

MINUTES

Item

Action

Welcome: Margaret read from John 1 v 1-9 and contrasted the dark which brings uncertainty, fear, anxiety and loneliness with light that brings company, guidance and a sense of calm. There is darkness in our world today but God's light has never been overcome. Our world is full of disunity but John's gospel reminds us that the light is available for everyone although not everyone chooses light. We are called to point to the sign of light in the darkness. The meeting then opened in prayer.

Present: Rev Margaret Asiedu, Chris Banham, Lyn Bignell, Andrew Chambers, Tricia Johnson, Peter Mace, Roger Maidens, Michael May, Gaynor Miles, Rev Graham Miles (Chair), Heather Neale, Richard Neale, Irene Unsworth, Bryan Utteridge, Sheila Warsap

In Attendance: Paul Cooper (Circuit Property Officer), Richard Johnson (Withern), Catherine Rolph (minutes)

Apologies: Nick Adams, Ann Briggs, Nancy Cartwright, Jean Cawkwell, Helen Clough, Ivan Clough, Christine Foulds, Dennis Kemp, Edward Mossop, Liz Mossop, Anne Moyes, Kate O'Flynn, Neil Poulson, Doreen Silvester, John Silvester, Josie Towle

Minutes of the last meeting on 17/09/25: Accepted and signed.

Matters arising from the minutes of 17/09/25: Michael asked whether the grant payment agreed to Louth Methodist Church had been actioned and Catherine said that it had.

Correspondence: None received.

1. Finance: Irene Unsworth – Circuit Finance Liaison Officer

- **SFAAB to 31.8.25 subject to Independent Examination:** These show income and expenditure for the years ending August 2025 and, for comparison, 2024 with the corresponding balance sheets for each year. In the notes to the accounts section it mentions tangible fixed assets for use by the Circuit which is related to the requirement to separate land and property values in the accounts. The land was valued at £585k in 2015, and the notes state that in the trustees' opinion this valuation still holds. The notes also state that in our opinion the value of the property is at least as high as it was in 2015 so no depreciation has been factored in.
The meeting agreed to accept the accounts and the wording of the notes subject to independent examination. They were signed by Michael (acting as Financial Advisor) & Graham
- **Reserves Policy:** The reserves policy was presented and elicited no questions.
The meeting agreed to accept this policy and it was signed by Michael & Graham.
- **Trustees Annual Report:** This is required by the Charity Commission and is an annual summary of the work and financial position of the charity. We include a list of trustees and churches. If anyone believes details are incorrect, please contact the Circuit Administrator.
The meeting agreed to accept this report.
- **Draft Budget:** The exact figures for Connexion and District assessments are not yet known but the increase has been proposed at 1.1%. There will be a stipend rise from Sept 26 which has yet to be confirmed but 4.47% has been proposed and we have an estimate of 5% in the budget. The cost of surplus property will hopefully diminish as property gets sold. Assessments will be finalised once all the outgoings are known. To balance the budget £55K will be drawn from TMCP, leaving a 'surplus' in the accounts of

ALL

£4k.

The meeting agreed to accept this draft budget

- **Finance Statement to end November 2025:** This is proportionate to where we are in the year. The £5k donated to Covenham has been returned as a payment to TMCP and will be moved to our current account in due course. The sundry income of £4k shown is for sale of the Capela van.
 - **Amalgamation of Trusts:** (Michael May) With Mid-Lincs ceasing to exist their funds were split between Lincoln and our circuit on an 80/20% split. Our 20% included 5 trusts shown on Michael's document. TMCP have agreed that all the bequests listed can be combined into a 'various bequests' heading to simplify reporting. Funds from property sales now go directly into our Circuit Model Trust Fund, so it is proposed that the funds from the trust relating to the sale of the Greenwood property are moved into our CMTF.
- The meeting agreed to these proposals.***

2. CLT Matters:

- **Circuit Administrator Recruitment:** The person appointed after the first interview had to withdraw for personal reasons. The role was readvertised around the Circuit and District and two further applicants were interviewed. It was a close decision, but the successful candidate is Mrs Jane Corden who is a member at Louth. She will start next week so handover will be brief. Please give her your support.
- **Review of Safeguarding Caseworker Role:** Safeguarding administration is now being handled by the Circuit Administrator, and in the absence of anyone coming forward to take on the Circuit Safeguarding lead, CLT have drawn up job descriptions for 1 or 2 safeguarding 'caseworkers'. They would be a point of contact when cases arise and attend the occasional District meeting.

This job description was accepted by the Circuit Meeting and the role will be advertised

Admin

- **Review of Circuit Grant Form:** This was drawn up following an approach for a grant from Alford MC. It is a form that any church can fill in and submit. It is available on the website and its existence will be advertised.
- **Christians Against Poverty Update:** (Michael May) The recent CLT meeting to discuss the possibility of setting up a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Debt Centre/Hub in the Circuit to cover two of the most deprived areas in the country, Mablethorpe and Skegness, was addressed by Marcus Harborne, manager of the Nettleham CAP Centre. His enthusiasm for the CAP project encouraged CLT members to suggest that talks could be given to churches in the Circuit to encourage members to support the idea. As CAP can provide speakers, it was suggested that Michael May should approach CAP to seek speakers to lead services at 6 larger churches: Alford, Louth, Mablethorpe, Skegness, Sutton-on-Sea and Wainfleet. The suggestion was that services marked as LT on the Plan would be suitable dates. Accordingly, Michael has contacted CAP requesting speakers to give a 20 minute talk in place of the sermon on one of the LT dates in January and February, giving his details as the church contact to avoid any embarrassment if contact was made with the churches prior to the announcement of the request at the Circuit Meeting. The service will still need to be prepared locally to suit the inclusion of the CAP speaker giving the talk as the sermon. Church members will be invited to support the project in one of three ways – volunteering as a Debt Coach or a Befriender (full training will be provided by CAP) or simply praying for the project. Catherine has prepared prayer cards, which were made available at the Circuit Meeting, which will also be provided for the relevant service as well as to all other churches in the Circuit to encourage all churches to support the Project.

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3. Property Update: Paul Cooper – Circuit Property Officer

- **St Marys:** The sale process has been very long-winded, but our solicitor says the aim is for completion mid-December although this may slip.
- **Burgh:** TMCP approved the sale to the Council for 90k. Paul is now waiting for the council to provide the name of their solicitors and the sale process can begin.

- **Conisholme:** The Land Registry have confirmed our ownership of the extra land and the buyers have been updated so hopefully the sale can proceed.
- **Seathorne/Winthorpe:** This has now had new quinquennials done on the church and the schoolroom so we can see what work is essential. This was something the Winthorpe Community Partnership wanted doing before taking on the lease. They were also concerned about the rent increase after 3 years (which we have agreed to handle but not in a formal way), the cost of Methodist Insurance – we are happy for them to get a different insurer, and what happens when the lease expires after 7 years, which is something we will be able to address as we wish to continue supporting them. Paul and Michael will look at QQI and see what work the Circuit will agree to do and bring this back to Circuit Meeting. After signing the lease WCP would take on maintenance.

Paul
Michael

4. **Missions:**

Graham commented that our CAP work would come under the heading of mission, together with our work at Seathorne/Winthorpe.

5. **Safeguarding:**

A foundation safeguarding training course is running on January 14th in the afternoon at Louth MC and invites have gone round the Circuit. Anyone wishing to take part should email the Circuit Office.

Connexion are conducting a District audit for safeguarding in March next year and churches may have to answer questions and complete questionnaires. One area they will be investigating is safer recruitment – do we conduct safer recruitment in our churches? This involves creating job descriptions, interviewing people and taking up references, and then keeping records of the procedure.

6. **Caravan Chaplaincy:**

Bryan had circulated a report prior to the meeting. He has now lost another person that he visited. He also mentioned that the Louth shop that took posters – Feathers – has now adopted the Chaplaincy as its Christmas Charity and has collected 21 seasonal gifts for chaplains to take out. Graham thanked Bryan for the work he has done since taking over as manager of the chaplaincy.

7. **Local Preacher Matters:**

Nick had sent apologies but had provided a report which Graham read and will be circulated with the minutes.

8. **AOB:**

Bryan updated the meeting on Louth Churches for Refugees of which he is a trustee and who the Circuit supports through the rental provision of a former manse. LCfR hope to bring in a 3rd family but are now looking for a new rental property on the open market. An agent Bryan contacted was initially unhelpful but on being approached in person feels they may be able to work round the issues. Many people like to interview the people they rent to, but this would be impossible in this case as the Home Office will only allow a family to come once housing has been arranged.

This was Catherine's last meeting as Circuit Administrator and Graham thanked her for her work and support over the last few years.

9. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

7pm Wednesday 11th March 2026 – Spilsby

7pm Tuesday 16th June 2026 - Louth

The meeting closed by sharing the grace.