

**CHRISTCHURCH CLARENDON PARK (BAPTIST/METHODIST)****ANNUAL REPORT, YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023****Administrative information**

Christchurch Clarendon Park is a Baptist/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), formed in 1992 by the former Clarendon Park Baptist and Clarendon Park Methodist Churches. The church meets in the premises of the former Methodist Church, which were extensively remodelled and refurbished in 1996/7.

We are members of the Leicester Trinity Methodist Circuit (23/7), the East Midland Baptist Association and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

The address is Christchurch Clarendon Park

105a Clarendon Park Road

LEICESTER LE2 3AH

Tel. (0116) 270 5369

Website: [www.christchurchcp.org.uk](http://www.christchurchcp.org.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/christchurchcp](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchcp)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/christchurch\\_cp](https://www.twitter.com/christchurch_cp)

Email: [enquiries@christchurchcp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@christchurchcp.org.uk)

General correspondence should be addressed to the Church Secretary:

Mr Chris Whitford, 23 Brinsmead Road, Leicester LE2 3WD

Correspondence concerning the accounts should be addressed to the Church Treasurer:

Miss Jennifer Whillis, 90 St Leonard's Road, Leicester LE2 1WR

Christchurch is **Registered Charity No.1148934**.

Risk Assessment and review is carried out by the Resources Team (in respect of buildings and health and safety) and by the Executive concerning the future viability of the Church.

The number of church members at the beginning and end of this period was

	31 August 2022	31 August 2023
Baptist	15	13
Methodist	34	29
Joint	<u>37</u>	<u>37</u>
	86	79

In addition, there are approximately a further 50 people on the community roll and a considerable number of contacts through groups which use the church premises on a regular basis.

The Managing Trustees are the members of the Executive. Ordained ministers in pastoral charge are *ex officio* members of the Executive. The other members are elected by the Annual Church Meeting. The Trustees have the power to co-opt up to a further four Trustees.

The current Trustees and those who served during the year ended 31 August 2023 are

Mr Mark Asher	Mr Alan Stead
Miss Alison Charlesworth	Mr Chris Whitford (Secretary)
Rev Kate Cook	Miss Jennifer Whillis (Treasurer)
Mr David Eyre	Dr Lawrence Whittaker

### **Independent Examiner**

Alison Murray, 184 Howard Road, Leicester LE2 1XL

### **Bankers**

Barclays Bank, 1–3 Haymarket Towers, Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WA

National Westminster Bank, 1 Granby Street, Leicester LE1 6EJ

### **Aims and organisation**

The purpose of Christchurch is to advance the Christian faith primarily in Clarendon Park, Knighton, Knighton Fields and Stoneygate, in the city of Leicester. In achieving its purpose, the Church engages in a range of activities both on its own and with others, as described later in this document. The agreed aims and objectives are the responsibilities of a number of Teams and Committees, especially the Executive, the Mission & Ministry Team and the Resources Team.

During the year, pastoral oversight was provided by Rev Kate Cook, a Methodist supernumerary Presbyterian. Rev Kate has also made herself available for a further year. A Baptist input was maintained by our Associate Baptist Minister Rev John Rackley, who conducted services and gave other input when requested.

### **Public benefit**

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and have regard to it in their administration of the Church. The Trustees believe that, by fulfilling their responsibility to work together with the ministers and co-operate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, they provide benefit to the public by:

- Providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for the Church members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- Promoting Christian values and service by members of the Church to the community, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole;
- Providing attractive meeting facilities to a wide range of community groups.

### **Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults**

There were no *serious incidents* or other matters relating to Christchurch during the year ended 31 August 2023 which the Trustees should have brought to the attention of the Charity Commission.

**Review of significant events, progress and achievements**

The Covid pandemic now seems a distant memory but it has had a lasting impact on the church. In the four years since 2019 membership is down by 30% and attendance at Sunday services has dropped by 35%. We remain positive about the future however.

In 2022 when the Methodist Circuit went through its annual stationing process no minister was appointed to take charge of Christchurch in 2023, and Revd Kate Cook agreed to continue for another year. The church is very grateful to her and appreciates her ministry with us. We have been assured that a new minister will be appointed in this year's round, to start in September 2024. Meanwhile the call for a part-time Baptist minister has moved forward with the Church's profile entered on to the Pastoral Vacancy List. Revd John Rackley continues to provide valuable service.

The pattern of Sunday services is unchanged, with two services a month in the hall and the remainder in the Worship Centre, while a new mid-week service has begun fortnightly on Wednesday mornings. Services in the Worship Centre continue to be streamed on Zoom but this hasn't really developed and is mainly used by regular congregation members if they can't get to a service.

A series of Sunday evening discussion gatherings was held after Easter, which will be repeated in the autumn. Meanwhile the Bible study group and the contemporary theology group continue and a new study group is to begin in the autumn. Monthly 'Prayer Breakfasts' are being held on Saturdays. A series of interfaith dialogues, "A Taste of Faith" is also planned for the winter months.

In common with many other churches and organisations, the church operated a 'Warm Space' one afternoon a week throughout the winter. This was well supported by volunteers from the church but only a small number of visitors came in.

An exciting new initiative led by a former art teacher in the church is to investigate hosting an art exhibition from the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC) in 2024. Discussions have been held with the MMAC management committee and a site visit made. We are now waiting to hear if the church is considered a suitable venue and if so, a formal request for the loan of the works will be made.

**Financial review**

Aided especially by a more equitable Assessment from the Methodist Circuit (taking better account of our Baptist responsibilities) and increased lettings income, we recorded an annual surplus for the first time for six years. The increased lettings were thanks largely to the energy and friendly approach of our Lettings Officer, Jean Baxter.

We benefited too from personal giving being mostly maintained, even by those not attending worship, and by our fixed-price fuel contracts continuing throughout the year.

More expensive fuel contracts have been agreed from autumn 2023 and the new year will also see increased expenditure on maintaining the property.

*Reserves Policy*

Christchurch seeks to expand its membership amongst all age groups and makes provision for the expected expenditure in maintaining its witness. In common with most UK churches, however, its membership has declined in recent decades.

The income of the church depends critically on some two dozen key supporters, any of whom could move away or otherwise cease to be with us. As the membership falls, there are fewer volunteers for the tasks of maintenance, necessitating increased expenditure on professional services. With buildings valued at £6.2m, some of which are more than 120 years old, there is also the risk of exceptional property expenditure, for example for a new roof or the remedy of an infestation of dry rot.

The church therefore considers it appropriate to maintain financial reserves in the range £50,000 – £100,000, for uninsurable risks, such as loss of income and exceptional property expenditure. At 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 the reserves (General Fund and Legacy Fund) amounted to some £55,100. There was one Designated Fund, a Renovation Fund (£19,900) for major maintenance of the fabric.

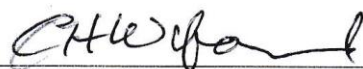
The Reserves Policy is reviewed each spring by the Resources Team, whose recommendations are brought before the Trustees.

**This Annual Report was approved by the Trustees**

on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

and signed on their behalf by

(signature)



full name

Christopher Henry Whitford

office

Church Secretary

(signature)



full name

Jennifer Whillis

office

Church Treasurer

## CHRISTCHURCH, CLARENDON PARK

## RECEIPTS &amp; PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31 August 2023

	<i>Notes</i>	Unrestricted Funds, £	Restricted Funds, £	Total Funds, £	Last Year, £
		£			£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Planned Giving		39,268		39,268	39,830
Loose Cash		2,956		2,956	4,195
Donations		3,821	910	4,731	4,540
Legacies		-		-	-
Interest		2,214		2,214	381
Tax recovered		11,844	360	12,204	12,798
Sundry		471	3,756	4,227	2,375
Lettings		21,832		21,832	15,584
Benevolence				-	-
Collections, etc, for external orgs	3		1,889	1,889	670
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>82,406</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>89,322</b>	<b>80,373</b>
Asset & Investment sales, etc		-	-	-	-
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>82,406</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>89,322</b>	<b>80,373</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Methodist Circuit		41,214		41,214	50,346
Baptist Ministry, etc	4	2,232		2,232	5,084
Charities		4,070		4,070	3,870
Benevolence			58	58	-
Communication		2,067	5	2,072	1,843
Utilities	5	10,578		10,578	9,844
Repairs & Maintenance		8,396	1,200	9,596	9,853
Sundry		3,821	3,682	7,503	4,061
Passed to external organisations	3		1,889	1,889	670
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>72,377</b>	<b>6,834</b>	<b>79,211</b>	<b>85,570</b>
Asset & Investment purchases		-	-	-	-
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>72,377</b>	<b>6,834</b>	<b>79,211</b>	<b>85,570</b>
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>		10,029	81	10,111	(5,197)
Transfers between funds		(58)	58	-	-
Cash funds last year end		75,100	475	75,575	80,772
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>		<b>85,072</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>85,686</b>	<b>75,575</b>

**ASSETS and LIABILITIES as at 31 August 2023**

		<b>£</b>	<b>Last Year, £</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Cash Funds</b>			
Barclays Bank		11,115	5,918
National Westminster Bank		1,081	6,047
CFB Deposit Account		36,928	28,161
Deposits with Baptist Union Corporation		36,447	35,304
Cash in Hand		115	144
		<b>85,686</b>	<b>75,575</b>
<b>Investment Assets</b>			
		None	None
<b>Land and Church Buildings</b>	<i>Note 1.2</i>	606,381	606,381
<b>Tangible Fixed Assets</b>			
Church contents, including furniture, fixtures, fittings, computers and other equipment	<i>Note 1.3</i>	218,428	217,341
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
		None	None
<b>Pension Scheme Liability</b>	<i>Note 7</i>	42,800	42,800

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - 31 August 2023****1 GENERAL**

- 1.1 The basis of preparation is in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, on a Receipts and Payments basis.
- 1.2 The Church Land and Buildings are valued at cost, as follows:
- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| Land and original buildings (1900)        | 9,822   |
| Refurbishment and new buildings (1996/97) | 596,559 |
- 1.3 The Church Contents are valued as for insurance.
- 1.4 The current Restricted Funds which had a balance at 31st August 2023 are the *Key Deposits Fund* (£325), the *Event Deposits Fund* (£242) and the *WarmSpace Fund* (£47.02). There is one Designated Fund, a *Renovation Fund* (£19,954) for major maintenance of the fabric. The former unrestricted *Legacy Fund* was merged into the *General Fund* during the year.

**2 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The following organisations come within the control of the Church Meeting and operate their own independent accounts. Their transactions for the year, which have been independently examined, are summarised below:

	Balance 31.8.2022	Receipts	Payments	Balance 31.8.2023
Art Group	97	134	231	-
Junior Church	830	-	-	830
Luncheon Club	1,505	2,149	2,229	1,425
Parent & Toddler Group	1,440	523	463	1,500
Wesley Guild	203	-	203	-
Wild Honey Project	788	525	1,313	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,863</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>4,439</b>	<b>3,755</b>

**3 COLLECTIONS, ETC,  
FOR EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

Christian Aid	735
MHA Aigburth Amenity Fund	444
Crohn's and Colitis UK	345
Action for Children	117
Spurgeon's Children's Charity	117
ShelterBox Trust	78
Methodist World Mission	54
	<b>1,889</b>

**4 BAPTIST MINISTRY, etc**

Baptist Pension Scheme	132
Rev John Rackley	2,100
	<b>2,232</b>

**5 UTILITIES**

Gas	4,683
Electricity	2,078
Water	213
Insurance	3,604
	<b>10,578</b>

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31 August 2023****6 BAPTIST FUNDS**

Various Baptist monies are held for the benefit of the church by the East Midland Baptist Trust Company (EMBTC) as Custodian Trustee, and these are set out below:-

	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Total</b>
Balances as at 1 September 2022	103,789	54,845	158,634
Capital appreciation		14,234	14,234
Dividend		821	821
Interest received		5,747	5,747
Balances as at 31 August 2023	103,789	75,648	179,437

The figures exclude accrued interest.

In early 2023, the EMBTC decided to sell their equity account holdings to reduce risk and simplify administration and to place our funds on deposit with the Baptist Union Corporation. As a result, we received a capital appreciation, as shown.

The amount held on Income Account can be used for any purpose agreed by the Church Meeting. Capital Account represents the proceeds of sale of the Baptist manse in 1999 for £99,620 plus surplus on disposal of investments in which the proceeds were originally held. Income Account represents the accumulated interest, etc, since received on the Capital Account.

**7 BAPTIST PENSION SCHEME LIABILITY**

The Church is an employer participating in the Baptist Pension Scheme ("the Scheme"), which is a separate legal entity administered by the Pension Trustee (Baptist Pension Trust Limited). The assets of the Scheme are held separately from those of the employer and other participating employers. Baptist Ministers of Christchurch are eligible to join the Scheme.

The Scheme, previously known as the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund, provided a Defined Benefit (DB) on contributions made until 31 December 2011. Since 1 January 2012, benefits have been provided through a Defined Contribution (DC) Plan.

For many years the DB Plan had a significant deficit and member churches contributed monthly to reduce this. Recently the funding position has greatly improved, the Trustees of the Pension Scheme have signed an agreement with an insurance company to secure the DB Plan members' pension benefits and DB contributions have been reduced to a nominal £1 per month for each participating church.

Consequent upon the departure of the Baptist Minister from the Church in 2016, the Church could have had a **cessation event** under Section 75 of the Pensions Act 1995. This would make the Church liable for the proportion of the overall deficit (assessed by reference to the cost of securing benefits by the purchase of annuities) applicable to its previous Ministers who were members of the Scheme, calculated as at 31 October 2016. An estimate of this debt was £62,000.

In order to prevent such a cessation event, the Church applied for a 'period of grace' before employing another member of the Scheme. The period of grace lasted three years, following which Rev John Rackley, a retired Baptist Minister, was appointed as Associate Minister. John is a interim member of the Scheme. The Church makes a nominal contribution on behalf of John to the DC Plan, and this prevents a cessation event from occurring.

Should Christchurch fail to appoint a full member of the Scheme during the period for which the interim membership arrangement is allowed, this would trigger a cessation event for which the liability would be as at October 2016 less the contributions already paid. The liability is estimated as £42,800.



**Statement by Independent Examiner:**

I am pleased to confirm that no matter has come to my attention during my examination of the accounts of Christchurch 2022/23, which gives me cause for concern.

The accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act and the subsequent accounts as produced comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act.

I also confirm that there is nothing in my opinion which needs attention in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts. I have examined the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act and have followed the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commission (under the said section 145(b) of the Charities Act. 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 given.



Alison Murray Independent Examiner

10/10/2023

Dated