

Trustees' Annual Report

Amersham Methodist Circuit

Year Ending 31st August 2018

Registered Charity No. 1132354

Overview

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Trustees' Annual Report of the Amersham Methodist Circuit.

The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion as the body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement, and help. It is in the Circuit that presbyters, deacons and probationers are stationed and local preachers are trained and admitted and exercise their calling. The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources of ministry, which include people, property and finance, as they relate to the Methodist churches in the Circuit, to churches of other denominations and to participation in the life of the communities served by the Circuit, including local schools and colleges, and in ecumenical work in the area.

The Amersham Methodist Circuit lies within the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire, in an area of outstanding natural beauty and encompasses several medium-sized, towns and rural villages. It forms the southernmost part of the Northampton District and extends northwesterly from Gerrards Cross to Prestwood and Lee Common.

The Circuit has approximately 320 members and comprises 9 churches; one being an Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) with the United Reformed Church (URC). The circuit staff consists of two full-time presbyters who are supported by 1 supernumerary minister and the circuit stewards. The Circuit funds the provision of the two presbyters, supplies and maintains their accommodation, (manses) and covers their legitimate expenses. The Circuit arranges professional Quinquennial Inspections of the circuit churches and circuit properties. Each of the circuit churches has a pastoral support system led by pastoral leaders. There are active Churches Together groups throughout the area and ecumenical relationships are good.

The Circuit Meeting (CM) of the Amersham Methodist Circuit is the principal meeting responsible for the affairs of the Circuit and the development of circuit policy. The CM, with the Superintendent Minister and with the guidance of the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) exercises that combination of spiritual leadership and administrative efficiency which will enable the Circuit to fulfil its purposes as set out in Standing Orders. The CM acts as the focal point of the working fellowship of the churches in the Circuit, overseeing their pastoral, training and evangelistic work. The CM meets quarterly.

CIRCUIT MISSION STATEMENT

The circuit's policy on mission and ministry is to support all its churches in their efforts to reach out with the Gospel message in their local communities. The circuit recognises and encourages the diversity of approaches to mission and worship among its churches

and seeks to make resources available to enable them to carry out their ministries. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith in our Circuit through: worship and prayer; learning about and developing knowledge of and trust in Jesus; and via mission and outreach work.

When planning our activities for the year, the Superintendent and CM considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The trustees are committed to reaching out to as many people as possible in the Circuit's geographical area through regular worship at the member churches which provide pastoral care and community activities as part of their outreach. The Circuit produces a quarterly preaching plan to ensure that regular acts of worship take place at each of the nine churches. Worship is open to all people without charge.

The Circuit was pleased to welcome the Rev'd Nigel Wright as full-time circuit minister. Lay Authorisations were renewed for a third year for two highly regarded and experienced Local Preachers to mitigate against potential deprivation of The Lord's Supper.

The Movers & Shakers mission programme based in Gerrards Cross Methodist Church is now well embedded into the community and benefits from the addition of further help from reliable volunteers. The Movers and Shakers project continues to provide a place of welcome for the elderly 'guests' as well as the provision of an exercise session, craft activities, speakers and a lunch.

The Circuit Meeting continued to raise money for Lindengate, a local charity offering therapeutic gardening which is the designated Circuit charity for the 2016-2018 period. The members of the Circuit Outreach Group spearheaded fundraising and awareness raising activities across the circuit.

A job description and person specification was agreed for a circuit administrator and the post was advertised variously across the local area. There was a good degree of interest registered in the post, however, there were disappointingly few applications and no appointment was possible first time round. The post is to be reviewed and re-advertised.

Funds were raised for the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain and Ireland. Collections were also made for Methodist Homes for the Aged, Christian Aid and Action for Children.

Mr George Kulasingham, a chartered accountant has oversight of the circuit accounts, under the direction of the circuit stewards, on a paid basis. The information flow is still less fluid than is desired and efforts continue to make communications smoother.

INCOME TRENDS

Circuit income is drawn primarily from the assessment paid by the circuit churches. The manse located at 41 Codmore Crescent is now let and is providing a small income once set against maintenance costs. The sharing agreement between the United Reformed

Church and the circuit with respect to 22, The Lagger, Chalfont St Peter has been terminated and the sale of the 20% Methodist share of the property is proceeding.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS

The single largest expenses are those relating church ministers, such as stipends, pensions contributions, expenses and the provision of manses. Stipend expenditure has increased each financial year in line with conference approved increases. A budget has been set aside to finance a Circuit administrator/manager and for renovations to 11 South Park View.

The other expenditure includes costs in respect of the maintenance work on the manses and the payment of church quinquennial inspections.

PLANS FOR 2018/19

The CM agreed has budgeted for the outstanding garden works at 11 SPV and for a replacement kitchen.

Complete the sale of 20% Methodist share of 22 The Lagger, Chalfont St Giles.

Consideration of Data Protection under the guidance of TMCP and the implications for Circuit life under the new General Data Protection Regulations that come into force in May 2018.

Review Safeguarding compliance across the Circuit.

Create opportunities for intentional Bible study and discipleship courses.

Update the Circuit website.

Finance and Governance

BASIS OF PREPARATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Charity's annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2018 have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice 2015 as applicable to the Financial Reporting Standard (FRSSE) 2015

The members of the Amersham Methodist Circuit meeting are the Charity Trustees, membership being made up of circuit office holders, ministers and representatives appointed by the local churches. Full membership is shown as Appendix A to this report.

The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMPC) are the Custodian Trustee of Circuit Properties.

CIRCUIT MINISTERS AND OFFICERS

ACTIVE CIRCUIT MINISTERS:

The Rev'd Anne ELLIS

The Rev'd Nigel Wright

CIRCUIT STEWARDS

John HOLLANDS

Ray RICHARDS

Paulette TEDD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Martin Hunt,

Amersham Accountancy
King George V Lodge, King George V Road, Amersham, HP6 5FB

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

TaxAssist Accountants
117 High Street, Chesham HP5 1DE

BANKING AND INVESTMENTS

HSBC
92, Sycamore Road, Amersham, HP6 5EW

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

SOLICITORS

Lennons
Chess Chambers, 2 Broadway Court, Chesham HP5 1EG

Captsticks Solicitors LLP,
1 St George's Road, London, SW19 4DR

AIMS AND ORGANISATION

Charity objective is to act as a Resource provider within the area around Amersham for the Methodist Church:

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

- a) The Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and discipline of The Methodist Church;
- b) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit. local or other organisation of The Methodist Church;
- c) Any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church;
- d) Any purpose for the time being of any charity being a charity subsidiary or ancillary to The Methodist Church.

The organisation and resourcing of regular public acts of worship open to members of the church and non members alike.

The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups.

The resourcing of pastoral work including visiting the sick and bereaved.

Taking religious assemblies in local schools.

Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and services.

Provision of chaplaincy services to the local university and other institutions.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

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

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT

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

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

Day to day management of the circuit is undertaken by the the Superintendent Minister, the Circuit Leadership Team along with the Local Preachers' meeting, and the Circuit Stewards' Meeting.

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

RELATED PARTIES

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

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Amersham Methodist Circuit:

- discuss and regularly review by the Circuit Staff/Stewards and Circuit Meeting.
- takes professional advice as and when required.
- follows procedures and guidelines issued by the Methodist Church to mitigate risks.
- adopts and implements the Methodist Church's robust safeguarding policies and procedures in the Circuit and the local churches.

There continues to be a steady decline in membership which reflects the increasingly elderly profile of the majority of the local congregations.

SAFEGUARDING

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of humankind 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 Amersham Circuit commits itself to ensuring the implementation of Connexional Safeguarding Policy; government legislation, guidance and safe practice in the circuit and in the churches.

The Amersham 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.

RESERVES POLICY


The Reserves Policy for the Circuit is to hold a minimum sum equivalent to six months' average expenditure. In addition the Circuit will hold sums relating to specific budgeted expenditure, such as: planned repairs and renewals; relocation expenses of ministers; and outreach projects. This should be sufficient to meet any unforeseen item of major expenditure on manses and/or to be able to continue, in the short term, funding of planned activities in the event of any inability to raise the full Circuit Assessment from churches.

DECLARATIONS

Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer



Date

23-11-18

Name

Mr George Kulasingham

Address

3 BEEHIVE CLOSE UXBRIDGE
UB10 9QP

Presentation to the *Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on

6TH DEC 2018

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting



Name of the Chair of the meeting

Revd Anne Ellis

Date

20.03.19

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

AMERSHAM METHODIST

CIRCUIT

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31st August

2018

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. 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 below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met;

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name

MARTIN ROBERT HUNT

Signature



Relevant Professional qualification or body

FCCA

Address

KING GEORGE V LODGE,
KING GEORGE V ROAD,
AMERSHAM
BUCKS HP6 5FB

Date

11/3/2019.