

Trustees' Annual Report

Charity Name: Leatherhead Methodist Church
Charity Number: 1212932
Financial Year: 1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025



Reference and Administrative Details

Leatherhead Methodist Church (LMC) is part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain and operated within the Dorking & Horsham Circuit during this reporting year.

Principal Address: Leatherhead Methodist Church, Church Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8AY.

Trustees: The Church Council members served as Managing Trustees during the year, chaired by the Minister. Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution of the Methodist Church.

Daniel J Balsdon	Anne Ray
John Bees	Phillip Reeves
Alison Foster (resigned 18 th May 2025)	Julian Rickard
Andrew Foster	Norma Show
Sue Friend	Ron Shaw
Alison Gillott	Ian Smith
Tim Hall	David Stoves
Nicholas Joyce	Carol Stoves
Mary Pittam (resigned 31 st August 2025)	Mark Trotter
Maureen Prescott	James Wild (resigned 18 th May 2025)
Les Prescott	Liz Yeowell

Minister:

Rev. Dan Balsdon (with oversight support from Rev. Gavin Hancocks during sabbatical period)

Independent Examiner: Mr. R. Lynch

Structure, Governance and Management

Leatherhead Methodist Church is governed by its Church Council, which acts as the charity's Managing Trustees. The Church Council meets regularly to oversee the mission, ministry, finances, property, safeguarding, and strategic priorities of the church.

The church operates under the governance structures of the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Policies relating to safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and financial controls are reviewed regularly.

During the year, the Church Council approved updated delegation arrangements for financial decision-making to ensure clarity and accountability.

Objects and Activities

The purposes of the charity are consistent with those of the Methodist Church, namely:

- The advancement of the Christian faith in Leatherhead and surrounding areas
- The provision of public worship and pastoral care

- Engagement with the local community through outreach, partnership and service

Activities undertaken during the year included:

- Weekly worship, and hosting New Fire most months
 - Pastoral support through a redeveloped model of pastoral care that empowers the whole church family to care for one another, supported and overseen by the pastoral team.
 - Children, youth and family ministry, including toddler groups, youth activities and family events
 - Community groups such as Time for Team and caring for the community garden at the top of Church Road.
 - Support for local and Methodist charities
 - Community worship in local care settings
 - Discipleship opportunities including regular connect groups, and retreat days.
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Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Leatherhead Methodist Church provides public benefit through open worship, community activities, pastoral care, and partnerships with local organisations including Trinity School, Leatherhead Youth Project, Leatherhead Foodbank, and residential care settings. Activities are open to the wider community and aim to promote wellbeing, inclusion and spiritual growth.

Review of the Year

Worship and Discipleship

Worship continued to be central to the life of the church, supported by a strong team of worship leaders and local preachers. We have seen increasing attendance at Sunday worship. Connect Groups met regularly, including seasonal Lent groups, supporting discipleship and fellowship.

Pastoral Care & Social activity

The church continued to develop and embed its new pastoral care model focused on caring for people through groups and relationships rather than fixed lists. Feedback has been encouraging, and the model continues to be under careful review.

We have organised various social events throughout the year to both build fellowship within the congregation and community, and invite others along.

Children, Youth and Families

Toddler groups, youth activities, Discoverers on Sundays, and family-focused events continued to grow, with increasing engagement from new families. We ceased the Secret Movie due to declining impact, and in August 2025 we launched our new Stay and Play, a new model of family ministry by offering an all-age drop-in space with games, toys and crafts.

Volunteer support remains essential to sustaining this work.

Community Engagement

Time for Tea remained well attended and valued. Community worship at Fairfield and Hartfield continued to provide meaningful support to residents.

We continue to work with our partners, Leatherhead Trinity School. Our Children, Youth & Family Lead continued to run a Tuesday lunch club, and coordinate Thursday collective worships led by local church leaders. We also hosted Trinity school for a number of end of term worship events, where parents and carers are also invited to attend.

Our minister continues as a governor of the school.

Fundraising activities supported local charities including Leatherhead Youth Project. We also worked with Effingham Methodist Church to run a stall at a local community market at Christmas, and sponsored a community event held at a local recreation ground.

After much work and fundraising, our external access defibrillator was installed, and we ran a defib training evening in October 2024 in partnership with the St Johns Ambulance cadets who meet on the premises.

We continued to host LunchBox, a community drop in offering community, connection and a light meal. We host them free of charge, and provide them some storage space.

Property, Eco Church and Sustainability

The church continued its commitment to environmental responsibility, building on its Eco Church Bronze Award and working towards Silver. Actions included renewable energy supply, education, and community engagement.

Early in the year, we installed a new heating system which we had spent many months working towards. Since installation, we have invested time analysing our usage to maximise our efficient use of the system.

Governance and Circuit Life

Due to increasing annual income, we registered Leatherhead Methodist Church as a registered charity during the year.

The year also included our minister taking a 3 month sabbatical, and staff taking time off for medical reasons. Collectively these have made the year challenging to both maintain normal operations, and strive to grow and develop.

In Summer 2025 we reviewed our progress with the church development plan and began working towards launching a revised set of development priorities in the autumn.

Significant time was given to discussions regarding the proposed merger of the Dorking & Horsham Circuit with Redhill & East Grinstead. The Church Council unanimously supported the proposal, which was confirmed by the Methodist Conference in July 2025. Therefore from 1st September, we will be part of the Gatwick and Mole Valley Circuit.

Financial Review

The accounts for the year have been independently examined.

The church saw an improved financial position during the year, supported by increased giving, careful cost management, and one-off income including a legacy, but continues to operate at a deficit drawing on financial reserves. Significant expenditure included work on the heating system and building maintenance, alongside regular expenditure on staffing and circuit assessment.

The trustees consider the charity to be financially unstable, although moving in the right direction and towards stability. Reducing the deficit continues to be part of our strategic planning, while also recognising ongoing challenges related to building costs and future sustainability.”

Reserves Policy

The trustees undertook the annual review of our reserves policy in October 2024.

1. As necessary, use funds to cover shortfall in income to meet expenditure incurred and committed.
 2. As necessary, use funds to pay our lay workers salary costs for a further two years.
 3. Ensure reserves are retained sufficient enough to meet half year estimated expenditure.
 4. As required, use funds for premises' development with particular consideration to roof replacement, heating system renewal and lighting system upgrade.
 5. Renew status and policy annually at the first trustees' meeting each financial year.
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Risk Management

The trustees actively identify and manage risks. Key risks include:

- Rising building and energy costs
- aging building with accelerating deterioration
- Volunteer capacity and leadership succession
- Safeguarding and compliance responsibilities

Appropriate policies, insurance and oversight are in place to mitigate these risks.

Plans for the Future

Priorities for the coming year include:

- Developing our prayer life and discipleship pathways
 - Growing confidence in sharing our faith.
 - Continuing to develop pastoral care and volunteer teams
 - Sustaining and growing children, youth and family work
 - Progressing environmental sustainability goals
 - Supporting the transition to a new merged circuit
 - Ongoing review of property and heating systems
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Trustees' Responsibilities Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Approved by the Trustees of Leatherhead Methodist Church on 24th February 2026

Signed: *DJBalsdon*

Chair of Trustees