



STRATFORD ON AVON METHODIST CHURCH

incorporating Henley in Arden Methodist Church

ANNUAL REPORT

and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Receipts & Payments)

Year ending 31 AUGUST 2024

South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit 12/5

CHARITY REGISTRATION Number 1152323

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT for year ended 31 August 2024

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2024.

Mission Statement

Our vision is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those around us and to provide a place of witness and worship for all people. Our aim is to have a dynamic, growing Church with warm fellowship and outreach where people of all ages and backgrounds can meet the Lord Jesus Christ and feel part of a caring Church family.

Full Name of Charity: **Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church**

Registration Charity Number: **1152323**

Date of Charity registration: **8 June 2013**

Main communication address: c/o Treasurer, Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church Centre, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BG

Minister: Deacon Jane Mills
Presbyter: Rev Sally Jones
Church Stewards: Steve Peacop (appointed 1 May 2024)
 Jan Grant (appointed 16 February 2021)
Treasurer: Phillip Ledgard (appointed 19 July 2023)
Secretary: David Dumper (appointed 5 June 2013)
Property Steward: Vacant
Resources Secretary: Graham Collins (appointed 1 April 2019)

The members of the Church Council of Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church are the Charity Trustees*, membership being made up of church office holders, Minister, Presbyter and representatives appointed by the church at the Annual General Meeting.

Representatives as at 1 September 2024:

Chris Benson*	Circuit Representative	Lim Ho	Church Representative
Brenda Birnie	Church Representative	Michael Ledgard	Church Representative
Margaret Blakemore	Henley Representative	David Loader	Church Representative
Sheila Brown	Church Representative	Janet Mee	Church Representative
Alan Cumming	Church Representative	Malcolm Smith	Church Representative
Gillian Edwards	Church Representative	Andrew Steele	Henley Representative
Evelyn Ho	Church Representative	Susan Rimmer	Church Representative

*Chris Benson is not a Charity Trustee for the Church.

Independent examiner: Mark Whitehouse, 42 Lillington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 5YZ

Bankers

- HSBC, 13 Chapel Street, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6ET

Investment Bankers

- Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, 9 Bonhill Street, London, EC2A 4PE
- Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ

Aims and Organisation

The Charity provides services and events resulting in the provision of public Christian worship for all and provides a facility for local groups and organisations to use our premises for the purposes of a wider witness within Stratford-upon-Avon and Henley in Arden and surrounding area.

The objectives of the Charity are set out in The Methodist Church Act 1976 and include the following:

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.

Activities of the Charity

- a) Worshipping God through prayer, song and other acts of worship including the organisation and resourcing of regular public acts of worship open to members of the church and non-members alike.
- b) The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups.
- c) The resourcing of pastoral work including visiting the sick and bereaved.
- d) Taking religious assemblies in local schools.
- e) Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and services.
- f) The charity supports Connexional & Mission work in the UK and Overseas including an active Overseas Sponsorship scheme, All We Can, Christian Aid, Action for Children, Methodist Homes for the Aged, and South Warwickshire Methodist circuit projects
- g) Additional support is given to Stratford Churches Together, Stratford upon Avon Foodbank and Talking Newspapers for the Blind (Stratford)

Public Benefit

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

ECO Church

In 2003 this church began its Eco-Congregation programme and was given 3 awards over the next 15 years. In 2014 the premises were redeveloped with the aim of becoming more energy efficient and successfully reducing our carbon footprint. In summer 2019 we received the Gold Eco-Church award from A Rocha the first Methodist church in the UK to do so, and only the sixth church in the country of any denomination at that time. An active ECO group continues to meet monthly.

Structure, Governance and Management

The governing document for the church 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).

Day to day management of the church is undertaken by the Church trustees along with the Minister.

The Trustees are appointed at the AGM of the church.

Trustee Training

A range of guidance produced by Methodist Connexion to support the effective running of the church and the role of Trustees is given to the Church Trustees at various meetings.

Related Parties

The Church regarding its financial year ending 31 Aug 2024 was part of the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit itself a part of the Birmingham District, also accountable to the Methodist Conference.

The internal organisation linked to this church during this past year is Wesleys (family club).

Risk Management

The major risks have been identified and recorded by the trustees with professional advice taken as required. A regular review process is undertaken and recorded.

Income and Expenditure is monitored and compared with the approved annual budget by a Finance committee which meets quarterly as part of the risk management process to avoid unforeseen calls on reserves and identify opportunities to increase our 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

Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church 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.

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy for the Church is set such that reserves should be sufficient to meet any unforeseen item of major expenditure on the church building and / or to be able to continue, in the short term, funding planned activities in the event of any inability to raise the full expenses including the assessment payable to the Circuit. As Trustees our reserves policy is based on a realistic assessment of our needs present and future. The following formula was adopted by Church Council in October 2005:

- Reserves are deemed to be those moneys, which are held in trust by the Church Council, but excluding Endowment Funds. This includes our Bank & CFB accounts plus all Model Trust Bequests, which are not restricted.
- Minimum Reserves should not fall below the equivalent of six months routine expenditure (for August 2024 this calculates as £55,000); and
- Maximum Reserves should not exceed the equivalent of six months routine expenditure plus the estimated shortfall between income and expenditure budgeted for the next three financial years plus amounts set aside to be spent in respect of building and development projects as declared under that section of the current schedule A.

The Reserves of Stratford on Avon Methodist Church on 31 August 2024 amounted to £42,821 (2023: £39,166). No endowment or restricted funds are held. This figure includes £2,965 belonging to Internal Organisations (2023: £2,080). Whilst we still have a shortfall versus the minimum reserves policy, caused by the erosion during the Covid restrictions, the shortfall has reduced during the year.

Basis of preparation and legal framework

The Charity's annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 has been prepared on a receipts and payments basis and in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Review of the year (incorporating financial review)

Throughout the year Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church has been a church worshipping on two sites at Stratford upon Avon and at Henley in Arden. During the past twelve months worship has continued at both churches with administration and finance now under the control of Stratford upon Avon with Henley in Arden representation on all committees. Throughout the year to August 2024 the financial transactions for both sites have been recorded as one church.

Income Trends

In the year to 31 August 2024, total income of £135,054 is £33,413 higher than in 2023. Of this, £21,947 represents restricted funds raised for green investment. The immediate target was to purchase and install two energy storage batteries. Unrestricted income was also increased year on year by £11,466, led by lettings income increasing strongly to over £51,512 (2023: £42,453).

Church income is primarily drawn from standing orders, Sunday cash collections, Gift aid tax credit, donations, legacies, gifts, and fundraising from church groups and members, being 59% of total income (2023: 55%); and letting income paid by external users of the building 38% (2023: 42%).

Following redevelopment of church in 2014 our green features continue to export energy to the National Grid yielding over 2% of annual income (2023: 2%).

COVID 19 had a severe impact on both the finances and outreach of the Charity but by the end of the financial year we had broadly returned to pre-COVID levels of lettings income.

Expenditure Trends

The major cost has been in relation to the annual assessment paid to the South Warwickshire Circuit. Our contribution this financial year of £51,148 represents 38% of annual income (2023: £48,666, being 48% of income).

Other significant expenditures include staff & administration costs of 8% (2023: 9%), maintenance and cleaning of Church premises 20% (2023: 21%), and utilities & insurance 14% (2023: 19%) of annual income. Ongoing repairs and maintenance costs of keeping our two churches capable of running as the Community Centres that they are increased by £1,300 this past year.

Expenditure on the two energy storage batteries totalled £17,283 giving rise to restricted reserves carried forward into the following financial year.

Fund balances

The charity had a surplus of receipts over payments of £7,434 in the year, of which £2,770 represents unrestricted funds, and £4,664 being restricted.

We are holding funds of £2,965 (2023: £2,080) for Wesleys Family Club as an Internal Organisation. An Internal Organisation is defined by Connexion as being a group or organisation formed or set up by the Church Council. This money comes under the control of the Church Council, though it will sometimes be held in a separate bank account and be the responsibility of a different treasurer. These groups have their own officers appointed by the Church Council. Stratford Methodist Church acts as banker for Wesleys for this fund. These monies are included in our reserves, and they belong to the Church not the internal organisation.

The total liquid assets of the charity amounted to £47,485 as at 31 Aug 2024 (2023: £39,166) of which £4,664 is reserved for restricted green investments initiatives (2023: £nil).

Other Assets and Liabilities

Aside from the liquid assets held by the charity, are Land and Buildings assets valued at £4,348,885 (2023: £4,270,158) and other assets of £189,558 (2023: £185,713). The land and building asset value of our two churches is calculated from the insurance reinstatement cost (inclusive of organ) less 15% architects fees and removal of debris costs plus Contents. In addition, there is a £400,000 land value attributed to our Stratford side. Other assets reflect an insurance valuation of the contents across both sites. The Methodist Connexion is the ultimate owner of all church buildings and land but the trustees are deemed responsible for the upkeep of said premises whilst in their custody.

Not recorded in the receipts and payments accounts as presented, are certain other assets and liabilities. The charity has the following other assets and liabilities excluded from reporting requirements:

- Invoices raised but cash not received for lettings before 31 August 2024: £1,821.
- Costs prepaid in the year, relating to periods post 31 August 2024: £235

- Cost invoices received but not yet paid from suppliers relating to activity before 31 August 2024: £939
- Cost accruals for services received but where no invoice has been received, relating to activity before 31 August 2024: £277.

Plans for 2024/25

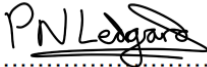
Deacon Jane Mills continues as minister at Stratford upon Avon and Henley in Arden and Rev. Sally Jones continues as our presbyter. Our minister Jane continues outreach initiatives utilising our premises at both sites.

Following the successful fund-raising activities during the year, the solar batteries will be connected and put into full use. Opportunities to further enhance our energy saving initiatives across both sites will be explored.

We hope that income from giving and letting will continue to replenish our reserves depleted during the Covid restrictions.


Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2024 have been prepared from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of treasurer  Date 11 February 2025

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 were/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on 11 February 2025

Signature of the Chair of the meeting 

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Sally Jones Date 14 February 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church

Charity Number 1152323

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Stratford upon Avon Church for the year ended 31 August 2024 set out on pages 10 to 11. As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Church's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

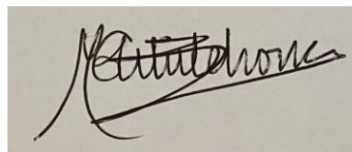
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below*) which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signature of independent examiner



Name of independent examiner Mark Whitehouse

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner FCA (ICAEW)

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024				Stratford upon Avon Methodist		Church	
	SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year		Totals last year
			£	£	£		£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note					
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered		44,649		44,649		43,513
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income		877		877		523
a4	Lettings		51,512		51,512		42,453
a5	Other receipts		16,069	21,947	38,016		15,152
a6	TOTAL RECEIPTS		113,107	21,947	135,054 (a7)		101,641
	SECTION B						
b1	PAYMENTS						
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share		51,148		51,148		48,666
b3	Donations		200		200		
b4	Repairs and Maintenance		13,633		13,633		12,052
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)		14,828		14,828		18,947
b6	Eco/Green initiative Projects			17,283	17,283		
b7	Other payments		30,528		30,528		20,229
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS		110,337	17,283	127,620 (b9)		99,894
	SECTION C						
c1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	2,770	4,664	7,434		1,747
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		37,086		37,086 (c6)		35,339
c3	Sub total	(c1+c2)	39,856	4,664	44,520		37,086
c4	Transfers and adjustments					(c7)	
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	39,856	4,664	44,520 (c8)		37,086 (c6)
	SECTION D						
	FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS						
d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures				£		£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year						
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations				1,478		2,669
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations				797		2,669
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	(d1+d2-d3)			681		

Stratford upon Avon Methodist Church

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL**SECTION E** Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS		Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1	Wesleys	1,985	1,100	885		2,080	2,965
e2							
e3							
e4							
e5							
e6							
e7							
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds	1,985	1,100	885		2,080 (e11)	2,965 (e1)
e9	Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	135,054 (a7)	127,620 (b9)	7,434	(c7)	37,086 (c6)	44,520 (c)
e10	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	137,039	128,720	8,319		39,166 (x)	47,485.000 (y)
Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward		TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS				

SECTION F**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES****CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2024**

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1 Cash in hand	5	1,042
f2 Bank Current Account	3,124	31,494
f3 Bank Deposit Account	147	148
f4 Central Finance Board	32,413	10,439
f5 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	1,397	1,397
f6 Other funds		
f7 SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	37,086 (c6)	44,520.00 (c)
f8 Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	2,080 (e11)	2,965 (e1)
f9 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	39,166 (x)	47,485 (y)

SECTION G**OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES**

	At 1 September 2023	At 31 August 2024
g1 Investments (include Endowments)		
g2 Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	4,270,158	4,348,885
g3 Other Assets	185,713	189,558
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 Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line f5)