have been quite a lot of developments in Crowland with people moving in, so the chapel put together a mission statement and a postcard which was included in May's Crowland magazine so that everybody in the town knows they are there. Importantly, it states that: 'Everyone is welcome, whether a person of faith or of none. There is no discrimination, whether on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation or social class. Jesus bids you welcome and we will never turn you away'. Many people do not know where the chapel is, so this is putting it on the map.

Normally in Crowland, they have a big occasion of carol singing around the bridge at Christmas. They were not able to do that, of course, but six of them went out carol singing a couple of times in the town and they had a very good reaction from people waiting in the queue at the baker's shop, saying how nice it was to hear some cheerful carol singing. They also went to the Abbey Gate residential home where they sang to the residents through an open door. They felt they had to get out there and sing.

There have been some very inventive examples, one was car park carols that took place at Waitrose in Oundle. Churches have found ways to be safe and inventive.

We have realised the importance as churches of reflecting on what we have learnt through the lockdowns, and how we have engaged with new people. As churches are naturally places of compassion, we have engaged with more people via paper or online and we are seeing the threads of the key questions like, how do we emerge from the lockdown? How do we invite people back to church and capitalise on all of those new areas? It is also a realisation that we cannot keep fishing for people in the same pool to do jobs. So, evangelism and good evangelism in the gentlest of ways is coming to the fore.

Through baptism, wedding and funeral services, people have started to see how open and flexible we are as a Church. We always try to include what is meaningful for each family, having listened to their stories. It is important to make those connections as the purpose in life is to love and be loved, and the purpose of life is to experience love, and God yearns to be with us and, to be able to make links between that and connections with the Gospel is absolutely profound. It reminds us as churches to look at how we are making those connections as we all work together.

2.3.7 Once the lockdowns eased, Sarah Clarke started a very successful baby support group at Yaxley (the 'Busy Bees Baby Group') This is the first new group they have had in the chapel for a very long time.

Yaxley also have a thriving Facebook page and have regularly watched the Circuit livestream worship.

2.3.8 The Circuit meeting discussed the 'God for All' strategy, which is significant both financially and in terms of mission strategy in the next decade to twenty years in the life of the Church. It was launched at Conference this year but obviously the launch was somewhat subdued because of the lockdowns. We focused for the first section of our prayers in livestream last year on the elements of the God for All strategy. Its three foundational features are: 1) Centring ourselves on God 2) The Methodist Way of Life, which is built on Our Calling and what we are going to do, but wedded together with what we are going to do in small groups. Smaller small groups work in encouraging people to form prayer triplets and encouraging journaling and helping people to spiritually reflect, and encouraging people in acts of hospitality, and reframing everything we are doing or thinking about it in the light of The Methodist Way of Life. This is something we need to do but at our own pace. 3) Leadership and particularly transactional leadership which is a style of leadership that

looks to generate leaders within their own contexts. It expects great things but is open perhaps to things happening that we did not expect that are great i.e., you try something new and that does not work, but it leads you on to something else that is hugely successful.

2.3.9 As a Circuit, we have a Mission Statement and we have targets and objectives and so we made a start at reviewing our Mission Plan. For this, we need to know what the churches are doing, and so the churches started to look at their mission statements and work out their mission plans.
To help churches with this, Revd Langley introduced some mission planning material including the 'Mission Planning Workbook', which includes an eight-step process for mission planning: Decide on a process, do a community audit, conduct a church review, dream together, choose priorities, identify actions, consider the fruit, set a date for a review.

He and Revd Viv encouraged the churches to gain an understanding of our core vision. We need our effort to be in what our priorities should be and in how we move forward. Revd Langley is working with two churches on their mission plans – Crowland and Whittlesey - and it is proving to be a very fruitful and uplifting exercise. The community survey and Dreams and Visions aspects of the Mission Action Plan process are being woven into Crowland's ecumenical partnership with Crowland Abbey.

2.4 Worship, Services and Prayer

2.4.1 Some churches took part in the national 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative from 13th to 23rd May. Our thanks to our County Ecumenical Officer, Caroline Hutchings, for always keeping us informed of ecumenical initiatives, events and services in the local area.

2.4.2 The Circuit continued its subscription to The Vine's 'Twelvebaskets' (set services for Own Arrangements), and this has again been a real Godsend for the churches when they had to close during the lockdowns. Some churches have based their services on these materials and invited preachers to email weekly reflections to be included in these services, so enabling preachers to still contribute, and congregations to continue to have contact with preachers and benefit from a variety of preaching. Church stewards and contacts faithfully worked to make The Vine material available to people in their churches.

Although we have streamed our services online and held services via Zoom and Facebook, we have not wanted older people or anyone to feel left out because they do not have a computer so, churches have used 'The Vine' resources and made this available to their congregations. Some churches have printed and delivered hard copies of their church magazines and newsletters to keep everyone in the loop. Pastoral visitors have printed material for those they visit.

2.4.3 During lockdown, the pandemic saw local church leaders set up processes to look after and maintain contact with those that could not join worship online, i.e. at Orton Waterville, the church stewards were phoning people on their pastoral lists and chatting about the next week's reading, and so the depth of engagement which people were receiving was huge.

Once the Covid regulations allowed, the congregation at Orton Waterville were able to meet in the local village hall for their Sunday services as the church was not spacious enough to meet. Their services were led by two dedicated Local Preachers, with additional reflections sent from other Local Preachers and ministers.

2.4.4 Oundle continued with its bi-monthly "Gatherings" (times of fellowship, teaching and prayer), with local preachers and ministers invited to give reflections).

2.4.5 At Southside, on every second Friday of the month, they had Zoom 7pm 'Sing to God', every Saturday Morning, they had a Zoom Prayer Meeting at 10am, and every Sunday morning, a Facebook 9.15am 'Think' service. Thanks go to Janet Rich as what she has been doing and enabling has been fantastic. She has enabled Zoom Church on Sunday mornings and enabled preachers to play out their ministry. She also enabled the leadership at Dogsthorpe.

2.4.6 Our Pioneer Hub Café worship has continued, meeting via Zoom every month. Our thanks to Revd Dale Sherriff for leading and enabling these.

In the Pioneer Hub we discussed how we share our faith and how we talk positively about church and the idea of 'Me, Jesus and the Church' came from this. These are conversations with people within our Circuit, i.e. local preachers, and what they say is so honest, rich and touching. They went out online on Fridays and Saturdays.
Folks have been really moved by these conversations and the depth of experience that is in people. They talk about difficult experiences they have been through and are able to talk positively about how their faith has helped them, and also how the Church has supported them with reference to their personal experience of their local church, and it has been extremely moving. One of the things that the Pioneer Hub was keen to stress was the need to encourage people to see Church positively and to see the connection with the local church positively, and that is why 'Me, Jesus and the Church' works out well.

Revd Langley had some good and positive conversations on the run up to Christmas with key leaders in the Church - Revd Helen Cameron, and Geoffrey Clarke from the URC Synod. He had a good conversation with Steven Pettican (from Light Project Peterborough), and all of these were available online. There was some positive feedback from these interviews.

2.4.7 Huge thanks go to Revd Dale Sherriff and Matt Forsyth and Revd Langley who continued to lead Circuit Livestream worship and 'Morning Prayers'. We are also always conscious of those who do not have access to the online worship and how we are supporting them as well as those who watch. We aim to make it as accessible as possible, so you do not have to be a member of Facebook to view the Circuit page.

2.5 Our Focus as a Circuit

2.5.1 Revd Langley asked the preachers to give an account of how they have been able to live out their calling. Obviously, pulpits have not been open to them in quite the same way but preachers have lived out their calling in preaching and teaching within churches, and in supporting churches, and this has happened in an incredibly diverse way. Via the Plan requests, we tried to ask the churches what things were happening in their local church. Preachers can give us an impression of what life looks like in the churches as they adjust.

Online worship has been a significant success and that is why we are continuing our Circuit worship – on Sunday mornings. Sometimes now this is pre-recorded as Revd Langley has to be present in his churches, but preachers and church stewards and church members contribute via reflections and readings.

2.5.2 *God in Love Unites Us* - we have had local conversations on this. The January Circuit Meeting was given the Synod Voting Paper to give a focus on what the resolutions are. Members were invited to feed their reflections through to our Synod reps, along with any queries or questions or written statements ahead of the autumn Synod vote.

2.5.3 The January Circuit Meeting formally adopted the Connexional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report. This helps to prevent things like unconscious bias.

2.5.4 Having concern for our planet, a Circuit Climate Awareness group was set up to keep everyone aware and informed of climate issues. Churches were encouraged to keep Climate Awareness Day on 13th July and Climate Sunday on 5th September. Circuit members were emailed resources, news and events and Revd Langley included climate issues in his 'Weekly Bulletins'. Climate documents were added to our Circuit web site, with direct links from the Homepage, including to the 'Climate Action Briefing paper'. People were encouraged to click on 'Climate Action Methodist Church' with its commitment to climate action including 'Worship', 'Commit' and 'Speak up', and lots of wider advice.

Climate Sunday is not just one day, so individuals, churches, local communities and families were encouraged to think about what they can do and action and to think about what, as a church, locally we can do to encourage our communities and our churches to be involved in climate change.

2.5.5 Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and declared Sunday 4th July as 'National Thank You Day'. Churches were encouraged to get involved. It was about saying Thank you to those who have helped us and got us through the pandemic.

3 Staffing and Appointments, Stewards and Ministries

3.1 Simon Stewart, Sue Keeney, Christine Kell and Sue Holmes all continued as Circuit Stewards for this year. All these stewards were re-elected to the Circuit Stewarding Team at our June Circuit Meeting. Ann Tooth decided to step down and was thanked for her wisdom and spiritual input.

3.1.1 Sue Keeney, Nigel Lightfoot, Mick Goodman and Nicky Ward continued as our representatives to District Synod. Ann Tooth stepped down and was thanked for her service.

3.1.2 Marion Mahan became Chaplain to our local Methodist Home, The Maples. The residents are also supported by visits from two of our ministers and several Circuit members.

3.1.3 From a local preaching training perspective, Matt Forsyth continued on trial and was still committed to his local preaching. In June 2021, in addition to this, Matt was appointed as the new District Mission Enabler, and we congratulated him on his success.

3.2 Grace Sherriff continued as our Circuit Social Media Enabler. Grace helped produced videos to inspire young people and all in the Circuit, and liaised with young people as best she could during the lockdown. She helped improve our social media presence. She also helped with putting together Circuit livestream worship.

Grace works three hours a week. She produces material and is known as an approachable, friendly face. She helps us work out what we can do online.

We had a meeting with youth leaders across the Circuit, which was mixed in its response. A lot of our young people would rather just gather round and eat pizza, but they were stuck behind screens because of the lockdowns. Grace explored the possibility of some kind of online zoom group, particularly at Whittlesey.

Our thanks to Christine Kell who supports Revd Langley in Grace's line management and the support meetings. Grace is raising the profile of young people with her very existence and willingness to share online and the scheme is working both in terms of her mentoring and in terms of what she is giving to us.

It is disappointing that Grace has not been able to engage in face to face due to Covid because, although we might think social media enabling does not need that, in fact she feels it is important to make contact with people first and then feed them into social media. Grace feels that is the only way forward – until we actually talk face to face with the young people, nothing is really developing.

3.3 As we reflected on the growth of livestream and on the need to release Revd Langley and others to serve face to face across the Circuit, we created the voluntary post of Circuit Digital Livestream Producer. We recognised that, as we develop livestream more, there needs to be more delegation across the Circuit because, as things expand, there are more and more things that need attending to. The more we can have the livestream or recorded services scheduled, the more Revd Langley can be released across the Circuit, and we are able to release others too. We were pleased that Matt Forsyth took this on, bringing much experience to this role.

3.4 Laura Martin stepped down in August from the roles of Local Preachers' Meeting rep and MHA rep as she would start her ministerial training in September. Laura thanked the numerous people in the Circuit who have supported her on her journey.

3.5 Not seeing one another has made communication difficult. However, Revd Langley has been keeping everyone abreast of what is happening through what were 'Weekly Bulletins', now 'Monthly Bulletins'. Via these, he has regularly provided guidance for the churches following the different regulations and Covid-19 guidance that were issued by the Government and the Methodist Church, as well as providing thoughts and reflections. People appreciate the bulletins in terms of finding a

sense of connection. As a Circuit, Revd Langley thinks we should recognise that we have responded well through the lockdowns and adjusted well, and that bodes well when we think about how we adapt ourselves for mission. We have reshaped things to achieve our mission in different ways even though we have not been able to meet. We have responded to the challenges brought by the pandemic really well. There are always things we can do better but, when we look back, it is amazing how our churches have responded, both in paper and online, in the scope of pastoral care and the deepening of the pastoral relationships between people.

Our thanks to all who have provided up to date information and assistance to those in their churches, including those who have produced paper copies, church newsletters and written reflections from preachers to those not on email. Brookside faithfully produced a magazine all through this period and continue to do so. It was a magazine and is now a newsletter and is an extremely important tool for keeping people informed and involved in the life of the church. Our thanks also to the pastoral carers who have supported those isolated by the pandemic.

During the lockdowns, local preachers continued to support the churches by providing typed reflections for circulation. This has been a great encouragement and support to those smaller churches who were not able to re-open for a long time.
Some preachers also continued to provide recorded reflections for inclusion in our Circuit online worship (livestream and recorded). This is still continuing and is much appreciated, especially by those unable to get to church for various reasons.

4 Safeguarding

4.1 Philip Assensoh stood down as Circuit Safeguarding Officer and thanked for his service. David Whiting was appointed to this role at our June Circuit Meeting.

4.1.2 District has stopped the Safeguarding Refresher training course so we now have only the Safeguarding Foundation training courses to do within the Circuit. The new Safeguarding Foundation training incorporates some of the Refresher topics.

District organised a Safeguarding training in November for Safeguarding officers in the Circuits, to be done via Zoom. This training incorporated Safeguarding Refresher and Foundation.

After the November training, we started planning Safeguarding training in the Peterborough Circuit. These took place after February 2021 when there were less Covid-19 issues and restrictions.

4.1.3 The District Safeguarding Team is setting up Online Advanced training. The Foundation training is now being offered online. They hoped to do face-to-face Advanced training by the Spring or Summer of 2021. The Circuit Safeguarding Team decided to conduct Zoom foundation training if the Covid-19 restrictions continue after the New Year. The District Safeguarding team trained Safeguarding training trainers on how to conduct online Safeguarding training.

The Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Circuit Safeguarding Officer checked the DBS certificates are up to date for people in positions in churches. The Safeguarding Co-ordinators checked members in new positions in churches have up to date DBS certificates.

4.1.4 Particular thanks go to Janet Rich as, during lockdown, we had to move on safeguarding training with some quite specific needs. Groups were wanting to provide support, particularly regarding signposting for mental health and, without Janet's support when we were working through the training that could not have happened.

Revd Viv held the mantle for the Safeguarding Team. We were able to call on those involved for their expertise but there were a lot of needs as we emerged out of lockdown, including training. Everyone across the Connexion needed some form of retraining, and we have looked at that in this circuit and seen what the position is, including our DBS, with Revd Viv taking on the responsibility for these. Revd Langley and Philip Assensoh are still part of the Safeguarding Team in the Circuit. Viv, Janet Rich and Connie Hunt attended a 'Training the Trainers' meeting in July, so they are now able to deliver the Foundation training and can be Online Safeguarding trainers in the Circuit.

4.1.5 The Circuit Safeguarding Policy for 2021 was amended and updated and agreed at our January Circuit meeting.

4.1.6 The Circuit continues to abide by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and keeps contacts and posters accurate and up-to-date.

4.1.7 Two Circuit Stewards and Revd Shameela attended a seminar in Market Harborough last year on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in the Methodist Church. It was a very interesting day where the challenges facing the church were discussed. The District were keen for this to be discussed in the Circuits and it has been discussed this year in our circuit. The January 2021 Circuit Meeting adopted the Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and our churches continue to review their EDI processes to ensure best practices.

5 Finance

5.1 The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021 were audited and approved.

5.2 Income for the year was £170,373 including a grant of £9,000; the expenditure for the year was (£134,400) giving us a surplus of £35, 973 adding to our Circuit reserves.

5.3 The Circuit policy on reserves, at 6 months, was unchanged.

5.4 We have benefitted from regular income from the rental of the Birchtree venue manse, and not too much in terms of associated costs.

5.6 We continue to look at how to improve the income from Circuit churches and how best to replace the current method of meeting costs of running the Circuit. We have relied too long on Circuit reserves and this needs addressing. A steep rise in costs from the District is impacting our circuit and our churches, and we are putting plans in place as to how we meet these costs in the most effective way, and in a way that is manageable for each of our churches.

Obviously, some of the churches have been hit quite hard through the Covid-19 crisis. We started to get an overview of churches' positions so we can see what next year might look like, and then update our budget accordingly. We asked the churches in January what they think their financial concerns will be.

5.7 The CLT started looking at proposals to move away from the current 'share' method of contributing to Circuit funding to one based on the way that the District assesses how much Circuits pay. We will be looking to implement this in the next Connexional year, commencing September 2021.

6 Property

6.1 Paul Hutchings and Mick Goodman continued on the Property Team. We set up a small working party (Circuit Stewards, the CLT and a Property rep) to re-evaluate what the responsibilities of the Circuit Meeting are, and how we can best meet them in relation to the future for management/responsibility of Circuit property. It was felt we need to reassess how we deal with these responsibilities which are ever increasing, and the legal aspects which are now quite onerous. CLT and the Property Team Coordinator came together to review the Circuit Property Portfolio and how best to use buildings for the furtherance of Christ's work in Peterborough.

6.2 Conscious of the energy performance of our properties, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) were obtained for two manses.

6.3 Annual Inspections of all circuit property were completed and checklists distributed to the Circuit Meeting.

6.4 We continued to let the Dogsthorpe manse and the income from this was all ring-fenced for the Welland project. A new tenancy started in December 2020. A Domestic Electrical Installation Condition Inspection and Asbestos Management Survey were undertaken whilst the property was unoccupied.

Due to the recruitment freeze in the Connexion, we were not able to progress the Welland Pioneer Worker vacancy, but we still see Welland as a very important part of our work. We are looking at

staffing overall as a circuit and whether or not we can make this a full-time role with other responsibilities; it may end up with two people in part-time posts if we cannot find the person with all the right skills. We used this time to reflect on all this and consider what would work best for an individual in that post and for the Circuit.

6.5 The Connexional Property Strategy 2018-20 (adopted by the Methodist Council in October 2018) sets out areas of work as being necessary and urgent during the Connexional year and, working with our mission plans and property development plans, we completed this work.

A Church Property Plan was added to the Methodist Property web pages in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. This consists of two worksheets (Church Profile and Church Attendance & Use) to assist local churches in getting an overview of their local area and how the building can best serve the local mission.

The Connexional Property Strategy encourages all local churches to complete this Property Plan alongside a local mission plan and the churches used these this year. This strategy is designed to get churches thinking about their missional opportunities over the next five to ten years. It gives us a better understanding and a fuller picture of where we are around the Circuit, and what our churches' desires and needs are as they look at how they manage their properties for missional purposes.

Paul Hutchings and Simon Stewart attended a seminar run by the District looking at the Connexional Property Strategy, and some of the projects that churches have undergone to better provide mission to the area in which they serve. It was very interesting to see some of the projects that some circuits and churches have done. It gave food for thought.

Paul attended one of the Connexional Property roadshows which was helpful and interesting.

Paul and Simon met to review the Circuit Property Portfolio and how best to use buildings for the furtherance of Christ's work in Peterborough. The Methodist Conference is looking into the area of trusteeship, and one of the roles of trusteeship is overseeing property, and the statutory regulation including safeguarding and finance.

6.6 Quinquennials were carried out at Elton, Orton Waterville and Oundle, and at three manses.

6.7 Discussions took place regarding whether or not to let or sell the manse associated with Westgate New Church and Whittlesey.

6.8 Three years ago, the Circuit took over from Ailsworth Church Council the trusteeship of the property and finance, with periodic reviews. It was agreed at the June Circuit Meeting, with heavy hearts, that Ailsworth would cease to worship. Unfortunately, after much searching, we were unable to find officers to fulfil the necessary roles. Revs Viv and Langley are providing pastoral support to the faithful members of that church community. All their hard work was acknowledged.

Thanks go to the CLT for their trusteeship of Ailsworth. It has continually supported them, including through the lockdowns. The CLT has spent a lot of time with the people at Ailsworth looking at how we can use the building for missional purposes. We have used it in many successful missional ways including Messy Play, and Coffee and Chat, and a lot of time and effort has been put into that, but the worship at the church has not really happened. The lockdowns have really impacted all that work.

At our Circuit Meeting in June, we realized that we had reached the point at which we have done what we can at Ailsworth, and liaised with the people but that it is now time to move on, and recognise that God has other plans for the people at Ailsworth and for the building. So, the Circuit Meeting was asked to consider that Ailsworth ceases to meet. This is the first part of the process for closing the church – something which the members of Ailsworth have agreed.

The membership is below six. They are not meeting for worship regularly. The work that was done needs more support, which we do not feel is forthcoming. Revd Vivienne has promised them that, as we go along the journey, she will walk with them through that. The meeting unanimously agreed to approve the cease to meet for worship.

Regarding the disposal of the building, the Meeting delegated authority to the CLT and Paul Hutchings for the future of the building. There are possibilities for alternative use of buildings but they require somebody to run them. And we have tried to look for an alternative use within the current structure which we have operated, because we have transferred trusteeship. The Meeting agreed it was happy to delegate authority to the CLT and Paul Hutchings (as Property Team Co-ordinator), for the future of the building with a clear understanding that a sale is most likely to be the outcome. There were no objections, so this was unanimously carried.

6.9 Our thanks to Paul Hutchings for his thorough work on church property reporting this year. Paul stepped down on 19th August, after a very busy year, from the role of Property Team Co-ordinator. He was thanked for his sterling work, and we are looking for someone else to take on this role.

In conclusion

We believe we have kept the Church alive and active throughout the difficulties of the Covid-19, and we have done it through working and learning together, and supporting and encouraging each other, and in reaching out to those in our communities – in person and virtually/online. The Circuit Leadership Team is grateful to everyone for all their contributions and support in another difficult year.

We continue to give thanks for many blessings:

The scope of our pastoral care, and our ability to 'see need' and adapt.

Our confidence and trust in each other as we discern where God is leading us and 'do the right thing'.

Our online, on-site, and on-paper worship that has reached those who would otherwise have been socially isolated.

Our District and the wider Connexion for their support during challenging times.

We continue to pray for:

Our Circuit, as we focus on the themes within God For All, especially New Places for New People.

Our Circuit as we consider how we can make the best use of our resources.

Our churches as they review and develop their mission plans.

The remaining work to be done in our churches, in light of ‘God in Love Unites Us’.

It has been another year of joys and sadnesses but, we end with some of the joys:

Meeting again in person to worship together

Receiving Communion for the first time since March 2020

Seeing new people come to church (in person and online), and witnessing existing members growing in their faith and learning new skills

We think it fitting to end with the following prayer, which we submitted to the ‘Methodist Prayer Diary’ this year:

God of all,
In all our dealings, may we see Jesus carved into the woodwork,
and the wine glass
of fellowship and joy

instead of faces in opposition.
Keep us courageous as we accept difference
but commit to living in unity.
Amen

Signed: *L Mackrell-Hey*

Revd Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey
Chair and Superintendent of the Methodist Circuit:
The Peterborough Methodist Circuit of Churches

Date: 16th June, 2022

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2021

District	**Circuit no**	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number 1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

REVD DR LANGLEY MACKRELL-HEY

REVD VIVIENNE SMITH

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY

MRS CHRISTINE KELL

MRS ANN TOOTH

MR. SIMON STEWART

MRS. S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021 | **PETERBOROUGH** | **Circuit**

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds	Circuit Model Trust Fund	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
a1	**RECEIPTS**		£	£	£	£		£
a2	Assessment/Share		127,383			**127,383**		158,131
a3	Capital receipts			27,015		**27,015**		(2,642)
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		1,685	2,733		**4,418**		4,954
a5	Grants							9,000
a6	Other receipts		11,557			**11,557**		14,218
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**140,625**	**29,748**		**170,373**	(a8)	**183,661**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		66,745			**66,745**		96,715
b3	Manse Costs		14,056			**14,056**		13,309
b4	Administration etc		7,045			**7,045**		5,289
b5	District Assessment		30,853			**30,853**		31,507
b6	Grants & donations		-					
b7								
b8	Other payments		11,007	4,694		**15,701**		14,169
b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**129,706**	**4,694**		**134,400**	(b9)	**160,989**
	SECTION C							
c1	**NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR**	(a7-b9)	**10,919**	**25,054**		**35,973**		**22,672**
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		60,324	154,934		215,258	(c6)	192,586
c3	**Sub total**	(c1+c2)	**71,243**	**179,988**		**251,231**		**215,258**
c4	Transfers and adjustments		(3,000)	3,000		-	(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	(c3+c4)	**68,243**	**182,988**		**251,231**	(c8)	**215,258** (c6)
	SECTION D							
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**							
d1	Balance brought forward from last year					-		-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations					-		-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations					-		-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**					-		-

PETERBOROUGH Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E **Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2021 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts		Payments		Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments		Opening balances		Closing balances	
c1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
c9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	170,373	(a8)	134,400	(b9)	35,973		(c7)	215,258	(c6)	251,231	(c8)
c10	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	170,373		134,400		35,973			215,258	(x)	251,231	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**TOTAL PAYMENTS**								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2021	OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	43,618		54,834	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	16,708		13,410	
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	154,932		182,987	
f6	Other funds				
f7	**SUB TOTAL**	215,258	(c6)	251,231	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	215,258	(x)	251,231	(y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

		At 31 August 2020	At 31 August 2021
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	899,939	807,000
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer  Date 25/5/22

Name MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on 18/11/21

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting 

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Dr LANGLEY MACKREZL-HOY

Date 29/05/22

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

PETERBOROUGH **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees conside audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and tha 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 Report

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 (other than that disclosed below*):

(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;
- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I ~~have~~/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name M.J. RUFFLES

Signature M J Ruffles

Relevant Professional qualification or body ICAEW — FCA

Address 4 BARON COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZE

Date 28/09/21

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2021

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MR. SIMON STEWART

MRS. S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

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PETERBOROUGH Circuit

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** Please circle as appropriate*

Name M.J. RUFFLES

Signature M J Ruffles

Relevant Professional qualification or body ICAEW — FCA

Address 4 BARON COURT PETERBOROUGH PE4 7ZE

Date 28/09/21

THE PETERBOROUGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

England & Wales - Charity number 1135613

Accounts

Annual Report of the Trustees of the Peterborough Methodist Circuit
for the church year 1st Sept 2019 to 31st August 2020
(Registered Charity No 1135613)



Produced by the Peterborough Circuit of the Methodist Church
Circuit Office, Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough PE4 7TG
Email: pborocircuitoffice@gmail.com Tel: (01733) 328192

Our Mission Statement

"The Peterborough Methodist Circuit aims to be the people of God within our communities, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and showing God's love through worship, witness and service."

We seek to discover the needs of contemporary society and respond to it; working with our ecumenical partners towards creating relationships within the communities and sharing the word of God with those around us.

We are seeking to utilise and ensure the abilities and skills of lay people fully in the Circuit and encourage others to explore and offer themselves for service at all levels as equal partners in our work.

Our vision statement for our children's and young people's ministry

'Providing loving and caring ministries that children and young people may come to know Jesus Christ'

Trustees during the year	
Revd Langley Mackrell-Hey (Chair)	Sue Keeney
Giles Armstrong	Christine Kell
Philip Assensoh	Sarah Kelly
George Barber	Nigel Lightfoot
Sue Baron	Laura Martin
Sarah Bereznyckyj	Valerie Octon
Heather Black	Revd David Parkes
Ewan Cappitt	Janet Rich
Sue Gage	Cathy Ruffles
Owen Gardiner	Margaret Smith
Elizabeth Gee	Revd Douglas Stevens
Michael Goodman	Simon Stewart
Anita (Neat) Gordon	Monica Sturgess
Revd Sarah Gower	Ann Tooth
Susan Halford	Revd Graham Tooth
John Hewitson	Denise Watson
Sue Holmes	Elizabeth White
Trevor Howlett	Nicky Ward
Paul Hutchings	Peter Williams

Our Circuit

There are 13 churches in the Peterborough Circuit, and the Circuit crosses 3 counties – Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. One of these churches (Yarwell), is an Anglican Church and Methodist ministers or local preachers lead the service there once a month. The Yarwell congregation is a class of Elton and receives support from the congregation there. Three of the churches: Whittlesey, Westgate New Church and Christ Church are Local Ecumenical Partnership's (LEPs)

Trustees of the Circuit Meeting met three times during the year: In September 2019 and in January and June 2020. Our Circuit Meeting Devotions this year were led by: a Local preacher on 'New Beginnings'; an outside speaker on 'Supporting Syrian Refugees in Peterborough'; and our Superintendent Minister on 'Building on our Reimagine sessions' including 'The Dragonfly' model. Unfortunately, our March 2020 meeting was cancelled because of the national lockdown related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It has been an unprecedented year due to the Coronavirus, which has forced us to work very differently as a Circuit. We have responded well to the many challenges we have encountered and our report shows how we have adapted our ways of working, and put on new and different services and activities in a variety of creative ways. Everyone has stepped up, learned new skills and embraced all kinds of technology, often surprising themselves, and gaining confidence along the way. It has been a steep learning curve for us all!

1 Circuit Strategy

1.1.1 The Ministry Plan for 2019-2020 continued as for the previous year. Revd Gareth Baron's successor, Revd Shameela Jameelee-Samuel, started her ministry from 1st September. Unfortunately, she suffered a period of ill-health from April through to the end of August 2020. Our supernumerary ministers, Revd Dale Sherriff, and Revd David Parkes were on hand to provide support to the Circuit, so none of Revd Shameela's churches lost momentum as they looked forward to the future and discerned the best way ahead. Revd Dale was available for conversations around personal vocation, and helping churches to set up new groups or reflect on how they can develop this work. Revd David continued to work in an advisory capacity, frequently attending planning meetings and ensuring churches felt supported.

1.1.2 *Westgate New Church (WNC)*

Revd Langley continued with his churches plus continued Methodist oversight of the Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) at Westgate New Church and Whittlesey Queen Street Church. With his work as Superintendent, oversight of seven churches, plus taking on the ATC Chaplaincy, it has been a very busy and active year for him.

Whilst the role of a minister has not changed, the focus of what ministers do is changing and has done so for some time. Revd Langley's role seems now to be one of enabling churches and helping them plan, and also one of mentoring key leaders. With this in mind, thanks go to Nigel Lightfoot for helping at WNC and Monica Sturgess at Oundle. Their support was part of the Circuit making the best use of our preachers on the Preaching Plan, and also to give more consistency given that Revd Langley's focus is spread. It has enabled a deeper link with the Circuit and helped the Circuit know how it can support the churches better in terms of meeting their worshipping needs, particularly during the uncertainties and difficulties brought by the pandemic.

We have had a lot more discussions generally this year on what the needs of the churches are and how the Circuit can help. And, regarding Westgate New Church, much progress has been made in terms of building relationships with other local agencies and with the United Reformed Church. Plans in moving forward have been affected by the North Westgate Development, which has also been delayed in its progress by major changes which have impacted on the developers' plans for the City Centre, of which Westgate New Church is a part.

We are in discussion and negotiation with the developers regarding a site for a new church building as part of this new development. This is not just about WNC; it is about how the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have a platform for mission in the city of Peterborough. Revd Langley has worked with WNC to develop a 'Mission Statement and Action Plan' that demonstrates how the church sees itself, and its vision for the city centre. He sees the potential for WNC as a base for pioneer work, community work and mission.

The URC, like Methodism, are facing challenges in resourcing ministers to churches. To plan for the future they are looking at Resourced Churches where one church is the main centre of a group where a minister is based but also supporting other churches. Discussions have been held with Whittlesey and Westgate New Church to understand their opinions of the proposals and to feed that back to the URC.

During the pandemic, WNC requested volunteers to help co-ordinate the Foodbank, and to assist with the BOB project - 'Back of Beyond' – which has received funding from both denominations. BOB spurred people on and we now have this bigger vision in the church, involving pioneer work. These will be the leads we follow. We have made contact with a Connexional resource who advises on how to build a worship centre that matches the mission of the church for the future and are looking to build on this opportunity.

1.1.3 Last year, we continued our work on developing a new Circuit Strategy, and held two 'Reimagine' meetings as part of our circuit consultation, where we discussed in depth how best we use our resources. After further discussion at Circuit meetings, an updated Circuit Strategy was approved at our September Circuit Meeting. This new Strategy has been prepared to recognise the changes that have occurred since the previous strategy was agreed in 2001.

Thanks go to Simon Stewart for all his work on this, and to the CLT, and to those who attended the Reimagine gatherings and those who helped in the local churches.

2 Mission and Outreach

This section includes: The work of our Pioneer Team Leader, Neat Gordon, who ministered in Welland:

different mission activities happening in the Circuit; and some examples of specific mission in individual churches.

2.1 *Welland*

Neat resigned from her role in March 2020, after being with us for two years and two months. Throughout her time with us, she got lots of things moving, and galvanised volunteers to help with activities in the local community. She brought different aspects to things and her role became more community-based. She made a wide range of contacts across the area.

These are the things she achieved and enabled in her last year:

This section builds on work started last year when, following the news that many families would have to find extra resources for them to feed their children throughout the summer holidays, Neat arranged for the existing groups, facilitated by Pioneer Welland, to extend to offer meals around Dogsthorpe. Therefore, every meal was attended by families, carers, grandparents and the sense of community between the different venues increased. After five weeks of running the Summer Food Programme, they had fed 211 children and 148 parents and carers (350 hot meals).

A grant from Near Neighbours enabled them to continue the Friday Feast until half-term and do meals during half-term as well. They ran this at 100a Central Avenue, from 12 noon until 2.30pm and it was open to anybody.

During September to December, Neat engaged with 165 people (72 children and 93 parents/carers) who attended drop-in sessions, activities and events within the community.

In January, Neat undertook a SWOT analysis, looking at the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities available for the ongoing Pioneer Welland project:

Strengths - Since September, they continued working closely with the Olive Branch Community Garden and Barnardo's, hosting Parent's United three times a week. Every Friday lunchtime, serving a hot meal brought a good atmosphere of friendship and support among the five regular families that attended.

At half-term and Christmas they offered free meals to parents and children at each venue, and it was encouraging to see the donations of food and the number of occasional volunteers grow, with other people able to cook a meal or provide food for a lunch. Also, all families and children were able to receive a gift at Christmas as a result of a kind donation from a family in Dogsthorpe Methodist Church.

Weaknesses – The amount of time and energy expended during the summer months meant cutting back on other activities within Welland to keep within Neat's twenty hours, but she maintained contact through emails and occasional meetings.

Neat offered pastoral and practical support to the families she connected with. She was honoured to serve them, but it did bring challenges.

Opportunities – Plans were made to operate a Community Fridge in Dogsthorpe. Another plan was to develop running an Art and Craft Café style group at the Charteris Centre during the week. Many ladies in Dogsthorpe and Welland are interested in crafts and there is an opportunity for them to demonstrate their particular skill to others. Running this event one evening per week would allow working people to join in. Also, in order to get to know residents better and to find out more about the cultural make up of Welland, plans were made to visit houses on the estate door to door.

Threats – the two main threats to Pioneer Welland are the time available and volunteers. As the project is a Circuit-led resource, having more volunteers from outside the immediate area would be an asset to the group. The volunteers come from villages outside of Peterborough, therefore, she appealed to anyone who was interested in helping with meals, serving teas and snacks or sitting chatting to other parents for an hour or two each week.

Over the two years in post, Neat noticed how the nature and scope of the Welland estate has changed; there are more working families and local authorities are strongly encouraging parents to return to work so, reaching them has become more difficult. However, the problems of loneliness, isolation and other related issues do not go away, and so running groups at other times to suit parents may be of benefit.

Along with her team, Neat reflected on Pioneer Welland and how effective it has been, what was

happening and what was the best way forward to continue building the whole Dogsthorpe community, and offering support to the Christ the Carpenter Parish, and the charities and community groups working on Welland. She shared her thoughts at the Pioneer Welland Prayer Meeting in February at the Charteris Centre. She also held a Celebration and Vision Evening in March at Dogsthorpe Methodist Church and invited all stakeholders, team members, circuit church members and community groups that she was working alongside.

Neat saw fruit appearing where the foundations of prayer and faithful commitment to the Dogsthorpe and the Welland estate have been planted over the years. She thanked everyone for their faithfulness in prayer, provision and activity across the years. Her prayer was a quote from Bill Johnson in the book "Power that Changes the World":

"I have discovered that when we enjoy life with the citizens of our communities and show people that we are real and practical, we have influence. We need to have more faith and confidence in the impact the Holy Spirit's presence in us will have. He will affect our surroundings….we are to become immersed in the affairs of our cities."

Neat believed this is what we were seeing in Welland, and she acknowledged the need for disciples, not volunteers, to help 'pioneer' into Dogsthorpe and Welland. Thanks go to Laura Martin who worked alongside Neat and joined up to help at the Tuesday event at The Acorn Centre, where we saw a change in just a few weeks.

The CLT is in discussion about a replacement for Neat. With her resignation and the desire to provide additional support for Westgate New Church and Whittlesey, one proposal the CLT is considering is looking at whether it is feasible to create one full-time role encompassing the two roles. Unfortunately, with the recruitment freeze during lockdown, nothing could progress this year.

2.2 *Mission in our Circuit*

This has obviously been affected greatly by the pandemic but here are some examples of what we have been able to do, despite the restrictions:

2.2.1 Despite the lockdowns, we continued to run and support Foodbanks at Dogsthorpe, Westgate New Church and Oundle, and with numbers of users dramatically increasing, we were pleased to be able to help meet real needs in our city. Dogsthorpe Methodist Church became the city-wide hub for foodbank in Peterborough.

2.2.2 The local Winter Night Shelter was impacted; unfortunately, the Government regulations concerning Covid-19 did not allow Night Shelters for the homeless to run so, none of the local churches, including Southside, Brookside and Dogsthorpe, were able to be host churches for the project this year, as they were in previous years. However, several members of our churches are members of the Light Project Peterborough Steering group, which is responsible for the project and attended regular meetings. And some Circuit members have volunteered for the "The Garden House", which is a drop-in day centre for the project; this continued to open throughout the lockdowns with strict safety measures in place. The Government awarded funds for rough sleepers to be put into hotel accommodation and the staff and volunteers facilitated this and gave support.

2.2.3 Our Missions and Ministries Team normally has an annual Mission focus. Unfortunately they were unable to meet this year. However, people in the Circuit were generous in supporting a member who did a fundraising challenge in aid of the Methodist Homes Association, which was severely affected by the pandemic. £1,436 was raised with £500 of that going to our local Methodist Home, MHA The Maples.

2.2.4 Again, the churches responded generously to Connexional Funds. £7846.27 was sent to the charities involved. Elizabeth Gee stepped down as Connexional Funds Officer and our thanks go to her.

2.3 *Mission in our Churches*

It has been a year of two halves with September to mid-March following our usual pattern and then mid-march onwards, there were many adaptions:

2.3.1 Normally, a wide range of regular groups meet in our churches, and up until Mid-March 2020 these groups included: *At Orton Waterville*, Knit and Natter; *At Brookside*: Tuesday Fellowship; Messy Church Christmas; PE4 ecumenical events; Brookside pre-school; Toddlers group; Word Alive; Keys; Youth

club, Boys' Brigade. *At Oundle*, Bible Study group; Clergy Prayers. *At Crowland*: Explorers; Toddlers group, Saturday morning coffee sessions with book stalls 10 to 11-30am. Small fellowship / study groups: Wesley`s Wayfarers on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 11 am and Stepping Stones fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm, *At Westgate New Church*, Circuit Intercessions. *At Whittlesey*, Network Group, Little Fishes; at Elton, the 'Cheeky Monkeys' toddlers' group, including forging links with the mums and encouraging them in the Christian faith.

2.3.2 At Dogsthorpe, they had a Youth Weekend, sleeping in the church, and they followed a Bible stories series that they were introduced to at Soul Survivor called 'Storylines'. Ten young people stayed over on Friday and Saturday and contributed to the AAW service on the Sunday morning. They chose the songs and contributed to different things within the service. The children and young people have been getting involved with the services there, facilitated by Revd David Parkes. They are finding different ways of engaging with the congregation and vice versa. It has been nice to see the way different relationships are developing and, seeing the way the young people relate to the rest of the church is very positive.

2.3.3 At Brookside, the toddler group on a Wednesday afternoon has been running for a number of years. A few years ago, the numbers were so low that they thought they might have to disband but, numbers have now hugely increased and it is booming. The children have a great time, as do the parents and grandparents.

2.3.4 Once we realised that we were going to be in lockdown for quite some time, some groups changed from meeting in person to meeting via Zoom or facebook, including Zoom study groups and WhatsApp groups. These included: 'New Direction' (the Brookside Bible study group) which changed to meeting via Zoom at 10.30am on Thursdays. A warm welcome was given to anyone. At Dogsthorpe, the Thursday House group met weekly via Zoom from 7.30 to 9pm. At Whittlesey, they started a weekly Zoom meet-up, 4pm on alternate Sundays for sharing, fellowship and prayer and a WhatsApp group for sharing and encouragement.

2.3.5 Dogsthorpe carried on serving the community in a number of ways: They held a Foodbank distribution point on a Friday and Saturday. They had Blood Donor Sessions, The Pre-School continued to meet during second lockdown rulings. They had Worship Services via Zoom, a Saturday Morning Zoom Lent course, and a Wednesday Morning Zoom Prayer Group. Occasional Church meetings were held via Zoom, there was a twice monthly Saturday Morning Bible Study via Zoom when not in Lent. Regular contact has been made via link leaders with members of the church family, making sure nobody was left feeling isolated.

There was regular use of the Prayer Chain supporting one another in joyful and sorrowful situations. On Covenant Sunday, Revs David Parkes led a "Love feast" Covenant Service via Zoom. The church family has held together well - births, special birthdays, deaths, special occasions have all been remembered and noted. During a brief period between lockdowns they did meet under strict Covid rules.

2.3.6 Crowland ran 'Stepping Stones' (A study group for young people) fortnightly via Zoom. All members joined in and studied the Book of Romans. The 'Wesley Wayfarers' group restarted, meeting, socially distanced, within the chapel.

2.4 Worship, Services and Prayer

2.4.1 Until the lockdown happened: We continued to hold Circuit Healing services every month at Southside. A Confirmation service was held at Christchurch on 17th November. We held a Circuit Service at Brookside on Sunday, 26 January.

As part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*:* Brookside held a service and prayer time, along with four other churches in the PE4 area; Christ Church joined together with the Churches Together in the Ortons for a service at Orton Waterville Methodist and, during Lent, they meet up each week for lunch together in the different churches. This was a lovely way of joining together and an example of ecumenical gathering.

Our County Ecumenical Officer, Caroline Hutchings, attended a Hope4Peterborough meeting and she distributed prayer bookmarks and other literature and promoted the 'Call to Prayer' meetings arranged

for the year.

Several churches took part in the global 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative during Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday. This was more low key this year because of the pandemic, but prayers for Thy Kingdom Come featured in our livestream 'Morning Prayers'.

2.4.2 The Circuit continued its subscription to The Vine's 'Twelvebaskets' (set services for Own Arrangements), and this has been a real Godsend for the churches when they had to close during the lockdowns. Some churches have based their services on these materials and invited preachers to email weekly reflections to be included in these services, so enabling preachers to still contribute and congregations to continue to have contact with preachers and benefit from a variety of preaching. Church stewards faithfully worked to make The Vine material available to people in their churches.

2.4.3 During lockdown, the pandemic saw local church leaders set up processes to look after and maintain contact with those that could not join worship online, i.e. at Orton Waterville, the church stewards were phoning people on their pastoral lists and chatting about the next week's reading, and so the depth of engagement which people were getting was huge.

Once the Covid regulations allowed, the congregation at Orton Waterville were able to meet in the local village hall for their Sunday services as the church was not spacious enough to meet. Their services were led by two dedicated Local Preachers, with additional reflections sent from other Local Preachers and ministers.

2.4.4. Dogsthorpe provided a service for members of the church who do not have access to technology or who were isolating or coming out of isolation; the service was just for those people to have an opportunity to come into the church for worship whilst also doing a Zoom transmission for those who do use technology.

2.4.5 Oundle started to have Monthly "Gatherings" (2m apart): A time of fellowship, teaching and prayer.

2.4.6 At Southside, on every second Friday of the month, they had Zoom 7pm 'Sing to God', every Saturday Morning, they had a Zoom Prayer Meeting at 10am, and every Sunday morning, a Facebook 9.15am 'Think' service.

2.4.7 Our Pioneer Hub Café worship has continued, meeting via Zoom every month. Our thanks to Rev Dale Sherriff for leading and enabling these.

2.4.8 With churches being closed, our superintendent flew into action and quickly instigated a Sunday morning Livestream service, which has run consistently through the lockdowns and is still running. A big online community has built up, and it is helping a lot of people, including new people who have joined us in worship. The service is streamed via Facebook live and YouTube. This *w*orship takes place via livestream every Sunday morning and we also began another new venture – 'Morning Prayers' which also draws in others from beyond the Circuit. Our thanks go to Revd Dale Sherriff, who covered 'Morning Prayers' when Langley was absent and who regularly led Sunday morning livestream, and also to Matt Forsyth who also came on board to help.

2.4.9 We are also always conscious of those who do not have access to the online worship and how we are supporting them as well as those who watch. We aim to make it as accessible as possible, so you do not have to be a member of facebook to view the Circuit page.

We have been getting about 250 views but, most importantly, about 120-130 comments on a Sunday which is people engaging, we get about half that in the weekly Monday to Thursday 'Morning Prayers' at 8.30am. We have started to consider the big question of, once we come out of Lockdown, how do we cover it? When do we support other churches? He has started to involve other people, and it is easier getting people to volunteer to help with the 'Morning Prayers', but the Sunday morning at 10.30am has the significant following and he is aware that we could lose people if we cannot maintain it. This is in tandem with knowing what the local churches need when the Lockdown eases.

Huge thanks go to Revd Dale Sherriff and Matt Forsyth who also lead Livestream worship and 'Morning Prayers'.

2.5 Our Focus as a Circuit

2.5.1 In terms of building on Reimagine, we made some really good progress in terms of drawing closer

links with local churches and congregations, but also there was this recurrent call for us to return to our roots, to tend to our roots and, with Revd Graham Tooth's advice, the focus being on how we encourage people in prayer and in small groups.

As we have reflected in the Pioneer Hub, which is open to everyone, we stumbled across another model and he showed us the image of the dragonfly. The Dragonfly is a devotion. Revd Dale Sherriff has come to us with a significant amount of experience in helping churches and encouraging small groups and one of the things he has brought to us is, if we think about how we gather as a Church, we can think perhaps about the four wings of a dragonfly for us in the Methodist tradition, but also in the wider Church tradition. The four wings could be: The Circuit – a group of churches working together; the local congregations; the small group/fellowship group with a class leader; prayer partners of two or three/small bands.

The dragonfly operates both in each wing independently or together, and it is a helpful model. One of the things we do is to ensure people feel connected in prayer and we are looking at how we group people together, i.e., virtually or via email or via paper when we have worship at home, and it is key that we get this right as we move out of Lockdown.

Revd Langley did a survey in the earlier phase of the Coronavirus with the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders regarding what we sense the Lord is saying to us, and he wrote a report on it, and this was when The Pioneer Hub was starting to get into motion as it thought about the Dragonfly Model, and there were two conclusions which are open to further exploration: Firstly, we need to be very wary of the idea of thinking that we are going to go back to the way things were before, in the sense that this is a golden opportunity for us to think about the needs and mission of the Church, learn the lessons in things like telephone pastoral ministry that is happening at places like Orton Waterville, the WhatsApp groups – we are all learning whether we are creating or receiving – creative things happening with paper as we use 'The Vine' material. So, this is an opportunity as we come out of Lockdown to think what do we need to do? When do we need to do it? Who is it for? How do we do it? Particularly, how do we ensure that we hold those people who have joined us during the Lockdown period?

Bishop Stephen Cottrell advised churches to be careful about just thinking we will go back to the way it was before. Revd Langley said there will be a Plan and we will be doing morning Worship but let us learn the lessons from the good things that are happening.

Secondly, online worship has been a significant success and it would be a mistake not to continue it in some shape or form. Exactly what that is, he does not know.

2.5.2 Revd Langley encouraged folks to think about how we encourage people in prayer, how we encourage people into meaningful prayer relationships by, if necessary pairing people up or inviting them into prayer triplets. Also, there are small groups and the Lyfe material produced by the Bible Society. Which has been well received as a really good resource. It ensures your fellowship group is not just about the tea and coffee but that you look at the Bible study stuff. It also means the latter is not as boring as watching paint dry! It keeps life in the whole thing. He has taken the initiative, which has come from the Pioneer Hub's initial suggestion that we would like to pray together at a set time, so he sent out an invite for the hub for 4pm on a Sunday in June. Revd Dale Sherriff produced a prayer sheet to accompany this.

3 Staffing and Appointments, Stewards and Ministries

3.1 Simon Stewart, Sue Keeney, Ann Tooth, Christine Kell and all continued as Circuit Stewards for this year and were joined in September 2019 by Sue Holmes. The Re-election of Circuit Stewards did not take place this year as the CLT felt they could not make these appointments over Zoom. So, with all the discussions that are going on regarding coming out of lockdown, it was felt that the team should stay, to provide consistency and, once we are back into meeting together in person, we will then re-elect the Circuit Stewarding Team.

3.1.1 Sue Keeney, Nigel Lightfoot, Philip Assensoh, Ann Tooth, Mick Goodman and Nicky Ward continued as our representatives to District Synod. The churches started discussing the Marriage and Relationships report ('God in Love Unites Us') in advance of the vote at Synod.

3.1.2 Helen Crofts continued in her role as Chaplain to the local Methodist Home, The Maples. It was, of

course, an extremely difficult time for them during the Covid pandemic, and Helen was able to offer much needed help, encouragement and support to the residents and staff. Helen also remained as a volunteer with the Pioneer Hub and carried on helping at Ailsworth in partnership with Revd Shameela.

3.1.3 The Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting looked at Team Preaching, although this shifted to think first about what the churches needed in the pandemic and placing their resource there accordingly.

3.2 From a local preaching training perspective, Matt Forsyth and Neat Gordon moved from on note to on trial. Mick Goodman continued on trial and Laura Martin completed her training and was recognised as a fully accredited local preacher. Her service of accreditation took place at Dogsthorpe Methodist Church on 1st December, 2019.

3.2.1 During lockdown, local preachers supported the churches by providing written reflections for circulation, and by providing recorded reflections to be included in the Circuit livestream worship. This is still continuing and is a great encouragement and support to those churches who have not yet been able to re-open.

3.3 We started to look at the profile of our social media in the Circuit, at what we have got and how we help network people who choose to go online and, mindful of the shortage of the material we have for children and young people, we appealed to folks in the Circuit if anyone could help out. Coincidentally, we were asked by the District if we could make use of a grant for £2,000 to employ a young person for three hours a week under the Young Leaders Scheme. This includes personal development away days run by the District. We gladly took up this opportunity as we need to develop our social media presence. We recruited Grace Sherriff, who is a young person between the ages of 16 and 24, as our Circuit Social Media Enabler. We also placed her the District's Young People's Mentorship Scheme, so she is supervised by the District and in partnership with us. Grace was already volunteering with us and producing content for livestream.

3.4 Not seeing one another has made communication difficult. However, Revd Langley has been keeping everyone abreast of what is happening through his 'Weekly Bulletins'. Via these, he has regularly provided guidance for the churches following the different regulations and Covid-19 guidance that were issued by the Government and the Methodist Church, as well as providing thoughts and reflections.

Our thanks to all who have provided up to date information and assistance to those in their churches, including those who have produced paper copies, church newsletters and written reflections from preachers to those not on email. Our thanks also to the pastoral carers who have supported those isolated by the pandemic.

4 Safeguarding

4.1 Philip Assensoh continued as our Circuit Safeguarding Officer and worked with Revd Langley in the Safeguarding team. Thanks also to Janet Rich who has been a great support with Safeguarding training.

4.1.2 Our normal Safeguarding training was affected by the Covid pandemic. However, training will be undertaken once the lockdown restrictions are over. Safeguarding Foundation training did take place at Crowland Methodist Church in February for all members in new positions and volunteers. And Safeguarding Refresher training took place at Brookside Methodist Church in early March.

The District Safeguarding Team are looking at online Safeguarding Foundation training as an option for Circuit Safeguarding trainers if the lockdown restrictions continue. District has started training Circuit Safeguarding trainers on how to conduct online training courses.

4.1.3 As Safeguarding Foundation training has been combined with Refresher training, we only have Safeguarding Foundation training to complete in the Circuit.

4.1.4 All members in positions who had attended either Foundation training or Refresher training in the last three years in Circuit do not have to attend or do another Foundation training for two years.

4.1.5 Coming out of lockdown was on every Circuit Meeting agenda; we recognised that every church is different and there is no one-fit-all approach to how our churches can reopen. We have seen things can change rapidly and any reduction in social distancing may happen quickly and with little notice. We

need to review what we used to do and whether it was really the best way to serve God. When churches are allowed to open, but with continuing restrictions on social distancing, printed books, singing, socialising after worship, we need to find a way that means no one is excluded, but still deliver meaningful worship.

4.1.6 Use of Photography and Video Information Sheet for Parents and Carers - the Methodist Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people during their engagement with church activities. We take great care recording, using and storing images of children and young people while they take part in church activities. The intended use of for any images and arrangements for storage will be indicated on the consent form. We have obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures & Guidance for the Methodist Church to make you aware of this information and to request your consent for the use of images of the child or young person under your care.

Forms for photo permissions to be used with children and young people have been sent to all Safeguarding Co-ordinators and to the Local Preachers' Secretary, and to Sunday school teachers too. The directive from the District Safeguarding Team is that these forms have to be completed before any photo is taken of children and young people during a church event and church service.

4.1.7 The Circuit continues to abide by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and keeps contacts and posters accurate and up-to-date.

4.1.8 Two Circuit Stewards and Revd Shameela attended a seminar in Market Harborough on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in the Methodist Church. It was a very interesting day where the challenges facing the church were discussed. The District are keen for this to be discussed in the Circuits.

5 Finance

5.1 The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020 were audited and approved.

5.2 Income for the year was £183,661, including a grant of £9,000; the expenditure for the year was £160,989, giving us a surplus of £22,672 adding to our Circuit reserves.

5.3 The Circuit policy on reserves, at 6 months, was unchanged.

5.4 Three years ago, the Circuit took over from Ailsworth Church Council the trusteeship of the property and finance, with periodic reviews. At our Circuit Meeting in June, the Circuit Meeting agreed to continue with the trusteeship of Ailsworth for two more years. During the three years, new people have come in to help lead the Messy Play activities and Helen Crofts has run 'Coffee and Chat', and it is also used for our Circuit Quiet Mornings. People attending are gradually learning about church and faith and we want to keep the focus on Ailsworth as a Christian presence and explore the opportunities as they arrive, whilst taking the burden of trusteeship away.

We acknowledged that, as a church, we are very good at reaching out to new people, but moving people into discipleship is more of a challenge. With the encouragement and hard work of all involved we have seen how Ailsworth is growing in a totally different way to how we would normally see it in a Methodist church. The following are thanked for their sterling work: Mick Goodman, The CLT, Bridget Spencer, Linda Bass and Helen Crofts for Messy Church and the 'Sewing Bees' group and building up good pastoral relationships.

5.5 We continue to look at how to improve the income from Circuit churches and how best to replace the current method of meeting costs of running the Circuit. We have relied too long on Circuit reserves and this needs addressing. A steep rise in costs from the District is impacting our circuit and our churches, and we are putting plans in place as to how we meet these costs in the most effective way, and in a way that is manageable for each of our churches.

Obviously, some of the churches have been hit quite hard through the Covid-19 crisis. We started to get an overview of churches' positions so we can see what next year might look like, and then update our budget accordingly.

5.6 The CLT started looking at proposals to move away from the current 'share' method of contributing to Circuit funding to one based on the way that the District assesses how much Circuits pay. We will be looking to implement this in the next Connexional year, commencing September 2020.

6 Property

6.1 Paul Hutchings and Mick Goodman continued on the Property Team. Ewan Cappitt left the area and was thanked for his many years of service.

6.2 Conscious of the energy performance of our properties, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) have been obtained for two manses.

6.3 Annual Inspections of all circuit property were completed and checklists distributed to the Circuit Meeting.

6.3 We continued to let the Dogsthorpe manse and the income from this was all ring-fenced for the Welland project.

6.4 The Connexional Property Strategy 2018-20 (adopted by the Methodist Council in October 2018) sets out areas of work as being necessary and urgent during the Connexional year 2018-19 and, working with our mission plans and property development plans, we completed this work.

6.5 Quinquennials were carried out at Elton, Orton Waterville and Oundle.

6.6 Discussions took place regarding whether or not to let or sell the manse associated with Westgate New Church and Whittlesey.

6.6 Our thanks to Paul Hutchings for his thorough work on church property reporting this year. One of our faithful and experienced Local Preachers, Nigel Lightfoot, ended our June Circuit Meeting with the following prayer. It sums up our year and what we have tried to do - 'Thank You God for the gift of modern technology, that we are doing things now that we never thought would be possible; that we would discern God's will in all of life's challenges; as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, that each of us would shine in our own small corner; that God would give us courage to jump in and take opportunities and remove the hesitation that we once would have had. Amen.'

We believe we have and we have done it through working and learning together, and supporting and encouraging each other. The Circuit Leadership Team is grateful to everyone for all their contributions and support in this difficult year.

Signed: *L Mackrell-Hey*

(Revd Dr Langley Mackrell-Hey – Chair – and Superintendent of the Methodist Circuit: Peterborough Circuit of Churches)

Date: 24th June, 2021

CIRCUIT
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
ACCOUNTS

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2020

District	Circuit no	23/21

Registered Charity - Charity Registration number 1135613

If not a registered charity **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

Ministers:

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REVD SHAMEELA JAMEELEE-SAMUEL

REVD SARAH GOWER

Circuit Stewards:

MRS SUE KEENEY

MRS CHRISTINE KELL

MRS ANN TOOTH

MR. SIMON STEWART

MRS. S HOLMES

Treasurer:

MR GILES ARMSTRONG

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020 | **PETERBOROUGH** | **Circuit**

	SECTION A	Note	Un - restricted Funds	Circuit Model Trust Fund	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
a1	**RECEIPTS**		£	£	£	£		£
a2	Assessment/Share		158,131			**158,131**		123,289
a3	Capital receipts			- 2,642		**(2,642)**		1,368
a4	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		1,947	3,007		**4,954**		8,205
a5	Grants		9,000			**9,000**		13,000
a6	Other receipts		14,218			**14,218**		15,682
a7	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**183,296**	**365**		**183,661**	(a8)	**161,544**
	SECTION B							
b1	**PAYMENTS**							
b2	Stipends, salaries, NIC, Pension and travel costs		96,715			**96,715**		127,566
b3	Manse Costs		13,309			**13,309**		17,364
b4	Administration etc		5,289			**5,289**		6,790
b5	District Assessment		31,507			**31,507**		23,184
b6	Grants & donations		-					
b7								
b8	Other payments		9,192	4,977		**14,169**		14,039
b9	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**156,012**	**4,977**		**160,989**	(b9)	**188,943**
	SECTION C							
c1	**NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR**	(a7-b9)	**27,284**	**- 4,612**		**22,672**		**(27,399)**
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		35,540	157,046		192,586	(c6)	219,985
c3	**Sub total**	(c1+c2)	**62,824**	**152,434**		**215,258**		**192,586**
c4	Transfers and adjustments		(2,500)	2,500			(c7)	
c5	**TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR**	(c3+c4)	**60,324**	**154,934**		**215,258**	(c8)	**192,586** (c6)
	SECTION D							
d	**FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (these amounts should not be included in total receipts/payments above)**							
d1	Balance brought forward from last year					-		-
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations					-		-
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations					-		-
d4	**BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID (d1 + d2 - d3)**					-		-

PETERBOROUGH

Circuit

SUMMARY OF CIRCUIT ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION REPORTING TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING

SECTION E **Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page**

Summary of the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2019 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Circuit Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross receipts and payments totals of the Circuit. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold of £250,000, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the Circuit and connected Circuit Organisations.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts		Payments		Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments		Opening balances		Closing balances	
e1												
e2												
e3												
e4												
e5												
e6												
e7												
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds									(e11)		(e12)
e9	**Circuit accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)**	183,661	(a8)	160,989	(b9)	22,672		(c7)	192,586	(c6)	215,258	(c8)
e10	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	183,661		160,989		22,672			192,586	(x)	215,258	(y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**TOTAL PAYMENTS**								

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CIRCUIT - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2019	OPENING BALANCES		CLOSING BALANCES	
f1	Cash in hand				
f2	Bank Current Account	13,573		43,618	
f3	Bank Deposit Account				
f4	Central Finance Board	21,967		16,708	
f5	Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	157,046		154,932	
f6	Other funds				
f7	**SUB TOTAL**	192,586	(c6)	215,258	(c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance totals above) (e12)		(e11)		(e12)
f9	**TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CIRCUIT**	192,586	(x)	215,258	(y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

		At 31 August 2019	At 31 August 2020
g1	Investments (include Endowments)		
g2	Land and Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	872,873	899,939
g3	Other Assets		
g4	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5	Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board
f5 Include only CFB Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trust accounts this is inserted in line f5)

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer [signature] Date 15/4/21

Name MR. GILES ARMSTRONG

Address 1, EATHWAITE GREEN, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6SZ

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on 22/10/2020

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting [signature]

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Dr Langley Mackreth

Date 12/04/2021

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

PETERBOROUGH **Circuit**

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees conside audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and tha 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 Report

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 (other than that disclosed below*):

(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;
- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply appropriate*

(3) I have/have not* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes ("TMCP") or held in other Trusts, Bank balances and Funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church ("CFB"), which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

** Please circle as appropriate*

Name M. J. RUFFLES

Signature M. J. R[illegible]

Relevant Professional qualification or body ICAEW - FCA

Address 4 BARON COURT
PETERSBOROUGH
PE4 7ZE

Date 05/10/2021

CIRCUIT
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
ACCOUNTS

THE METHODIST CHURCH

STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

PETERBOROUGH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 AUGUST 2020

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ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020 | **PETERBOROUGH** | **Circuit**

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PETERBOROUGH

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Date 05/10/2021