

BLACKHEATH AND CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 1137991

ANNUAL REPORT

for the period 1st September 2020 to 31st August 2021

Introduction

I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report for our Methodist Circuit, and trust that you will find the contents to be of interest. The year which ended 31st August 2021 was not an easy year in the life of our churches in that Government response to the Covid epidemic, which included restrictions on public gatherings, including places of worship meant that there were periods in which our church buildings were closed. Nevertheless, the outreach and ministry of our churches continued with many acts of worship and fellowship conducted remotely, often in a virtual setting.

It is my strongly held belief that the churches of our circuit remain firm in faith and resolute in their determination to offer the Gospel message to the people of South London.

Revd Richard Grocott,
Superintendent Minister

The registered address for correspondence is:

Circuit Administrator,
Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit Office,
Burnt Ash Methodist Church Hall,
Burnt Ash Hill,
London, SE12 0QD

The trustees who serve the charity are those specifically appointed to positions within the circuit, those who represent each of the nine church communities, plus ministers of religion who reside within the circuit or who have served within the Methodist Church and who have retired to live in the area.

Aims and organisation

The registered objectives of the Charity for the Methodist Church:

The purposes of the Methodist Church are and shall be deemed to have been
since the Date of Union

the advancement of:

a) The Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and discipline of The Methodist Church;

- b) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of The Methodist Church;
- c) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church;
- d) Any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church

The charity's mission statement states that

The Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit promotes Methodism and Christian communities by actively Empowering, Supporting, Resourcing and Encouraging its member churches to increase awareness of God's saving grace through Christ and His everlasting love.

The Charity's approach to achieving that mission is by:

- Providing the best possible resources to enable Christian worship, witness and service in each of our nine Church communities.
- Organising and resourcing regular public acts of worship open to members of the church and non-members alike.
- The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups.
- Encouraging training and preparation for all aspects of church life.
- The resourcing of pastoral work including visiting the sick and bereaved.
- Exercising Christian ministry throughout the community without discrimination.
- Mutually encouraging and supporting the ministry of the whole people of God.
- Fostering the Connexional spirit of Methodism within the Circuit and beyond.
- Nurturing ecumenical and other faith relationships.

Public Benefit

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

Structure, Governance and Management

The governing document for the circuit is the Deed of Union (1932) and Methodist Church Act (1976)

Detailed governance arrangements are outlined within the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church by order of the annual conference (CPD).

The practical management of the charity is undertaken by a Circuit Leadership Team comprising the ministers of religion, who are each appointed initially for five years - but who may stay for longer, the circuit stewards who are appointed each year by the Circuit Meeting and the Circuit Treasurer who is also appointed annually.

The circuit was successful in satisfying all of its key responsibilities, i.e. in the provision of ministers, co-ordinating the preaching plan, maintaining the manses, monitoring the governance of each of the

nine churches, as well as supporting and encouraging each church in their mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. The circuit has been represented at District Synod.

Trustee Training

A range of guidance produced by Methodist Connexion to support the effective running of the circuit, specifically the leaflet 'The Role of a Trustee in The Methodist Church' is available to all new Circuit meeting members via the Circuit website, as induction to their role as trustees.

The handbook 'Role of a Circuit Steward' has been made available to all Circuit Stewards.

Related Parties

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

The following Methodist Churches are linked to the circuit

Anerley Methodist Church
Burnt Ash Methodist church
Eltham Park Methodist Church
Forest Hill Methodist Church
Hither Green Methodist Church
Lewisham Methodist Church
Sunfields Methodist Church
Upper Norwood Methodist Church
Wesley Hall Methodist Church

Risk Management

The major risks have been identified and recorded by the Circuit Finance and Property Committee with professional advice taken as required.

There is a regular annual review process undertaken and recorded.

Income and Expenditure is being monitored in total and is compared with the approved annual budget on a half yearly basis to detect trends as part of the risk management process to avoid unforeseen calls on reserves.

Safeguarding

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Methodist Connexional practice outlines commitment to the following principles:

- the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults

- the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
- We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice

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

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

Brief financial review of the year

Income

Circuit income is primarily drawn from the assessment of £231,000 paid in full by the Circuit churches.

Expenditure

Expenditure in the year was £246,041.

65% Of expenditure was on stipends and the salary of the Circuit Administrator.
20% was the Circuit contribution to the District and Connexion, of which a significant part is used to fund the work of the wider Methodist Church.
The other expenditure, 15%, includes ministers' expenses and day-to-day maintenance of the manses.

Fund balances

As at 31 August 2021, the net current assets of the Circuit (including the Circuit Model Trust Fund) were £236,097 compared to £250,340 at the start of the year. This is broadly in line with projections, showing a planned and progressive reduction in Fund Balances in the future. Sufficient reserves are held to cover day-to-day expenditure, unexpected maintenance costs and to provide funding for any projects required to meet the Circuit's Mission Statement.

Plans for 2021/22

Circuit financial plans for the coming year have been prepared on the basis that there are four full time ordained staff with anticipated cost of living stipend increases.

Basis of preparation and legal framework

The Charity's gross income is less than £250,000 and so the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2021 have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

Full Name of Charity: Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit

Registration Charity Number: 1137991

Date of registration: 1 September 2012

Main communication address: The Circuit Administrator, Burnt Ash Methodist Church Hall,
Burnt Ash Hill, London, SE12 0QD

The members of the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Methodist Circuit meeting are the Charity Trustees, membership being made up of circuit office holders, ministers and representatives appointed by the local churches.

Fully membership is shown as Appendix A to this report.

Active Circuit Ministers	Rev Richard Grocott Rev Rohama Asif Rev Paul Hulme Rev Alberta Konadu-Yiadom
Circuit Stewards	Dr Garry Young (Senior) Mrs Jeannette Warren Mrs Margaret Boreham Mrs Elsie Sutherland Mrs Helena Green Mr David Maxwell (Mr Andrew Gibbs from 1 September 2021)
Administrator:	Dr. Linda Ryan

Name of the circuit steward who acted as the principal officer overseeing the day-to-day financial management and accounting for the circuit during the year (treasurer) was Mr David Maxwell

Independent examiner Mr David West, 67 Heathwood Gardens, London, SE7 8ET

Investment Bankers Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church

Trustees for Methodist Church purposes

Current bank accounts HSBC and Barclays

Reserves Policy

As at 31 August 2021, the circuit had the following cash reserves:

	Balances at 31 Aug 2021
Bank accounts (General Fund)	£ 18,992
CFB account (General Fund):	£ 163,580
Circuit Model Trust Fund:	£ 53,525

The Circuit holds these reserves to:

1. Fund Ministers' stipends and associated costs, fund the circuit office and administrator, and generally administer the Circuit's affairs appropriately and diligently.
2. Maintain, on a long-term basis, the property of the Circuit (comprising four manses) and, if necessary, in exceptional circumstances, to provide grants for the maintenance of the nine churches in the Circuit. The reserves are required to cover potential shortfalls in income from the Churches and any large and unexpected costs as well as planned programmes of maintenance and improvements.
3. Provide funding to resource projects to meet the circuit's Mission Statement, as determined by the Circuit Meeting from time to time. Such projects have yet to be identified.

The intention for the year beginning 1 September 2021 is that the cost of the circuit administration is met from the Circuit Model Trust Fund and that all other expenditure is met from the General Fund.

The Circuit considers the current level of reserves to be appropriate for its needs. However, given the negative effects on Church finances of the pandemic, it is the current expectation that the combined value of the General Fund and Circuit Model Trust Fund will reduce gradually in future.

Declaration

The trustees declare that

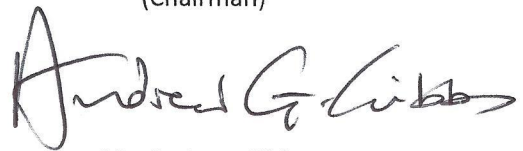
- they have understood all of the requirements associated with the submission of the annual return and all of the statements contained within it; and
- the information provided in the relevant parts of the annual return is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief and has been brought to the attention of the charity trustees who have each individually verified this and given their informed express consent to this submission with full knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the contents of the privacy notice.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signatures:



Rev. Richard Grocott
(Chairman)



Mr. Andrew Gibbs
(Treasurer)

Date: 17 March 2022

APPENDIX A

Names of the trustees who managed the charity in the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021:

Rev. Richard Grocott	Rev. Rohama Asif
Rev. Abe Konadu-Yiadom	Rev Charles ILungi
Mrs Jeannette Warren	Mr. David Maxwell
Mrs Elsie Sutherland	Dr Garry Young
Mrs Margaret Boreham	Mrs Helena Green
Mr Graham Sparkes	Mr Andrew Tredinnick
Mrs Marian Young	Miss Ruth Potter
Dr. Linda Ryan	Mrs Esme Russell-Mitra
Mrs Barbara Charlick	Mrs Megan Roberts
Mrs Marion Thompson	Ms Brenda Onatade
Mrs Brenda Renshaw	Ms. Janet Bartley
Mrs Saira Bonhan-Croft	Mrs Jessica Matumika Limba
Mr Peter Hewitt	Mr. Winston Fraser
Mrs Alecia Austin	Mr Graham Green

Ms Cynthia Davis
Mrs Gloria Morrison
Mrs. Marjorie Boothe
Miss Maxine Yawson
Mrs Margaret Price
Mrs Rosie Dada
Miss Sandra Clifton
Mrs Judith Ward
Miss Marcia Moncrieffe
Mrs Hilary Waterhouse
Mrs Comfort Oppong

Mr Andrew Gibbs
Mrs Juliet Gibbs
Mr. Milton Boothe
Mr. Gerald Hardy
Mrs Sibongile Mnguni
Mrs Jean Taylor
Ms Sandra Floy
Mrs Valerie Tredinnick
Ms Taiwo Dayo-Payne
Mrs Mary Sparkes

BLACKHEATH & CRYSTAL PALACE CIRCUIT

Reserves Policy

General Fund & Circuit Model Trust Fund

At 31 August 2021, deposits and cash totalled £236,097, as shown in the Receipts and Payments Account for the year. There was also a CFB investment held by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes valued at £26,071, which was unrestricted. The Total Funds available to the Church were therefore £236,097 + £26,071 = £262,168.

Total Funds fell over the year from £272,367 at 31 August 2020, a drop of £10,199. The fall was made up of payments exceeding receipts over the year by £14,243 less capital appreciation of £4,048 on the unrestricted CFB investments.

At the year end, the unrestricted General Fund, including the CFB investment stood at £208,643 and the Circuit Model Trust Fund stood at £53,525.

Appropriate level of reserves

General Fund reserve levels are listed below. They amount to £200,000.

Identified Reserves

District Assessment Reserve (£50,000)

The Circuit has an obligation to meet the annual District assessment, not only for the current year (to 31 August 2022) but also by forward agreement for the year to 31 August 2023. This commitment helps to ensure the orderly operation of the whole Methodist District. The assessment for the year 2021/22 is £47,024. The assessment for 2022/23 is expected to be the same. A reserve of £50,000 is set to cover the equivalent of one year's assessment.

Cash Flow Reserve (£100,000)

An operational reserve, of approximately 50% of annual cash flow, is required to ensure smooth and crisis free operation of the Circuit's finances and guarantee the payment of ministerial stipends as they fall due. Annual expenditure is c.£200,000, excluding the District assessment which is covered by the reserve in the paragraph above. Accordingly at 50% of £200,000, the cash flow reserve is set at £100,000.

Manse Repair Reserve (£40,000)

There is a regular programme of work to maintain the Circuit's four manses within the framework of quinquennial inspections. This is recovered chiefly within the annual Circuit budget. It is recognised, as a precaution against unforeseen eventualities, that a reserve of, say, £40,000 is also needed to ensure that proper and adequate provision of ministerial housing.

Pandemic Contingency Reserve (£10,000)

The Circuit has initiated a contingency fund composed of sums promised by the circuit Churches. A reserve of £10,000 is proposed as a contribution from Circuit funds, should it be required.

Circuit Model Trust Fund

There are limited purposes for which, under standing orders, the Circuit Model Trust Fund may be used. For a number of years it has been, and up until 31 August 2022 it will be, used to cover the Circuit Administration. It is now timely to consider alternative ways in which the Fund may be deployed after 1 September 2022.

Outcome of the review

The outcome of the review is that, after designating £200,000 in identified reserves, as above, the Church currently has a General Fund surplus of £8,643, which is budgeted to be used up in the current year.

Periodic Review of the Policy

This policy is to be reviewed periodically.



Andrew G Gibbs, Treasurer

21 January 2022



17.3.2022