

Leigh and Hindley Methodist Circuit

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1st SEPTEMBER 2024 to 31st AUGUST 2025

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the Circuit for the year ended 31st August 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2015 as applicable to the Financial Reporting Standard (FRSSE) 2015.

Registered Charity Number: 1142805

Charity's Principal Address: Kingsleigh Methodist Church, King Street, Leigh WN7 4LR

Trustees

Mrs. Susan Fisher acts as Circuit Treasurer for the Charity.

The members of the Circuit Meeting are the Charity Trustees. A full list of trustees is included in this report.

Ministers

Reverend Wilfred Robinson (Superintendent)

Reverend Katharine Bland

Reverend John Fisher (Part-time Supernumerary)

PROFESSIONAL BODIES EMPLOYED BY THE CIRCUIT 2024/2025

Iain Crompton/ Adam Robson Lambert, Smith Hampton (Chartered Surveyors),
4th Floor, Windmill Green, 24 Mount Street,
Manchester. M2 3NN (Sale of Wigan Road)

Lea Hough (Chartered Surveyors), Oakshaw House, 2 Capricorn Park, Blakewater Road,
Blackburn. BB1 5QR (Quinquennial Inspections)

Sapphire Homes (Estate Agents), 80, Market Street, Wigan. WN1 1HX
(Maintenance Contract/Manses)

Joanne Russell at Sinton Solicitors, Barrack Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6DB

Independent Examiners, Philip Martin Ltd, Crown House, 4, High Street, Tyldesley
Greater Manchester. M29 8AL

Bank

The Circuit's Bank account is held at National Westminster Bank Plc, Leigh.

Advisers

The Circuit's Investment managers are TMCP (Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes)
CFB (Central Finance Board)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Description of the charity's trusts:

The charity is controlled by its governing document the Deed of Union (1932) and Methodist Church Act (1976). The charitable trust is registered with the Charity Commission.

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

The trustee's listed have served throughout the year. The Managing Trustees of Local Churches and the Circuit have the authority to appoint new trustees and to fill any vacancies arising through resignation or death of an existing trustee. Ministers and circuit stewards are automatically trustees. Circuit Managing Trustees have regular meetings where the Circuit's main areas of activity and the aims of the charity are discussed and agreed.

Structure

The Circuit is part of the North West England Methodist District and appoints representatives to its meeting (The District Synod) and is accountable to the Methodist Conference.

A Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) that comprises of the Ministers and the Circuit Stewards supports the Meeting of the Trustees (Circuit Meeting). The CLT advises the Circuit Meeting and ensures that its decisions are enacted.

Safeguarding: The community sees Circuit and Church organisations as safe places and many young children and vulnerable adults use them. The risk of inappropriate behavior is controlled by application of the statutory procedures for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults. Additionally, in the year, the Circuit updated its Safeguarding Policy using the model that has been recommended by the Methodist Church. Churches are responsible for ensuring that the requirements are met in all their activities. The Circuit appoints a Safeguarding Officer supported by a Safeguarding Coordinator and ensures that each Church appoints its own Safeguarding Officer. The Circuit Safeguarding Officer supports them and calls meetings to share good practice. Training sessions are made available for all those in Churches and Circuit organisations involved in work with Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training module has been completed by all Presbyters, Local Preachers, Circuit Stewards and Church Stewards, as required.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements are also adhered to.

The Circuit monitors that all those who are required to do training or refresher training have attended and completed the necessary training.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

This is the Circuit's first year for Accrual's accounting due to the sale of Wigan Road Methodist Church on Friday 28th March 2025. The 2 Circuit Manses will be independently valued during the next 12 months.

Reserves Policy

This document includes all funds held by the Circuit Meeting as charity trustees.

Our Reserves Policy relates to our general (unrestricted) funds that are freely available to be used for any or all of the purposes of the Circuit. Other funds are also included for the sake of clarity and openness and to show that the Circuit has a policy for the management of all its money, not simply reserves as strictly defined.

The aims of the policy are:

- To secure and sustain the Circuit's viability and future
- To give reassurance to the general public that the Circuit, as a charity, intends to use all the money coming into its care for the purposes of the charity.
- To show how the Circuit's resources will be used to deliver its vision and mission.

For the Circuit to meet the first of these on-going obligations it relies on contributions from each of the 10 churches, on a basis assessed annually in consultation with the churches. In this current year the Circuit Assessments were increased by 2.3%. During 2024/2025 churches have worked hard to be able to pay their agreed assessments. District Assessment was increased by 2.3%. Ministers' stipends increased by 6.81%.

Ideally to deal with fluctuations and maintain cash flow the Circuit would maintain general reserves of 6 month's expenditure on these activities (typically around £85,000).

During the year each church was given a Utilities grant of 10% of their 2023/2024 Utilities bills, as per the Churches Standard Form of Accounts cost to Circuit £7,279.00. The Circuit also gave £700.00 each to two Churches towards the cost of their Quinquennial Inspections this financial year.

The Circuit Model Trust Fund balance as at the 31st August 2025 was £569,791.33p. The proceeds of the sale of Wigan Road Methodist Church were £350,000.00. After all necessary payments had been made the balance of £335,207.80 was paid into the Circuit TMCP account.

The various dedicated CFB accounts to help support the Circuit and Churches mission, discipleship and evangelism have not been drawn on in this financial year.

The Circuit is currently considering how these funds can be best used to support the work and worship of 10 churches and its 2 presbyters and part-time supernumerary presbyter, particularly in the areas of children, young people and family's work.

Restricted Funds Trust 349 - Beech House Trust (£4691 at August 2025) – Monies from this trust will be used as laid down under Standing Orders

As at 31st August 2025 the net current assets of the Circuit are £757,560.00p

The charity currently faces no major risks that would stop it from maintaining its objectives. Circuit assessments and budget have been agreed for 2025/26.

Risk Management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the Circuit is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission priorities were recently revised to recognise progress on earlier priorities:

“As the Leigh and Hindley Methodist Circuit we are determined:

1. To Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind. Our first priority is to worship Him, and grow in faith;
2. To be a prayerful people;
3. To explore all God-given opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with others;
4. To be prepared to consider new ideas in order to extend our mission;
5. To love and care for all God's people but especially the vulnerable and all who are struggling;
6. To encourage, support and give a voice to under 25's, building upon, and investing in, the Children's and Youth work already happening within the Circuit;
7. To continue to work and pull together as a Circuit and as Hubs.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document:

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.
- (e) Taking religious assemblies in local Methodist schools

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Part 1

Summary of the main activities under taken for the public benefit in relations to these objects.

The trustees confirm that they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Circuit produces a quarterly preaching plan to ensure regular acts of worship take place at each of the 10 Methodist Churches in its geographical area. These are open to all people without charge. The Churches welcome all families for baptisms, marriages and funerals and make their facilities available for community use.

The Circuit continues to support a Food Bank operating in the Centre of Leigh under the auspices of the Trussell Trust.

Individual Churches within the Circuit operate a variety of community services for young and old which are open to all regardless of faith. These include Warm Spaces, Luncheon Clubs, Coffee Mornings for people and varied youth activities.

Part 2

Summary of other activities.

Lay Employees

In this current Methodist year 2024/2025 the Circuit does not have any Lay Employees.

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders along with the Circuit Staff meet quarterly to discuss worship, new ideas and to share in Holy Communion. During the year there are a number of Worship Leader training sessions.

Governance

The Circuit Meeting normally meets 3 times a year and CLT meet every 6/7 weeks.

Churches and Circuit continue to carry out their legal duties in respect of pensions and are strongly urged by the Methodist Connexion to pay the Living Wage to all Lay Employee's.

The Circuit Treasurer invites Church Treasurers to meet annually to discuss the finances of the Circuit and Churches.

Circuit Property

The Circuit owns two manses, Marshbrook Close, Hindley and Burton Close, Culcheth.

Culcheth manse had to have a new central heating boiler fitted last January costing £2,285.00.

The Circuit continues to ensure that both manses meet the required standards through regular maintenance and improvements. Both manses have up to date Gas certificates and EPC reports.

Circuit Spiritual Weekend

In May 2025 the Circuit held a Circuit Spiritual Weekend led by Revd. P. Gough from Chorley focusing on the Book of Nehemiah. Friday evening was held at Bedford Church with everyone enjoying a Fish and Chip tea and introduction to the Weekend. Saturday was a full day held at Astley and Tyldesley Church with a morning and afternoon session studying Nehemiah. A buffet lunch was provided by the Circuit. The day finished with a time of Worship led by Revds. P. Gough and A. Perry. Sunday morning worship was held at Kingsleigh Church with a packed congregation; Revd. Gough led the Service. It was felt to be an excellent weekend with lots of positive feedback.

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This is a Youth Weekend held at Birmingham NEC for Young People from all over the country usually the first weekend in October. In October 2024 2 Young People and 2 Leaders from Hindley St. John's went by coach with others from around neighboring Circuits. The cost for each young person is £120.00 with the Circuit paying the cost, total £240.00. The Leaders go for free. Everyone sleeps in tents. There are lots of activities for the young people to participate in Bible study, crafts and various sports. There are different styles of worship like Late Evening Holy Communion ably led by various musicians, plus a Silent Disco. Both Young People and Leaders came home exhausted having had an excellent weekend.

Tickets have been purchased for 3Generate October 2025 for 6 Young People and 3 Leaders. The cost being £720.00 to be split 1/3rds District, Circuit, Hindley St. John's.

Epworth Education Trust

The Circuit continues to work closely with the two Methodist Primary Schools in Leigh – Bedford Hall Methodist and Westleigh Methodist. Both the schools are now part of the Epworth Education Trust formed in 2020 by the merger of the Acom Trust and the Wesley Trust. There are now 11 primary schools within the EET and the Trust is an approved sponsor in the primary, secondary and special sector, were the current articles of association enable both Methodist Schools and Community Schools to become part of the family of schools. The schools currently span 7 Local Authorities, (Bury, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Oldham, St. Helens, Tameside and Wigan). The schools are extremely proud of their Methodist inheritance and the positive impact it makes upon all aspects of school life.

Both schools are well represented on their Local Advisory Boards by Circuit Foundation Governors who are approved by the Circuit prior to membership.

Both schools have a higher percentage than the national average of children supported by the additional Pupil Premium to address the needs of those from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds. They deploy these resources to provide a wide range of practical and learning support for these pupils, ranging from breakfast clubs to employment of additional teaching assistants and subsidizing educational trips. In both schools the work of the Pastoral Managers adds great value in supporting and understanding the needs of pupils and their families, so to ensure effective Safeguarding and Attendance of all pupils.

In their most recent inspections as part of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Bedford Hall and Westleigh were both rated Excellent.

The Circuit supports the work of Bedford Hall and Westleigh Methodist Primary Schools whose children and families include many of none or different faiths.

Circuit Ministers, Local Preachers and Church Members, from Bedford and Hindley Green Churches, visit both schools on a regular basis leading full school assemblies, additionally supported by Circuit Members who deliver Bible stories from "Open the Book".

Education Sunday Services are held in School and Church where schools and church come together to share worship, these services are well attended by pupils and their families. The "It's Your Move" programme designed to support children in their transition from Primary School to High School is an annual regular feature. The schools feel privileged to be able to offer this support to all children.

The Foundation Governors continue to play a pivotal part in the life of the schools.

The Trustees who manage the Charity:

| Trustee name | Office (if any) | Dates acted. (If not for whole year) | Name of body entitled to appoint trustee | Leadership team |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Gillian Baglee | | | Kingsleigh Church | |
| Revd. K. Bland | Minister | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Delia Caswell | | | Glazebury Church | |
| David Clayworth | | | Hindley St. John's Church | |
| Janet Crozier | | | Glazebury Church | |
| Joyce Daniels | Local Preachers Secretary | | Ex-Officio | |
| Alan Eaves | | | Astley & Tyldesley Church | |
| Revd J. Evans | Supernumerary | | Ex-Officio | |
| Revd. J. Fisher | Supernumerary | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Susan Fisher | Circuit Treasurer, Circuit Steward, Synod Representative | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Nick Fletcher | | | Kingsleigh Church | |
| Margaret Freeborn | | | Bag Lane Church | |
| Keith Garbett | | | Atherton Central Church | |
| Irene Goodhew | | | Atherton Central Church | |
| Joanne Grundy | | | Glazebury Church | |
| Deacon Janet Heys | Supernumerary | | Ex-Officio | |
| Maureen Hilton | Circuit Steward Property | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Janette Hutchinson | | | Culcheth Church | |
| Janet Jennions | | | Hindley St. John's Church | |
| Philip Kennedy | | | Hindley Green Church | |
| Jean Leech | | | Bedford Church | |
| Thomas Martin | Senior Steward C.M Secretary Synod Representative | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Jean Maryan | | | Astley & Tyldesley Church | |
| Kevin Meredith | Synod Representative | | Bedford Church | |
| Susan Mooney | | | Kingsleigh Church | |
| Victoria Nichol | | | Bag Lane Church | |
| Lynda Nuttall | | | Atherton Central Church | |
| David Ogilvy | | | Culcheth Church | |
| Yvonne Owens | | | Hindley St. John's Church | |
| John Perfect | | | Astley & Tyldesley Church | |
| Mavis Power | | | Bag Lane Church | |
| Valerie Pownall | | | Bedford Church | |
| Vicky Robinson | | | Hindley Green Church | |
| Revd. W. Robinson | Superintendent Minister | | Ex-Officio | Yes |
| Carol Sherratt | | | Culcheth Church | |
| Elizabeth Smith | | | Hindley Green Church | |
| Susan Stewart | | | Hindley Green Church | |
| Revd. S. Whitehead | Supernumerary | | Ex-Officio | |
| Andrew Wilcox | | | Bamfurlong Church | |
| Stan Worgan | | | Bamfurlong Church | |

LEGAL OBLIGATION

The trustees confirm that there are no serious incidents or other matters, which they should have brought to the attention of the Charity Commission.

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above at their meeting on 23rd April 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Revd. Wilfred Robinson
Chairperson/Superintendent
Date:

Mrs. Susan Fisher
Circuit Treasurer/Steward
Date:

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