

DORSET GARDENS METHODIST CHURCH
Registered Charity 1160211

www.dgmc.org.uk

Annual Report of the Trustees for Year ending 31st August 2025

The Trustees of Dorset Gardens Methodist Church welcome you to our Annual Report covering the Financial Year ended 31 August 2025.

1. Mission statement and Aims

Mission Statement : "We will share God's love with those around us"

Worship

Our worship is open and inclusive of all, celebrating God's saving love expressed through Jesus in ways that are relevant, collaborative and inspirational.

We do this by:-

- Providing a rich blend of words and music that embraces and reflects our diverse community.
- Offering worship that is relevant, encouraging and challenging.
- Creating an atmosphere which enables everyone to express worship in ways which are meaningful to them.
- Helping everyone to discern and develop their own gifts and talents within worship and the community.
- Offering wholeness through worship, prayer and a healing ministry.

Nurture

We offer opportunities for everyone to grow and learn as Christians within a supportive and accepting environment.

We do this by:

- Creating opportunities for everyone to study, e.g. House Groups, and pray together.
- Using arts and crafts, music, and literature in ways which nurtures spiritual growth.
- Creating opportunities for young people and children to deepen their faith and feel valued as active members of our community.

Pastoral Care

We are a loving church family where everyone is welcomed, loved, cared for, and supported by each other.

We do this by:

- Looking after our church family through hospitality, fellowship and caring for each other e.g. through our group of pastoral visitors..
- Extending that care into the community.
- Being a praying people who also embrace the needs of our community and the world.

Service

We express God's love by serving the community and the world, challenging injustice, and being responsible stewards of God's creation.

We do this by:

- Providing an environment where everyone finds a loving welcome, a sense of worth, and a listening ear.
- Offering our love, our energy, and our prayers wherever they are needed
- Enabling and working in partnership with community groups
- Actively promoting awareness of injustice and helping everyone to respond appropriately.
- Being an eco-friendly church as far as possible.
- Being a place of welcome and support to students and meeting them where they are.

Equal Opportunities Statement

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church is an inclusive church.

All are welcomed regardless of age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

We are registered as a church to conduct marriages of both same sex and opposite couples.

2. Objectives and Activities

In planning its activities, Dorset Gardens has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion together with the 'Our Calling' framework as defined by the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament as we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of the wider community.

3. Achievements and Performance

a) Worship

- A Sunday morning service is held in our sanctuary every week at 10.30am and a service of prayer and praise is held at 1pm every Thursday in our Prayer Chapel.
- Evening healing services continue to be offered on the fourth Sunday of the month, led by the Revd Cynthia Park, the Revd Andy Lowe and Shirley Veater. This quiet, meditative service includes communion and the opportunity for the laying on of hands.
- Food and fellowship, an enhanced offering of food runs at least monthly after a Sunday morning service and is popular & much appreciated.
- The annual World Aids Day was on Sunday 1st December in 2024 and was marked with a morning service led by the Revd Heather Leake Date, our HIV Chaplain. There was also a Community Lunch by Lunch Positive, an act of remembrance in the small chapel, showing the film *How to survive a Plague* and the provision of a chilled out space.
- The tradition of a Community Carol Service was once again held on the afternoon of Christmas Eve and included readers representing a few of our user groups. Also the Sunday Club making the Chrismon symbols creating a simple but effectively decorated tree.
- The Revd Will Fletcher, Minister of Haywards Heath Methodist Church (and member of the Patcham Silver Brass Band) preached at the Church Anniversary in May 2025.
- Dorset Gardens hosted the Circuit Together Service on the afternoon of 18th May as café style and included the blessing of the Easter Offering and followed the theme of 'Education for All, Hope for All' which considers how education transforms lives and communities and opens God's promise of hope and fullness of life for all people.

b) Pastoral

- In the Autumn of 2024 we distributed 36 harvest gifts particularly to those who are housebound, widowed, in care/nursing homes and those living rough and attend Open House regularly. The main purpose of sharing these gifts is to live out God's love and demonstrate our faith, compassion and support to all without any prejudice.
- On Sunday 5th January 2025, as part of the Covenant Service, Revd Andy Lowe recommissioned the Pastoral Visitors by saying a profound prayer and words of gratitude.
- Our Pastoral Visitors are continuing to reach out to those who they are "in charge" of but also beyond. Through their visits, phone calls, letters they ensure everyone feels loved, welcomed, valued and safe. We are grateful for the love and care they offer to support the church and wider community.
- The Methodist Church published a helpful resource in August 2024 entitled 'Pastoral Care Guidance', developed with input from District Safeguarding Officers in Lincolnshire, Manchester, and Sheffield, and in consultation with pastoral visitors and secretaries. These provide useful resources and training material for our own team.

c) Young People

- We have been strategically exploring youth work as a circuit with a view to taking a small group to the Methodist Youth gathering *3Generate* in Birmingham in October 2025.

- So far some of our youngsters from DG have shared in All Age Worship and some monthly family fun afternoons.
- Our Young Church '**Sunday Club**' meets weekly, attracting a small but enthusiastic group who take part in a variety of activities and occasionally contribute to worship. During the year, two young members were baptised, each celebration supported by family and friends and accompanied by themed activities.
- Seasonal events were marked creatively. Harvest included decorative displays, while Advent focused on making and displaying Chrismons to explore Christian symbols. At Christmas, the group also contributed to nativity-themed decorations. During Lent and Easter, activities included creating an Easter Garden, decorating a cross, and sharing refreshments with the congregation.
- The group also engaged in wider church life, contributing to the church anniversary celebrations and exploring themes such as prayer, including an outdoor activity on Ascension Sunday. Pentecost was marked with themed decorations.
- Over the summer, sessions focused on the stories of David, with a range of interactive and creative activities to support learning and engagement.
- **Tearaway Tots:** Thursday sessions continue to grow in strength, offering free fruit through support from Morrisons, who also donated new wooden toys. Monday sessions are now well established, regularly welcoming over 20 children, with a steady stream of new families attending across both days. Feedback remains consistently positive, with families valuing the welcoming atmosphere and popular snacks.
- In March, we secured HSF (Housing Support Fund) funding via Brighton & Hove City Council to support families experiencing financial hardship, distributing 60 kitchen appliances (air fryers, slow cookers, and sandwich toasters) and £1,490 in Morrisons vouchers to help with the cost of living.
- A bank holiday drop-in café for toddlers and primary-aged children attracted 28 children and has led to plans for four similar summer holiday sessions.
- **Fun Clubs:** holiday fun days for primary-aged children continue to be well attended. The February half-term event, themed "Sowing the Seeds," included a wide range of creative and practical activities such as herb planting, crafts, and baking. These sessions now run regularly on Thursdays during school holidays.
- We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers for their hard work in delivering these activities, with particular thanks to Rosemary Cuthbert for leading Sunday Club and Samantha Dyke, our Children & Families Worker, for her energy and creativity.

d) **Service & Community**

- We continue to support the Circuit Project Supporting Refugees through fundraising, donations, and educational and social events, benefiting six local refugee charities and helping to promote informed and compassionate dialogue around migration.
- Our Harvest service in October generated substantial donations of food and toiletries for the Voices in Exile Foodbank, supplemented by ongoing contributions throughout the year. We make approximately monthly deliveries, primarily to Voices in Exile and occasionally to the University of Sussex (University of Sanctuary). We also donated £110 in cash to Care4Calais and provided winter clothing and toiletries in response to an appeal.
- The Jollof Café Night in December, focusing on "The Freedom to Move & Freedom to Stay," was fully attended and contributed to community engagement and discussion on migration issues.
- We have joined the Methodist Church's Joint Public Issues Team's Constituency Action Network to strengthen engagement with our local MP and ensure the church's voice is represented in public life.
- Regular activities supporting fellowship and outreach continue to flourish, such as Open House (weekly) and Knit 'n' Natter (monthly).
- Community Lunches (held on the fifth Sunday of every month) are for those who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

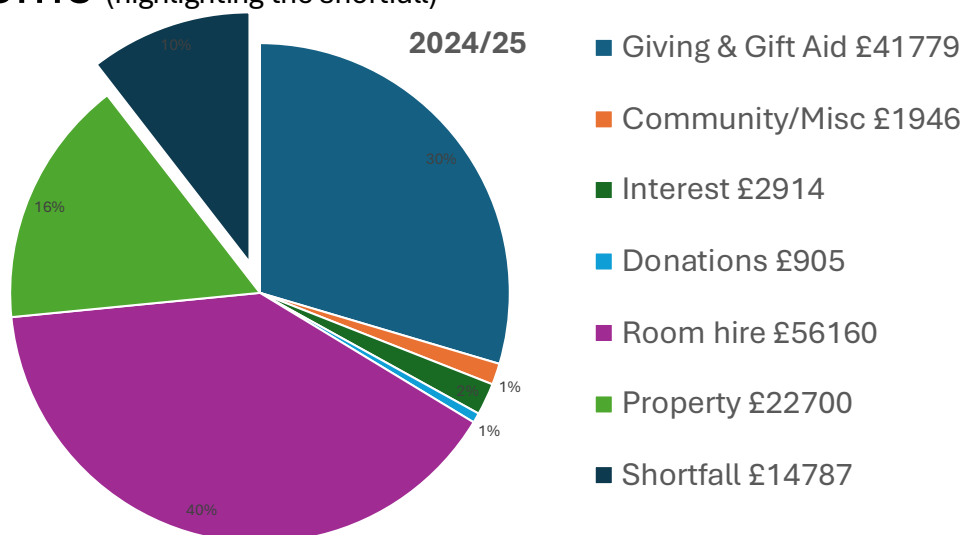
- We host and support a wide range of groups, including the 14th Brighton Scout Group and 3rd Brighton Rainbows & Brownies, as well as organisations serving people living with HIV, trans and non-binary communities, parents and carers in need of counselling support, those living with Parkinson's, NHS campaigners, and 12-step recovery groups.

4. Financial Review

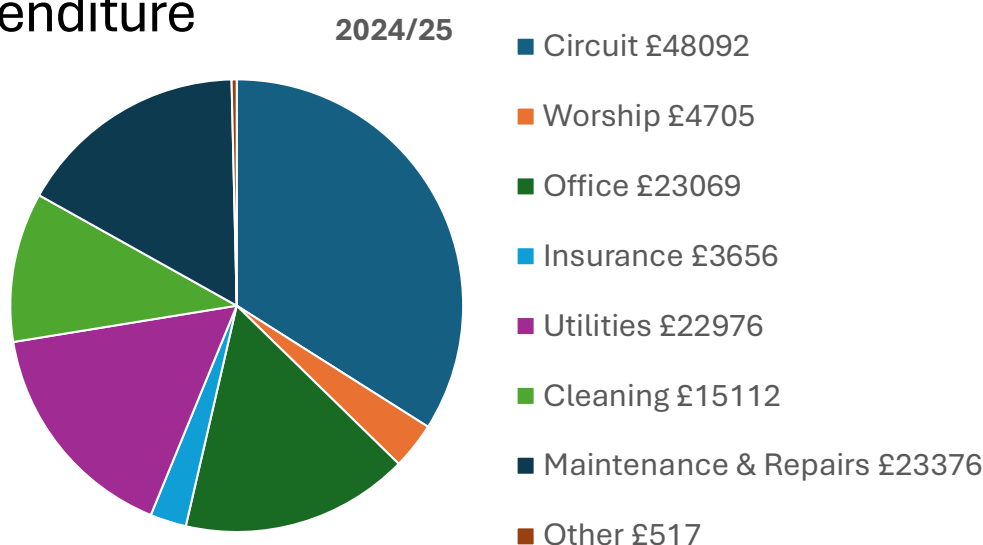
The Standard Form of Accounts for year ending 31 August 2025 are attached and were signed off by the Church Council Meeting held on Sunday 8th February 2025.

Our Income is from three main sources: Individual giving, church lettings, and rental income from the property at 12 Dorset Gardens, plus a small amount of interest from investments. Lettings income from is reduced due to the repairs required and the costs of the new Private Sector Property Licenses. The cost of running the church building continues to increase beyond our income and we again had a shortfall in our general accounts – see below.

Income (highlighting the shortfall)



Expenditure



In 2023/24 the church used some of its reserves to contribute to an appeal to top up the Methodist Church Pension Reserve Fund. In October 2024 the contribution was returned as the top up was no longer required. These returned funds have been used to cover the 2024/25 deficit. During this year we received a legacy from the estate of Revd Mary Bailey (a former Minister), this has been added into the reserves.

5. **Structure, Governance and Management**

a) **The Circuit Meeting**

The Circuit Meeting of Brighton & Hove is the body of Managing Trustees that is responsible for the affairs of the five Methodist churches: Dorset Gardens, Hove, Patcham, Stanford Avenue, and Woodingdean. The Circuit Meeting acts as the focal point of the working fellowship of the churches in the Circuit, overseeing their pastoral, training and evangelistic work.

b) **The Church Council**

The Church Council of Dorset Gardens is the body of Managing Trustees that is responsible for the affairs of the Church and the development of Church Policy. The Church Council Meeting together with the Church Minister, the Church Stewards & Leadership team, and lay employees' exercise that combination of spiritual leadership and administrative efficiency which enables the Church to fulfil its purposes as set out in the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church.

c) **Staffing**

- The Revd Andy Lowe is the Circuit Superintendent Minister and Dorset Gardens Minister.
- Andy took a sabbatical from 1 May to 31 July 2025. In the interim, the Revd Karen Bell served as Acting Superintendent. During his time away, Andy joined an archaeological dig at Barcombe Mills; however, the overall intention was rest and recuperation after a gruelling few years, and he was grateful to the Methodist Church for enabling this.
- Following consultation across the circuit, the Circuit Invitation Committee recommended that an open invitation be extended to the Revd Andy Lowe to remain in post for a further three years from September 2026 to August 2029. This recommendation was adopted unanimously by the Circuit Meeting.
- We are also grateful for the support, particularly during Andy's sabbatical, of the supernumerary minister, the Revd Cynthia Park (a former minister of Dorset Gardens), and a minister in Local Appointment, the Revd Heather Leake Date.

d) **Safeguarding**

- The Methodist Church places safeguarding at the heart of its life and ministry. Safeguarding means taking active steps to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.
- We all share responsibility for ensuring that everyone who enters our church building feels safe, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. As an inclusive church, we are committed to caring for all who come through our doors.
- This includes people who may be facing challenges such as mental health difficulties, addiction, homelessness, concerns about their sexuality, or uncertainty around their immigration status.
- During this reporting period, no safeguarding concerns were identified.

e) **Church Archive**

- Our Church Archival Officer & Circuit Archivist has been actively involved in Connexional consultation on a new Handbook for Methodist Archivists. This was formally launched in March 2025 and available on the Methodist Church website.
https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Methodist_Archivists_Handbook.pdf
We are grateful for the meticulous work undertaken by our archivist Michael Hickman.

THE METHODIST CHURCH STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

Dorset Gardens Methodist	Church
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 August 2025

Brighton & Hove	Circuit	Circuit no.	36/12
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Registered Charity - Charity Registration number

1160211

**If not a registered charity His 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)

Minister:

Rev Andy Lowe

Church Stewards:

Sue Harrington
Elizabeth Whittaker
Brandford Osei
Ian Lamb
Steve Preston
Ray Waller

Treasurer:

Jennie Lamb

SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
		£	£	£	£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note			
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	42,684		42,684	45,837
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	642	5,726	6,368	7,550
a4	Lettings	56,160		56,160	52,928
a5	Other receipts	66,778	360	67,138	34,993
a6	TOTAL RECEIPTS	166,264	6,086	172,350 (a7)	141,308

SECTION B					
b1	PAYMENTS				
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share	48,092		48,092	53,832
b3	Donations				
b4	Repairs and Maintenance	23,376		23,376	42,381
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	27,363		27,363	33,468
b6	Cleaning	15,112		15,112	10,914
b7	Other payments	28,741	6,987	35,728	58,332
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS	142,684	6,987	149,671 (b9)	198,927

SECTION C					
c1	NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR (a6-b8)	23,580	(901)	22,679	(57,619)
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year	102,824	118,050	220,874 (c6)	278,493
c3	Sub total (c1+c2)	126,404	117,149	243,553	220,874
c4	Transfers and adjustments	3,034	(3,034)		(c7)
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR (c3+c4)	129,438	114,115	243,553 (c8)	220,874 (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 above)		£		£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year				807
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations		735		1,494
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations		735		2,301
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	(d1+d2-d3)			

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL**SECTION E**

Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

Summary of the Church accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Church Council/Church 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 income and expenditure totals of the Church. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold, 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 District and connected District Organisations.

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1						
e2						
e3						
e4						
e5						
e6						
e7						
Sub total of Internal Organisations funds					(e11)	(e12)
Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	172,350 (a7)	149,671 (b9)	22,679	(c7)	220,874 (c6)	243,553 (c8)
TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	172,350	149,671	22,679		220,874 (x)	243,553 (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 2025**

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1 Cash in hand		
f2 Bank Current Account	11,870	13,230
f3 Bank Deposit Account		
f4 Central Finance Board	19,369	25,196
f5 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	155,135	176,117
f6 Other funds	34,500	29,010
f7 SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	220,874 (c6)	243,553 (c8)
Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	(e11)	(e12)
TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	220,874 (x)	243,553 (y)

SECTION G**OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES**

	At 1 September 2024	At 31 August 2025
g1 Investments (include Endowments)		
g2 Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)		
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 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)

Name of Church

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

No 36/12

Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm that these Receipt and Payment based accounts for the year to 31 August 2025 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

8th February 2026

Name and address of treasurer

Jennie Lamb

38 Chester Terrace Brighton

BN1 6GB

Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 were/will be* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on 8th February 2026

Signature of the Chair of the meeting

Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Andy Lowe

Date 8th February 2026

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

Charity Number 1160211

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Dorset Gardens Methodist Church for the year ended 31 August 2025 set out on pages 1 to 5. 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.

* delete or circle as appropriate

Name of Church Dorset Gardens Methodist

Independent Examiner's Statement

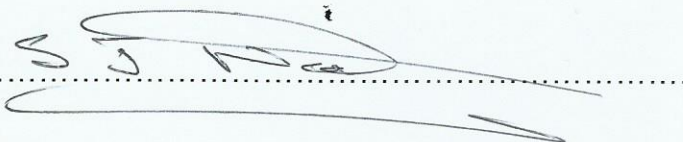
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below*) which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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 S J Neate

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner FMATT

Name of firm (where appropriate)

Address 23 Surrenden Lodge Surrenden Road Brighton

..... Post Code BN1 6QB

Date 7th January 2026

* delete or circle as appropriate

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Dorset Gardens Methodist	Church
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED

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Name of the Chair of the meeting Rev Andy Lowe

Date 8th February 2026

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Name of Church Dorset Gardens Methodist

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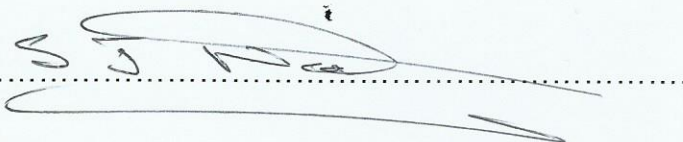
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Signature of independent examiner



Name of independent examiner S J Neate

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner FMATT

Name of firm (where appropriate)

Address 23 Surrenden Lodge Surrenden Road Brighton

..... Post Code BN1 6QB

Date 7th January 2026

* delete or circle as appropriate