

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1168391

Black Country Circuit
Unaudited Financial Statements
31 August 2024

BSN ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Chartered accountants
3B Swallowfield Courtyard
Wolverhampton Road
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 2JG

Black Country Circuit

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2024

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Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 August 2024

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

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Black Country Circuit
Charity registration number	1168391
Principal office	Circuit Office Leabrook Methodist Church Leabrook Road North Wednesbury WS10 7LY
Independent examiner	Philippa Miller-Hawkes BA CA 3B Swallowfield Courtyard Wolverhampton Road Oldbury West Midlands B69 2JG

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

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).

Day to day management of the Circuit is undertaken by the Circuit Leadership Team.

The members of the Black Country Circuit meeting are the Charity Trustees, membership being made up of circuit office holders, ministers and representatives appointed by the local churches.

Members of the Black Country Circuit meeting are as follows:

Ministers

Revd Ruth Childs
Revd Denise Williams
Revd Juliet Kisob
Revd Carole Holden (Supernumerary)

Lay-workers

Mrs Karen Belcher (Administrator)
Mrs Heather Pearce

Local Preachers and Worship Leader Representatives

Mr Trevor Allen
Mrs Jean Mason

Circuit Stewards

Mrs Helen Allen
Mr Donald Anderson (Property)
Mr David Ashfield
Mr Ian Belcher
Mr Malcolm Freeman
Mr Ian Palfreyman
Mr Christopher Pearce (also Local Preachers Secretary)
Ms Shirley Shelton
Mr Ian Thomson

Circuit Treasurer

Mr John Miller (Until 30th November 2023)
Mr Malcolm Freeman (from 1st December 2023 - nominated Circuit Steward for Treasurer role)

Circuit Officers (Property)

Mr Donald Anderson
Mr Alex Cooksey

Black Country Circuit
Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*
Year ended 31 August 2024

Circuit Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Mr Ian Belcher

Circuit Representatives to Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District Synod

Mrs Helen Allen
Mr Stephen Allen
Mrs Rosemary Jones

Circuit Church Representatives

Beeches Road - Mrs Grace Peumalu and Mr Robert Peumalu

Charlemont - Miss Linda Haywood and Mr Paul Reynolds

Hill Top - Mrs Joan Howes and Marlene Turner

Lea Brook – Judith Palfreyman

Methodist Centre - Mrs Jennifer Bibb and Mrs Vanessa Hill

New Road – Lorraine Morris and Chris Allen

Roseville - Mrs Sylvia Morran, Mrs Kathryn Turner and Mr Ronald Turner

Ryders Green - Mr Terry Dawson and Mr Alex Cooksey

St Andrews - Mrs June Davies and Miss Margaret Morgan

Tipton Green - Mrs Marjorie Ashfield, Mrs Rosemary Jones and Miss Susan Sandbrook

Toll End - Mrs Pauline Hodgetts and Miss Kim Pollard

Wednesbury (Central & Woods)- Mary Ann Thomson, Valerie Partridge and Karen James

Wesley - Mr Stephen Allen, Mr Ian Collett, Mr Malcolm Wills and Mrs Miriam Wills

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Trustee Training

A range of guidance is 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 given to all new Circuit meeting members as induction to their role as Trustees.

Circuit financial plans for the coming year have been prepared on the basis that there remain 3 full time ordained staff with anticipated cost of living stipend increases but with an increased, subsidised cost, of our administrator and any ministerial support worker that may be appointed.

The future number of churches in the Circuit cannot be predicted at present but, especially in view of the financial situation of some churches; the number of services to be covered in the Plan coupled with the number of presbyters in post and the reduction in lay preachers, there is a likelihood that some will close.

Two churches continue to hold zoom worship (Sunday and Tuesday evenings, fortnightly) which we expect will continue, alongside some circuit worship also being held on the zoom platform. The Circuit's sub-committee structure has been working well, it has been agreed that the Circuit Leadership Team will undertake a review of the sub-committee structures during next year (2024-25); the structure continues to provide a valued way for lay persons to support Presbyters.

During this financial year, the circuit successfully recruited a part-time (60%) Family Worker to work with presbyters and churches in the circuit to create and develop closer links with the community; Community Connect project is now up and running and despite being in its early stages, good progress is being made.

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Objectives and activities

Aims and Organisation

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 Circuit produces a quarterly preaching plan to ensure that regular acts of worship take place at each of the 13 Methodist Churches in its geographical area. The Black Country Circuit is constituted to offer acts of worship in its church communities and to further the mission of the Church in Tipton, West Bromwich & Wednesbury. With our primary internal function being that of Christian worship, we organise acts of worship in each of the 13 Circuit churches every Sunday. Our internal structure is based on a Circuit Meeting which meets twice a year; a Local Preachers' meeting which meets four times a year; Circuit Leadership Team meetings throughout the year, and Staff Meetings which normally meet fortnightly. We endeavour to make our meetings more than just 'talking shops'; they are the place where important decisions are made and within them, we plan our strategies and fulfil our role as Charity Trustees.

Public Benefit

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

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Achievements and performance; Review of the year

The financial year for year ended 31st August 2024 was a continuation of the previous year and one of consolidation. Many of our churches continue to struggle with ageing membership and people reluctant to take on leadership roles. The circuit has maintained its commitment from 2019 not to impose significant increases in finance requirements to the circuit from the individual churches.

The increased costs of gas and electricity continues to impact greatly on our churches; the Circuit Leadership Team has written to all churches in the circuit, highlighting the increasing costs of the circuit and continued commitment not to pass on significant increases to individual churches but to use reserves to support the work of the Black Country Methodist Circuit and individual churches within it. Each Church Council has been asked to reflect on seven areas – their financial position, state of their property, church membership (number and age demographic), leadership, interaction with the community, Mission Outreach, and lastly to consider whether merging with another church might be an option for the future.

The sale of Park Methodist Church completed in September 2024, proceeds from which have been added to reserves funds which will continue to be used for ongoing financial support of the circuit.

A new Circuit Administrator commenced employment in September 2023, alongside our existing Pastoral Worker and newly appointed Family Worker; all three support our ministerial staff and lay volunteers.

The Circuit Finances are in a healthy position thanks to income from church buildings which have been sold; some of this is ring fenced for our Circuit Connect Project which works to foster links between the church and the community as outlined above.

The situation with regard to Local Preachers in the Black Country Circuit is proving to be a difficult one. We currently have thirteen active Local Preachers with one to welcomed as an accredited Local Preacher in September 2024 having successfully completed the Worship: Leading & Preaching course of The Methodist Church; we currently have one further person “on trial”. This leads to challenges in planning the leading of worship in twelve churches, one of which has two services each Sunday. This inevitably leads to a number of “Local Arrangements” where each church prepares and leads their own worship. We also have once a quarter “sector services” which have met with varied success and are constantly under review. It is hoped that more training will be facilitated to encourage more leaders of worship.

Our modus operandum continues to be inspired and celebrated in our main activities of worship and mission. Mission and work in our local communities is an essential part of our mission and there are community activities in most of our churches, regular coffee mornings are held often with opportunities to share in craft-making. Many churches have offered Warm Spaces under the banner of the National Lottery Community Fund, an example of our churches connecting with communities and those in need.

We continue to house two Ukrainian families in two of our Manses; this project will most likely come to an end when/if the Government “Homes for Ukraine Scheme” ceases.

We would extend a big thank you to all those who have committed themselves to the work and mission of the Circuit and who provide invaluable support to the Ministerial and Administrative staff. The Circuit Leadership Team is very active in the life of the Circuit and provide expertise in financial, property, worship and other facets of church life and provide support to all our churches.

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Financial review

Circuit income is derived mainly from the assessments paid by the individual circuit churches and during the year the assessments were £195,638 (2023 £191,777). Most churches pay by standing order on a quarterly basis, but some pay monthly to lessen the burden on their cash flow. Interest received showed an increase at £34,949 due to the deposit of capital from property sales and the increase in interest rates. In the prior year there was grant income from the District in support of our Community Connect project/Pastoral Support worker of £10,000. Minister's stipends and associated costs showed an increase reflecting the annual increase of stipends.

Property costs borne by the Circuit rose due to the Circuit being responsible for the maintenance of the Park and Hallam Street churches. The Circuit receives rental income from Hallam Street tenants and this situation is under constant review; sale of Park by auction is scheduled for 12th September 2024. All the church and manse properties are in a state of good repair.

As at 31st August 2024, unrestricted reserves excluding Land and Buildings stood at £180,554 (2023 £218,376). The Circuit finances are in a relatively healthy position due to the closure and sale of church properties notwithstanding that individual churches are struggling to break even. The Circuit Leadership Team have considered offering a further grant scheme to the churches; this will be considered on an ongoing basis if there are suitable projects to support. In the meantime, the healthy financial position will support the ongoing work and costs of the circuit, rather than imposing significant increases in quarterly assessments on the individual churches.

Plans for 2024/25

Budgets for the coming year have been prepared on the basis that three presbyters will be in post together with a paid Circuit Administrator, Pastoral Support worker and Family Worker (all part-time roles)

The Manses situation will be kept under review but there is a distinct possibility that further church closures may take place, and the properties sold. This will help to maintain a healthy Circuit financial profile.

The Circuit Connect Project is underway and will be monitored on its outcomes by presbyters and the Circuit Leadership Team.

A "Circuit Celebration Day" was held in July 2024 where each church was invited to bring a display of things happening in their church; over 100 people from churches in the circuit gathered together to share fellowship, take part in workshops, with a buffet lunch provided and ending in worship. It

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Financial review *(continued)*

Reserves Policy General

It is the Trustees' policy to maintain a balance of unrestricted and undesignated funds equivalent to around six months average unrestricted expenditure, to cover unexpected requirements which may occur from time to time. Due to the uncertain future of some of our churches our reserves are currently above six months expenditure to support our future expenditure plans without having to impose substantial increases in annual assessments. Our reserves will diminish over the next few years as we continue to subsidise paid employment positions needed to continue the work of the Methodist Church in the Black Country Circuit.

The policy of only slowly reducing reserves has been vindicated in the current financial situation as some churches are facing serious financial problems but the Circuit itself is in a strong position to support the work of the Methodist Church in the Black Country.

Risk Management

The major risks associated with the Circuit have been identified by the Circuit Leadership Team. A regular review process is in place and is recorded.

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 Black Country Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in our

Black Country Circuit

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

Financial review *(continued)*

The Black Country Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the Connexional Safeguarding Policy, government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in our churches, including carrying out enhanced DBS checks as required.

The Black Country 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. We adhere to the church's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Regular training sessions are held to ensure that those required to receive the necessary training. Ensuring the appropriate training is undertaken continues to be closely monitored by our Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Necessary DBS checks have continued to be carried out over the last connexional year.

Our Circuit Safeguarding Officer, Ian Belcher, continues to meet regularly with our Church Safeguarding Officers - both informally and at regularly held formal meetings - to ensure that best practice is being followed in our churches and that effective communication about Safeguarding matters continues. Ian's priority is to ensure that Safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of Circuit and Church life, and that its core principles of inclusivity, respect, being valued, being listened to and feeling protected are at the forefront of all we do. This is achieved through ensuring that people attend Safeguarding training and undertake a DBS check appropriate to their role, the principles laid out in the Safer Recruitment Policy are adhered to and that Church Safeguarding Officers are supported in their vital role.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 13 June 2025 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Revd D Williams
Trustee



Mrs H Allen
Trustee

Black Country Circuit

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Black Country Circuit

Year ended 31 August 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Black Country Circuit ('the charity') for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

P. Miller - Hawkes

Philippa Miller-Hawkes BA CA
Independent Examiner

3B Swallowfield Courtyard
Wolverhampton Road
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 2JG

13 June 2025

Black Country Circuit
Statement of Financial Activities
Year ended 31 August 2024

			2024		2023
	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Charitable activities	4	195,638	—	195,638	201,777
Investment income	5	28,052	26,278	54,330	35,579
Other income	6	292	—	292	6,057
Total income		<u>223,982</u>	<u>26,278</u>	<u>250,260</u>	<u>243,413</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	7	<u>261,804</u>	<u>110,613</u>	<u>372,417</u>	<u>278,801</u>
Total expenditure		<u>261,804</u>	<u>110,613</u>	<u>372,417</u>	<u>278,801</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments		662,000	286,318	948,318	(1,210)
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds		<u>624,178</u>	<u>201,983</u>	<u>826,161</u>	<u>(36,598)</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		1,488,376	381,059	1,869,435	1,906,033
Total funds carried forward		<u>2,112,554</u>	<u>583,042</u>	<u>2,695,596</u>	<u>1,869,435</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 13 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

Black Country Circuit
Statement of Financial Position
31 August 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	12	1,165,000	675,000
Investments	13	767,000	595,000
		<u>1,932,000</u>	<u>1,270,000</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	14	25,424	15,064
Investments	15	583,042	381,059
Cash at bank and in hand		187,187	234,129
		<u>795,653</u>	<u>630,252</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	32,057	30,817
Net current assets		<u>763,596</u>	<u>599,435</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>2,695,596</u>	<u>1,869,435</u>
Net assets		<u>2,695,596</u>	<u>1,869,435</u>
Funds of the charity			
Restricted funds		583,042	381,059
Unrestricted funds		2,112,554	1,488,376
Total charity funds	17	<u>2,695,596</u>	<u>1,869,435</u>

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 13 June 2025, and are signed on behalf of the board by:



Mrs H Allen
Trustee

The notes on pages 13 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2024

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is Circuit Office, Leabrook Methodist Church, Leabrook Road North, Wednesbury, WS10 7LY.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting policies

Public benefit entity

The Black Country Circuit meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes below.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going concern

Based on the monetary assets and human resources available at 31 August 2024, the Trustees believe that the Circuit is a going concern.

Disclosure exemptions

The entity satisfies the criteria of being a qualifying entity as defined in FRS 102. As such, advantage has been taken of the following disclosure exemptions available under paragraph 1.12 of FRS 102:

- (a) No cash flow statement has been presented for the company.
- (b) Disclosures in respect of financial instruments have not been presented.

Consolidation

The Circuit has denominational regulatory oversight in respect of the work of the Churches within the Circuit but has no legal or operational control of those Churches and their governing bodies except in extreme circumstances. For this reason, the financial statements of Churches within the Circuit are not consolidated into these financial statements.

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

No significant estimates or judgements have been made by management when preparing the financial statements. The policies followed are shown below.

Grants

Grants made by the Circuit from its own funds are recognised in full at the time of agreement to make a grant, without performance conditions or as and when the Circuit accepts that there is a legal or operational obligation to make the payment if it is subject to performance conditions. When the grant is recurrent over more than one year the balance payable in future years is treated as a provision for future commitments in the Balance Sheet against the appropriate fund, the provision being released in future years as instalments are paid in accordance with the originally agreed terms.

VAT

Since the Circuit is not VAT registered, all input VAT is charged with the expenses to which it refers.

Incoming resources

Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the Circuit becomes entitled to the resources, and the trustees are reasonably certain that they will receive the resources; and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Resources expended

This is recognised when a liability is incurred, or a constructive obligation arises, where the amount is reliably measurable and it is considered more likely than not that there will be an outflow of economic benefit.

Tangible assets

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and individually cost at least £1,000. The freehold property is shown in the accounts at 2015 values following a revaluation of the properties by Wakeman Chartered Surveyors an independent valuer. No depreciation is provided on the buildings because the trustees consider the current residual value of the property in its present condition to be not less than its current value, and in the absence of any evidence of impairment, any depreciation provision would not be material

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

4. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Assessments on Churches	195,638	195,638	191,777	191,777
District Advance Fund	—	—	10,000	10,000
	<u>195,638</u>	<u>195,638</u>	<u>201,777</u>	<u>201,777</u>

The Circuit comprises of 15 churches and each is assessed for a contribution to meet the overall net costs of the Circuit. During 2017 the Circuit adopted a new method of raising its' assessments in order to ensure that each church's contribution is assessed on a fairer basis than that used in the past. The method takes account, to some degree, of membership, attendance, income and reserves but the increases are then reconsidered to ensure that no one church bears the brunt of a large increase (or decrease) in their assessment. Churches who are able to pay a little more than required help to offset the burden on struggling churches.

5. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Income from investment properties	19,381	—	19,381
Income from cash investments	8,671	26,278	34,949
	<u>28,052</u>	<u>26,278</u>	<u>54,330</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income from investment properties	16,126	—	16,126
Income from cash investments	6,064	13,389	19,453
	<u>22,190</u>	<u>13,389</u>	<u>35,579</u>

6. Other income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Other charitable income	292	292	6,057	6,057
	<u>292</u>	<u>292</u>	<u>6,057</u>	<u>6,057</u>

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

7. Expenditure on charitable activities by fund type

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and associated costs	155,777	—	155,777	136,045
District assessment and levy	44,539	20,915	65,454	71,610
Connexional assessment model trust levy	—	89,698	89,698	(4,438)
Property costs	40,616	—	40,616	42,639
Other outgoings	19,790	—	19,790	30,672
Office expenses	1,082	—	1,082	2,273
	<u>261,804</u>	<u>110,613</u>	<u>372,417</u>	<u>278,801</u>

District assessment and levy

In common with other circuits in the District, the Circuit pays an annual assessment to the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District of the Methodist Church, which is based on the number of Methodist Presbyters and Lay Workers within each circuit. The Levy is calculated on a sliding scale percentage of the balance of the Circuit's CMT at 31 August in the previous accounting year.

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
District Assessment	44,539	—	44,539	42,960
District Levy	—	20,915	20,915	28,650
	<u>44,539</u>	<u>20,915</u>	<u>65,454</u>	<u>71,610</u>

Property costs

During the year, the Circuit was Managing Trustee for 6 properties, with one sold during the year. All are manses or former manses with two former manses being let out on 6 month renewable shorthold leases

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Insurance, Council tax and utilities	12,561	—	12,561	14,143
General maintenance on manses and other Circuit properties	28,055	—	28,055	28,496
	<u>40,616</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>40,616</u>	<u>42,639</u>

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

7. Expenditure on charitable activities by fund type *(continued)*

Other outgoings

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Independent exam fee	1,440	—	1,440	1,440
Apprenticeship levy and payroll fee	546	—	546	990
Gifts	—	—	—	93
Capital project grants	8,189	—	8,189	24,724
Accountancy fees	3,960	—	3,960	1,800
Sale of Park	5,288	—	5,288	—
Miscellaneous	367	—	367	1,625
	<u>19,790</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>19,790</u>	<u>30,672</u>

Office expenses

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Website	43	—	43	556
Printing, postage, stationery and telephone	972	—	972	1,635
Miscellaneous	67	—	67	82
	<u>1,082</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>1,082</u>	<u>2,273</u>

8. Independent examination fees

	2024 £	2023 £
Fees payable to the independent examiner for:		
Independent examination of the financial statements	<u>1,440</u>	<u>1,440</u>

9. Staff costs

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Presbyters	136,991	—	136,991	118,455
Lay workers	18,786	—	18,786	17,590
	<u>155,777</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>155,777</u>	<u>136,045</u>

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

9. Staff costs *(continued)*

Presbyters

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Stripends and allowances	90,536	—	90,536	83,468
National insurance	8,809	—	8,809	8,041
Pension costs	23,033	—	23,033	21,873
	<u>122,378</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>122,378</u>	<u>113,382</u>
Telephone and travel	5,368	—	5,368	4,169
Postage and stationery	568	—	568	57
Miscellaneous	8,677	—	8,677	847
	<u>136,991</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>136,991</u>	<u>118,455</u>

Lay workers

	Unrestricted General Fund 2024 £	Circuit Model Trust Fund 2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and allowances	18,095	—	18,095	16,624
National insurance	41	—	41	—
Pension costs	—	—	—	—
	<u>18,136</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>18,136</u>	<u>16,624</u>
Telephone and travel	319	—	319	225
Miscellaneous	331	—	331	741
	<u>18,786</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>18,786</u>	<u>17,590</u>

Stripends were paid to 3 full time Presbyters. Salaries were paid to one full time and one part time lay worker.

No employees received employee benefits of more than £60,000. There is no accrual for holiday pay as it is immaterial. All staff are paid at or above the living wage.

Pensions

Most ordained Presbyters are members of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Supreme Court held in 2014 that Methodist ministers are not employees of the Church. For simplicity, however, when dealing with National Insurance Contributions and pension contributions, the terms 'employer' and 'employee' are used as they would be in an employing body.

On the other hand, any lay employees of the Circuit would be contractual employees and would have the option of joining a pension scheme which the Circuit would arrange with The Pension Trust.

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

9. Staff costs (*Cont*)

Costs of Superintendent, Presbyters and Trustees

The Superintendent of the Circuit, the other Presbyters and the remaining members of the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) are considered as Key Management Personnel. The Superintendent chairs meetings of the CLT and Circuit Meetings. The members of the Circuit Meeting are the trustees of the Circuit. The stipends, employer's NIC and employer's pension contributions and other expenses of the Presbyters of the Circuit are paid by the Circuit.

The manses are provided by the Circuit and the Circuit maintains the properties. The value of Council Tax and water charges is not disclosed here as HMRC does not regard this as a benefit-in-kind in the hands of the minister.

10. Trustee remuneration and expenses

Apart from the 3 Presbyters no member of the Circuit Meeting was in receipt of any payment for work undertaken on behalf of the Circuit, although certain travelling and administration costs were reimbursed in particular cases.

11. Leasing commitments

At 31 August 2024 the Circuit had no leasing commitments.

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £
Cost	
At 1 September 2023	675,000
Revaluations	490,000
At 31 August 2024	<u>1,165,000</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024	<u>—</u>
Carrying amount	
At 31 August 2024	<u>1,165,000</u>
At 31 August 2023	<u>675,000</u>

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

13. Investments

	Investment properties £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 September 2023	595,000
Additions	—
Disposals	(185,000)
Fair value movements	357,000
At 31 August 2024	767,000
Impairment	
At 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024	—
Carrying amount	
At 31 August 2024	767,000
At 31 August 2023	595,000

All investments shown above are held at valuation.

Investment properties

Investment properties consist of two former manses currently let under the government's scheme to assist Ukrainian refugees.

14. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Other debtors	25,424	15,064

15. Investments

	2024 £	2023 £
Model Trust Fund	583,042	381,059

The funds that support the Circuit Model Trust Fund are held by TMCP in the Trustees Interest Fund on which interest is credited each month. TMCP is the legal owner and custodian trustee of all Methodist model trust property including legacies, endowments and accumulated funds.

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	23,017	29,747
Other creditors	9,040	1,070
	32,057	30,817

Black Country Circuit

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 August 2024

17. Analysis of charitable funds

	Opening balance £	Income £	Gains on investments £	Expenditure £	Closing balance £
General	1,488,376	223,982	662,000	(261,804)	2,112,554
Circuit Model Trust Fund	381,059	26,278	286,318	(110,613)	583,042
	<u>1,869,435</u>	<u>250,260</u>	<u>948,318</u>	<u>(372,417)</u>	<u>2,695,596</u>

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,932,000	–	1,932,000
Investments	–	583,042	583,042
Current assets	212,611	–	212,611
Creditors less than 1 year	(32,057)	–	(32,057)
Net assets	<u>2,112,554</u>	<u>583,042</u>	<u>2,695,596</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,270,000	–	1,270,000
Investments	–	381,059	381,059
Current assets	249,193	–	249,193
Creditors less than 1 year	(30,817)	–	(30,817)
Net assets	<u>1,488,376</u>	<u>381,059</u>	<u>1,869,435</u>

19. Related parties

Related Parties include The Methodist Connexion, the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District, Churches within the Circuit (listed below), CFB and TMCP.

Beaches Road
 Charlemont
 Hallam Street
 Hill Top
 Lea Brook
 Methodist Centre
 New Road
 Park
 Roseville
 Ryders Green
 St Andrews
 Tipton Green
 Toll End
 Wesley
 Wednesbury Central
 Woods