

**BRIGHTON & HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT**  
**CIRCUIT MEETING**  
23rd November 2023



**CIRCUIT TREASURER'S REPORT**

The accounts for the year ending August 2023 have been adjusted for accruals and inspected by Stuart Neate who very kindly provides professional oversight of our financial reporting.

**Headlines**

1) *2022/23 Income & Expenditure*

- a) This is the second, and final, year that the Circuit has used Reserves to reduce the Circuit Assessments and the subsequent financial burden as the churches recover their income streams post pandemic. For 2023/24, the Circuit Assessments have been increased to cover the full cost of circuit outgoings.
- b) Income from circuit assessments was in line with the budget at £159,144. Income from interest on deposit accounts was significantly increased at £3,463 but offset by the District Advance Fund Levy and Administration costs.
- c) The final deficit once accrual adjustments were implemented stands at -£45K

2) *Receipts & Payments*

- a) Analysis of outgoing expenditure indicates minor variances against most budget items.
- b) The cost of employing the Circuit Operations Manager has been included in the budget which results in a significant variance against the Lay Staff budget.

3) *Circuit Reserves*

- a) The Balance sheet has been revised to reflect the Circuits liabilities. As at 31/8/2023 the reserves stood at £61,181 and are held in deposit accounts with TMCP and the Central Finance Bank.

4) *Circuit Liabilities*

- a) Refurbishment of 155 Surrenden Avenue £56,721
  - b) Loan from DG for COMS salary for 2021-2023. to be repaid over 4 years  
at £11,500 per annum. £46,000
- These liabilities are set against the rental income from 155 Surrenden Road as per the plan agreed at the Circuit Meeting in May 2023.

5) *Fixed Assets*

The value of the Circuit Manses will be reassessed in coming financial year.

6) *Reserves 'Policy*

The draft policy is attached. It has been amended to reflect the reduction in the reserves and the commercial letting of the Surrenden road Manse.

7) *Inspection of Accounts*

The Meeting is asked to agree that Stuart Neate be asked to oversee the Circuit Accounts for the Financial period commencing September 2023.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT (36/12) (Reg Charity 1134137)**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT : 31st August 2023**

2021-22		<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
£	<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<i>Assessments</i>
145,476	Assessment from Circuit Churches	£159,144	£ 160,298
131	Interest Received (less admin)	£ 506	£ 131
<u>145,607</u>		<b>£ 159,650</b>	<b>£ 160,429</b>
	<b>OUTGOING RESOURCES</b>		
	<i>MINISTERIAL</i>		
111,999	Stipends	£116,818	£ 119,179
(14,190)	District Contribution	-£ 14,770	-£ 14,474
564	Apprenticeship Levy	£ 565	£ 664
1,203	Travel	£ 2,404	£ 1,135
1,558	Telephones	£ 1,805	£ 1,765
228	Pulpit Supply	£ 240	£ 94
294	Other	£ 298	£ 606
-	Sabbatical Expenses	£ -	£ 500
8,023	Council Tax	£ 8,134	£ 7,719
<u>109,679</u>		<b>£ 115,494</b>	<b>£ 117,188</b>
	<i>LAYSTAFF</i>		
27,337	Circuit Ops Manager	£ 19,874	£ -
	Laystaff	£ 10,119	£ 8,130
5,395	Expenses	£ -	<u>£ 8,130</u>
<u>32,732</u>		<b>£ 29,993</b>	<b>£ 8,130</b>
	<i>DISTRICT &amp; CONNEXION</i>		
8,552	District Assessment	£ 9,022	£ 9,022
31,818	Methodist Church Fund	£ 31,197	£ 31,197
<u>40,370</u>		<b>£ 40,219</b>	<b>£ 40,219</b>
	<i>MANSES</i>		
3,768	Maintenance	£ 1,696	£ 12,000
6,058	Insurance	£ 4,382	£ 3,403
	Services	£ 1,287	£ 2,314
<u>9,826</u>		<b>£ 7,365</b>	<b>£ 17,717</b>
	<i>CIRCUIT</i>		
957	Activities	£ 2,097	£ 804
5,017	Administration	£ 5,682	£ 5,466
-	University Chaplaincy	£ -	£ 1,579
	Grants	£ 2,500	£ -
900	Quinquennials	£ -	£ 500
-	Place for Hope	£ 2,297	£ -
<u>6,874</u>		<b>£ 12,576</b>	<b>£ 8,349</b>
<b>199,481</b>		<b>205,647</b>	<b>£ 191,603</b>
3000	Connexional Funds Contribution	£ -	£ 3,000
(56,874)	Surplus/(Deficit)	(45,997)	(34,174)

BRIGHTON & HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT (36/12) (Reg Charity 1134137)  
BALANCE SHEET AT: 31st August 2023

31/08/2022

£	FUNDS HELD:	Notes	£	£
2,100,000	Fixed Assets		2,100,000	
	Properties - 3 x Manses			
	Circuit General Fund			
45,441	Balance brought forward		(24,341)	
(69,782)	Surplus/(deficit) for the year		(45,997)	
				-----
(24,341)	Balance Carried Forward			(70,338)
	Other Circuit Accounts			
99,606	Model Trust Fund	(1)	61,952	
8,276	Maud Gill Bequest	(2)	8,518	
47,012	Brian Kirkwood Community Mission Fund	(3)	47,012	
0	Surrenden Road	(4)	11,000	
1,300	Circuit Project	(5)	2,774	
53	Other Methodist Charities (World Mission, JMA)	(6)	263	
				-----
				131,519
				-----
131,906	Total Funds			61,181
				=====
	REPRESENTED BY:			
12,564	Barclays Community Account		11,943	
27,230	Methodist Central Finance Board (CFB)		22,287	
107,882	Trust for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP)		70,470	
10,530	Debtors and Prepayments		6,876	
				-----
158,206				111,576
3,300	less Creditors			4,395
23,000	Loan Dorset Gardens			46,000
				-----
26,300				50,395
				-----
131,906	Net Assets Excluding Fixed Assets)			61,181
				=====

2021-22	<b>NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS</b>		2022-23	
£			£	£
99,605		<b>CIRCUIT MODEL TRUST FUND (Held by T M C P)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	
		Brought Forward	99,605	
		Circuit /District pyt Levy	(2,490)	
		Interest less Admin Charge	2,837	
-----	99,605		-----	99,951
0		Contributions to:            General Fund	(38,000)	
-----	0		-----	(38,000)
-----	99,605	<b>Balance carried forward</b>		61,951
	=====			=====
		<b>MAUD GILL BEQUEST (Held by T M C P)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	
8,276		Brought Forward		8,276
		Interest less Admin Charge		242
		Tranferred to General Fund		0
-----	8,276	<b>Balance carried forward</b>		8,518
	=====			=====
		<b>BRIAN KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY MISSION FUND</b>	<b>(3)</b>	
		<b>(Designated)</b>		
47,012		Brought Forward		47,012
0		Receipts		0
		Transfers		0
-----	47,012			47,012
	=====			=====
	=====			=====
		<b>Surrenden road</b>		
0		Brought forward		-
		Transferred from reserves		38,000
		Refurbishment costs		(27,000)
				-----
				11,000
		<b>Circuit Project</b>	<b>(5)</b>	
1,300		Brought Forward <b>commenced 1.9.2021</b>		1,300
		Funds Received		2,494
		Donations		(1,020)
-----	1,300	<b>Balance carried forward Creditors</b>		2,774
	=====			=====
		<b>CONNEXIONAL FUNDS</b>	<b>(6)</b>	
0		Brought Forward		0
		Received from Circuit Churches in year		0
1,000		<i>Paid to:</i> Fund for Support of Presbyters & Deacons		0
1,000		Mission in Britain Fund		0
1,000		Property Fund		0
-----	3,000	<b>Paid during year</b>		0
	=====			=====

Name of Circuit ..... Brighton and Hove


**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 .....  (FMAAT) .....

Name of independent examiner ..... S J Neate

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner ..... FMAAT

Name of firm (where appropriate) .....

Address ..... 23 Surrenden Lodge Surrenden Road Brighton

..... Post Code .... BN1 6QB

Date .... 1st January 2024

\* delete or circle as appropriate

## **BRIGHTON & HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT (36/12) (“Circuit”) (Registered Charity 1134137) RESERVES’ POLICY 2023**

This Reserves’ Policy is in respect of all funds held by the Circuit which are controlled by the meetings of Circuit Trustees.

### **1. AIMS:**

- a. To secure and sustain the Circuit’s viability and future.
- b. To give assurance to the general public that the Circuit, which is registered with the Charity Commission, intends to use all moneys received by the Circuit for the purpose of the charity.

### **2. MISSION POLICY**

The Circuit’s Mission Policy provides for:

- a. The ministerial oversight and pastoral care of two Presbyters (one of whom is engaged for 2/3 WTE.
- b. Circuit Operations Manager .
- c. The maintenance of the Circuit manses
- d. Contributions to the wider work of District and Connexion

### **3. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### *a. Assessments*

The Circuit Assessment which determines the contribution made to the Circuit by each Church is reviewed annually. It is currently based upon a formula using Church income (95%) and Cash & Investments (5%)

#### *b. Property*

The Circuit has three manses and provision is made in the General Fund, for the annual maintenance programme, currently at a rate of £4,000 per manse. If extraordinary costs arise within the financial year these are met from reserves.

One manse is currently a commercial let the net income from which will be added to the reserves..

### **4. STANDING ORDERS**

- a. Methodist Constitutional Practice and Discipline (“CPD”) requires the Circuit to meet financial obligations regarding the support of Ministers and maintenance of manses.

### **5. FUNDS - on 31 August 2022**

- a. Circuit General Fund - Unrestricted
- b. Model Trust Fund - Unrestricted
- c. Maude Gill Bequest - Unrestricted (Circuit Designated “Mission”)
- d. Brian Kirkwood Community Mission Fund - Unrestricted
- e. Circuit Operations Manager - restricted
- f. Circuit Project - restricted
- g. (Unrestricted Funds may be used for any purposes of the Circuit. Restricted Funds must be used for specified purposes)

### **6. POLICY**

The Circuit will hold reserves amounting to approximately four month's expenditure which is estimated to be £60000. Funds in excess of this amount will be available to support the mission work undertaken by churches across the Circuit.

**BRIGHTON and HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT**  
**Registered Charity 1134137**

**Trustees' Annual Report**  
For the Connexional Year 2022 – 2023

The Trustees of the Brighton and Hove Methodist Circuit welcome readers of their Annual Report covering the Financial Year ended 31 August 2023.

**1. Aim and Purpose**

- a) All our churches are committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action. We aim to increase awareness of God's presence and celebrate God's love; be good neighbours to people in need and to challenge injustice; make more followers of Christ; and help people to learn and grow in faith. We offer safe and caring communities of nurture and respect that are committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- b) 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.
- c) It is to the Circuit that presbyters and probationers are stationed and in which local preachers are trained, admitted and exercise their calling.
- d) The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources for ministry which include people, property and finance.

**2. Objectives and Activities**

- a) In planning its activities, the Circuit 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**

- i. Throughout the year all churches offered an onsite Sunday morning service.
- ii. Two Circuit online services are offered monthly: one called Thinking Aloud with a progressive focus and the second Prayer & Meditation quiet & reflective in style.
- iii. A Circuit Together Service continues to be scheduled quarterly, held in one of the five churches with all members from across the circuit meeting together for unified worship and fellowship.
- iv. At an All-Saints Day service held on 1<sup>st</sup> November at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church, over sixty family members and friends remembered 40 people who died over the previous twelve months.
- v. All churches held a full range of special services marking the key Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas.
- vi. On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023 local preacher Ken Smith celebrated 60 years to the day that he received his accreditation as a Local Preacher and was presented with his long service certificate signed by the President of the Methodist Conference.
- vii. From January 2023 Hove Methodist Church started a monthly Friday after school Messy Church, whilst Patcham Church started monthly family fun days on a Sunday afternoon.

**b) Service**

- i. Every effort is made by all our churches to provide pastoral care and engage both with the family of faith and the wider community. This has included lunch clubs, coffee groups, arts and crafts, a range of children's activities and facilitating in person contact with all members.

ii. *University Chaplaincy.*

Historically the Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit has supported Chaplaincy work at The University of Sussex and the University of Brighton and is part of the Student Christian Movement (SCM). Whilst Student Development Worker Sue Harrington retired at the end of August 2022, she maintains contact, particularly at Sussex where there is a dedicated Chaplaincy Hub and helps as a volunteer as required. She also still administers the Brighton Facebook group and is happy for the Faith and Spirituality Advisors to refer any Methodist enquiries to her.

Both universities have moved to face-to-face meetings but still used Teams for online meetings where necessary or to save time and travel. The Sussex Meeting House is resuming its pivotal role with Freshers week much busier again and the foodbank continues via Administrator, Janine.

The Brighton Faith & Spirituality End Of Year Prize was given to the student pro bono law clinic where law students practise, supervised by qualified lawyers, helping people in the community. The prize acknowledges the student that gets the most from the clinic and demonstrated strong academic achievement on the Justice and Practice module.

c) **Mission and Evangelism**

i. *Circuit Refugee Project*

This project was launched from 1 January 2022 with the following vision:

*To make our Circuit a Sanctuary for All, where all feel safe and welcomed, including those fleeing violence, conflict and persecution. We will live out God's purpose and mission and offer hospitality, kindness, love and sanctuary to all through witness and service. We seek to build a culture of outreach and service by identifying and responding to the needs of those experiencing relocation and displacement. Through this project we will share our commitment to support and advocate for refugees and their families, working collaboratively in partnership with individuals and groups, particularly with refugees.*

At a special service that took place at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church on Sunday 12th March 2023, all five Methodist churches from the Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit received the Church of Sanctuary award; Dorset Gardens, Patcham, Stanford Avenue, Woodingdean and Hove. They are the first Methodist churches in Britain to achieve Church of Sanctuary status.

The City of Sanctuary movement began in 2007, when Sheffield became the UK's first ever City of Sanctuary. Since then, hundreds of local councils, schools, universities, libraries, theatres and more have been awarded with Sanctuary status, pledging to create a culture of solidarity, inclusivity and welcome. Brighton and Hove became a City of Sanctuary in 2015.

Revd Andy Lowe, Superintendent Minister of the Circuit, commented, "As individual churches and as a circuit we feel that there is a gospel call for us to be places where welcome, hospitality and inclusion are the norm. Loving our neighbour whoever they are, wherever they come from, is central to our faith and must be at the heart of all we do. Receiving these certificates and recognition is not an end in itself but just a mark in an ongoing journey to live out that command to love."

The founder of the City of Sanctuary movement, the Revd Inderjit Bhogal, preached at the service to celebrate the awards and commented, "This recognition of the support that these churches offer migrants comes at an important time when our government is making coming to the UK seeking sanctuary increasingly difficult. Applying for 'asylum' is not a crime, but criminalising people for even trying to get to a safe place is a crime against humanity. Detaining and deporting them without even considering their story and claim is immoral and unethical. Those who exploit already vulnerable people making money from them are those committing crime. Stop them, don't stop the boats. Government also should halt inhumane responses to a human catastrophe, and already vulnerable human beings."

Angie Lynn is the local Lead for Schools of Sanctuary and for Churches of Sanctuary in Brighton and Hove. She commented, "Brighton and Hove City of Sanctuary, also known as Sanctuary on Sea, has been proud to support the Methodist Circuit to achieve these



well-earned awards. We are delighted to applaud them as the first Churches of Sanctuary in our city for their work and ongoing commitment to engage with refugees and asylum seekers, celebrating their positive contribution to our lives together in Brighton and Hove. The work of the five churches is inspirational, and more vital than ever as our government continues to foster hostility where we want to nurture compassion and welcome. We look forward to the Methodist circuit helping to support other churches and faith centres to achieve Sanctuary Awards in the near future."

The five churches have all pledged their commitment to support refugees, inviting them to church to share about their fears and their lives. Church members have collected clothing for the newly arrived asylum seekers living in hotels while church buildings have been opened to host refugee social events. Some church members have offered accommodation to Ukrainian families seeking safety from the war. Refugees with an urgent need for practical help, such as assistance with school uniform and equipment for children, have been supported and food banks were established in each of the churches to provide for those living with no immigration status or seeking asylum.

The churches have also been working to change the conversation around migrants which has included participation in the annual Refugee Sunday in June 2023 as well as holding education events such as a "myth-busting community breakfast" which was held to hear the stories of refugees.

#### 4. **Financial Review**

##### a) **Income & Expenditure**

- (i) The single largest expense is that relating to the employment of ministerial staff. This includes stipends; National Insurance contributions; pension contributions and the provision and maintenance of the manses. Expenditure for this year remained within the budget forecast. Circuit income was in line with budget projections.
- (ii) The Covid recovery plan continued providing stability for churches until the restrictions were lifted. The impact of this was the reduction of the Circuit reserves by £35000. This is the second, and final, year that the Circuit will use Reserves to the churches as they recover their income streams post the pandemic.

##### b) **Reserves Policy**

The Reserves Policy was reviewed and updated.

#### 5. **Structure, Governance and Management**

##### a) **The Circuit Meeting**

- (i) The Circuit Meeting of the Brighton and Hove Circuit is the body of Managing Trustees and is responsible for the affairs of the Circuit and the development of Circuit Policy. The Circuit Meeting together with the Superintendent Minister and the Circuit Leadership team exercises that combination of spiritual leadership and administrative efficiency which enables the Circuit to fulfil its purposes as set out in the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church. 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.
- (ii) Following earlier consultations about the future structure and organisation of the circuit, a detailed exploration was carried out on the concept of one combined Society covering multiple sites replacing the current structure of five individual societies plus circuit infrastructure. The consensus by the Autumn of 2022 was that the benefits of the one society concept do not outweigh the complexities/difficulties identified and reservations/resistance expressed. There will be additional financial costs to the change, churches still want separate control of their money; worship will not change fundamentally; and the governance idea of a single society meeting is not deemed suitable to serve the needs of each location/community. Therefore, the conclusion is that we maintain the focus as is, whilst maximising any opportunities/benefits to working together, within the existing unchanged circuit structure.

(iii) *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*

Considerable effort was made to ensure that our circuit and each of our churches and particularly all managing trustees was able to complete their 2023 GDPR Annual Checklist to be compliant with the requirement from the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP). Ongoing education around best practice has also continued.

(iv) The Circuit Meeting met on four occasions, on 13<sup>th</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 and 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

b) **Churches**

Brighton and Hove Methodist Circuit [www.brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk](http://www.brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

There are five churches in the Circuit:

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church [www.dgmc.org.uk](http://www.dgmc.org.uk)

Hove Methodist Church [www.hovemethodistchurch.co.uk](http://www.hovemethodistchurch.co.uk)

Patcham Methodist Church [www.patchammethodistchurch.co.uk](http://www.patchammethodistchurch.co.uk)

Stanford Avenue Methodist Church [www.stanfordavenuemeth.co.uk](http://www.stanfordavenuemeth.co.uk)

Woodingdean Methodist Church [www.woodingdeanmethodistchurch.co.uk](http://www.woodingdeanmethodistchurch.co.uk)

On 1 Nov. 2022 the Circuit had 275 members

c) **Staffing**

Revd. Andrew Lowe, Circuit Superintendent,

Revd. Deborah Cornish,

Revd. Dan Woodhouse

Steve Preston, Circuit Operations Manager

6. **Administrative Information**

a) **Safeguarding**

Rosemary Cuthbert continues as Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

There has been a strong emphasis on training & education and during the year *Creating Safer Space* methodist foundation and refresher training sessions were held at Hove, Patcham and Woodingdean churches. In September 2022, the Local Preachers gathered at Patcham and did an on-line Advanced Training together.

This now completes our circuit compliance of safeguarding training which must be refreshed every four years. Over this period 75 circuit folk have completed/renewed their training, which includes completing the online Church of England 'Foundations' course and the Methodist Creating Safer Space: Advanced training module which is only offered via the district.

No Safeguarding issues were reported during the period.