

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

CIRCUIT MINISTERS

Reverend Debbie Borda 14 Well Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1EQ
Reverend Rita Carr 12 Shakespeare Road Stowmarket IP14 1TJ
Reverend Ruth Ridge 4 Kedington Court Acton CO10 0XB

CIRCUIT STEWARDS FOR THE YEAR

Miss Isabel Hebden 3 Singleton Court Great Cornard Sudbury CO10 0EN
Mr Bill Humm 52 Farriers Road Stowmarket IP14 2NS
Mr Andy Flack 16 Crown Mill Elmswell IP30 9GF

CIRCUIT TREASURER

Mr John Moore 11 Saffrons Close Woolpit Suffolk IP30 9RA (Until March 2020)
Mr Richard Meadows 16 Greene Mews Bury St Edmunds IP33 1QL (From March 2020)

THE TRUSTEES are those persons appointed from time to time under Methodist Church rules by the Circuit Meeting.

THE CIRCUIT 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 Circuit has a Methodist team of two and a half ministers covering a mainly rural area of some 500 square miles. There were 3 active supernumeraries and 11 local preachers with a further two on trial. During the year several churches conducted services based on local arrangements. There were ten churches until the end of the year when Cotton closed down (see below). Rev Rita Carr was re-appointed from 1 September 2019 for five years to 2024. Rev Ruth Ridge was appointed on 1 September 2019 working half time at Bradfield, Glemsford and St John's Sudbury. Rev Debbie Borda was reinvited for a further year to 2021. Isabel Hebden offered to remain as Senior Circuit Steward for an additional year, until 2020. Ruth Logan, Circuit secretary, continues to support the stewards.

THE CHURCHES During the year membership numbers and congregations were as follows:

Church	Membership in August		October count
	2020	2019	
Bradfield	7	8	10
Cotton	0	12	14
Glemsford	8	8	11
Ixworth	14	15	11
Needham Market (EP)	37	18	38
Northumberland Avenue	20	23	22
Old Newton	20	24	32
St John's Sudbury	75	75	50
Stowmarket	29	28	20
Trinity Bury St Edmunds	120	128	55
Total	330	339	263

CIRCUIT ACTIVITY

GENERAL: The year came to be dominated by the Covid-19 outbreak with churches shutting down in March. The Circuit took immediate action to ensure maintenance of its Mission “to Live and Share the Good News of God’s Love in Christ” by doing all it could, given the circumstance, to meet peoples’ spiritual, pastoral and social needs. Steps taken included the production of a weekly newsletter, interactive Sunday services conducted over ZOOM, mid-week coffee and chat sessions also over ZOOM. For those without the internet the newsletter and service sheets were sent by post. Ministers and Class Leaders were in frequent touch by telephone, particularly with those living alone. During August work started on preparing church premises for reopening for services in September with the required safeguards and risk assessments in place, an enormous task for ministers and church officers.

To help churches cope with the loss of income from collections, hall lettings and foregone fund raising events Circuit Meeting agreed that the assessments due in August should be limited to amounts churches could afford to pay with the shortfall of some £28,000 being met from Circuit reserves.

BURY ST EDMUNDS SECTION: Trinity have continued to host the Bury Drop in, as well as weekly coffee mornings and lunch club which were well attended until lockdown. Messy Church was held monthly until March. House groups have been thriving and there are now 4 groups meeting regularly (since lockdown via Zoom).

Northumberland Avenue have held a number of Fayres, reaching out to the community, and a weekly table tennis afternoon. Since lockdown services are on Zoom.

Ixworth’s Christmas tree festival and Carol service were successful. Their weekly coffee and chat meetings were popular in the village, and since March have moved on to Zoom. Similarly, their fortnightly Bible Study meetings continue on Zoom.

STOWMARKET SECTION: Stowmarket Church have continued their program of refurbishment. They held an afternoon tea in October to celebrate their revamped church hall, which made the Bury Free Press. They finally got permission to remove the Church pews and replace them with chairs. Over lockdown the frequency of Bible Study meetings was increased to weekly and has been well attended.

Old Newton held its first Messy Church in January. It has continued to provide food and fellowship at various events and combined this with fund raising for local charities.

Cotton also held fund raising events over the year, including a concert in aid of a local Cancer charity, and a Christmas Carol singing afternoon. Sadly, Cotton Church Council concluded that the Church should close from the end of August. Quite simply the Church had run out of people able to manage its affairs. Stowmarket manse has had a new bathroom fitted.

SUDBURY SECTION: The fourth of five annual grants each of £2,000 was made to support the community worker at St John’s. She continued to build strong community links through two weekly toddler group sessions, a community choir (youth and adult groups) and a weekly drop in for the isolated and vulnerable, offering coffee and craft and film mornings. The community team also took on organization of messy church and managed two sessions before the COVID lockdown started. During lockdown, the community worker worked alongside the local foodbank and supermarkets to provide fresh food deliveries to families in need. St John’s also hosted a successful harvest supper, a Christmas musical evening and a leap day tea as well as their annual Autumn Fayre. Pre lockdown our worship continued its usual pattern with quarterly alternative evening services in addition to weekly worship. During lockdown good pastoral links have been maintained thanks to the pastoral visitors and in addition to the weekly service members have been able to access a short service of evening prayer weekly via Facebook.

Glemsford also continued a regular pattern of weekly evening services and the congregation continued to work closely with the parish to run monthly services at a care home in the village and half-termly Messy Church sessions. In addition to this we shared in an Advent course, designed to attract those on the fringes of the church, including Messy Church parents and had begun a Lent course on the theme of Faith and Environment. Once again, during lockdown pastoral links have been well maintained. Bradfield hosted a very successful harvest weekend with a harvest Supper on two services. A good collection of produce was able to be sent to Bury Storehouse. The regular pattern of Sunday worship continued until lockdown and members provided good pastoral care and practical support for each other during that time. We also shared in an ecumenical Advent service at Stanningfield which was well supported by both churches.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

The accounts show a surplus of £21,855. The November, February and May assessments were based on a requirement to pay for the old complement of three ministers whereas two and a half were in post and there were net rent receipts of some £9,300 from letting the Sudbury manse. The shortfall in the August assessment receipts (see above) will fall on the Circuit's 2020-21 accounts. We are grateful to John Moore for all his hard work and careful stewardship of the Circuit's finances as Treasurer for some ten years. John also played a leading part in the management of the Circuit's estate, including some very difficult and time consuming disposals of closed chapels.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

BURY ST EDMUNDS METHODIST CIRCUIT 14/3

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 AUGUST 2020

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019-20

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

Accounting policies

Basis of accounting These financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention, except as noted below in respect of the valuation of manses, and in accordance with Statements of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and applicable UK accounting standards and the Charities Act 1993. The estimated net realizable value of the manses has been incorporated in the accounts. There has been no change in accounting policies from the previous year.

Funds The Circuit Advance Fund is considered to be a Restricted Fund set aside for specific purposes. All other funds are considered to be Unrestricted Funds for any use in furtherance of Circuit objectives.

Reserves Circuit policy is to hold unrestricted reserves equivalent to about six months expenditure. Unrestricted funds at the end of the year were almost twice that. However as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions the Circuit will need to draw on reserves to compensate for the loss of assessment income from churches. Forecast receipts for 2020-21 are already some £28,000 below the forecast sum needed to break even.

Incoming resources All incoming resources are recognized once the Circuit has entitlement to them, it is certain they will be received and the monetary value of incoming resources can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Resources expended Liabilities are recognized as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation which commits the Circuit to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that category.

Irrecoverable VAT Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resource expended for which it was incurred.

Tangible fixed assets Tangible fixed assets are capitalized if they have a cost in excess of £1,000 and can be used for more than one year. The only such assets are the manses in Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

1 Assessments

Assessments are based on perceived ability to pay as indicated by the average income of each church over the previous five years. Allowance is made for any extraordinary income such as bequests and grants. The total assessment required to support circuit is then shared between the churches pro-rata with income.

	2019-20(£)	last year(£)
Bradfield	7,860	7,780
Cotton	5,624	5,620
Glemsford	3,000	4,096
Ixworth	6,612	6,592
Needham Market	11,701	10,200
Northumberland Avenue	11,068	10,440
Old Newton	12,760	12,728
St John's Sudbury	45,716	44,712
Stowmarket	14,782	13,876
Trinity Bury St Edmunds	55,720	56,456
Total	174,843	173,328

2 Other income

Other income includes a donation of £410.

3 Staff costs

	2019-20(£)	last year(£)
	92,990	105,150
Number of full-time employees	2.75	3.25

4 EADTF East Anglia District Travel Fund

The District operates a pooling arrangement whereby every Circuit contributes the same amount per minister and the ministers claim on the fund for their actual travel expenditure incurred. The cost in 2019-20 reflected less travel due to Covid-19 and a reduction in the number of ministers.

5 Grants

A grant of £2,000 was made towards the Youth Worker project at St John's from Restricted Funds.

6 Contributions to District Advance Fund

A levy of 2.5% on the first £100,000, 5% between £100,000 and £250,000 and 7.5% above £250,000 is applied by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) to the Circuit Advance Fund as at 1 September and paid to the East Anglia Advance Fund.

7 Circuit Advance Fund drawdown

The Circuit received approval to draw from the Fund £2,000 for the grant for the Youth Worker (see 5 above), £10,000 towards the costs of administering the Circuit and £39,500 for the expected loss of assessment income due to Covid-19.

8 Creditors

Of the creditors £11,500 is advance payments by churches of parts of their first quarterly assessments for 2020-2021. The balance of £2,411 is a combination of outstanding cheques, resources used but not invoiced and a minor provision.

9 Manses

The manses are owned by the TMCP but are managed on their behalf by the Trustees of the Bury St Edmunds Methodist Circuit. As such their value is only reported in these accounts as a convenience to the owners TMCP. The book value is stated as £1,017,000, which the Trustees consider to be prudently conservative. In the event of a sale the Circuit would receive 80% of the first £100,000 of net proceeds and 60% of the remainder. Their value to the Circuit if sold would be about £630,000.

10 Capital commitments

One year's instalment (£2,000) remains of the Youth Worker project. There are no contingent liabilities.

11 Trustees

None of the Trustees, or persons connected with them, received any remuneration or other benefits from the Circuit or any connected organization as a result of their office during the year.

DECLARATIONS

1. TREASURER

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

Signatures *signed R J Meadows*
Circuit Treasurer

Date 26 October 2020

2. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE BURY ST EDMUNDS METHODIST CIRCUIT

This report is on the Circuit accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The Circuit's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is required. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination comprised a review of the accounting records kept by the Circuit Treasurer and a comparison of the accounts with those records. The procedures undertaken do not provide evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion in the view given by those accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

- a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 46 of the Charities Act, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the Accounting Act have not been met, or
- b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature *signed Stephen Cook*

Date 19 January 2021

Stephen Cook MA FCA 84 Whiting Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1NZ

3. PRESENTATION TO THE CIRCUIT MEETING FOR APPROVAL

I confirm the accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on and were approved.

Signature of the Chairperson of the meeting. *Signed Debbie Borda*

Date 24.03.21