***943 Closure of Chapels.*** *(1) Public services may not be discontinued in any chapel or preaching-place, nor any preaching-place removed from the circuit plan, until permission has been given by the Synod on the recommendation of the managing trustees, the Circuit Meeting and the district Policy Committee. The Circuit Meeting shall submit any such recommendation to the district committee before any steps are taken to carry the intention into effect.*

**Church:** Dunnington Methodist Church **Circuit:** York (29/33)

**1. What is the present membership?**  12

**2. What is the number on the community roll?** 19 adherentsare on the Community Roll (including 2 joint Anglican-Methodist members)

**3.  What is the average adult attendance at worship?**  12

**4. What other activities take place on the premises?**

Currently only the local council use the building approx. every other month. This is new as other venues have not been available. Before the pandemic activities included:

* an ecumenical weekly prayer group (of 6 people) *– it now meets in people’s homes*,
* Weekly mid-week coffee mornings *– the local parish church now does these*
* Messy Church (with the local Parish church), once a quarter,
* some use for Pilates fitness classes *– now in the local Sports Centre*
* monthly lunch ‘stop’
* monthly film nights
* Community choir practices – *now held in the Community Reading Room*

**5. Provide a financial overview – e.g. income vs expenditure.**

Income vs expenditure showed a DEFICIT of £5,901 for the year (20/21);

leaving reserves of £9,105.

**6. If a new building is not to be provided, what provision will be made for the present congregation and other activities?**

The Methodist Church in Dunnington has been in an LEP with the Parish church (St Nicholas’ Church, Church of England) for over 20 years. The two churches have operated independently most recently, with occasional joint services and activities. The previous minister did lead mid-week Eucharist services ever-so-often, and was also on the shared rota for church input into weekly assemblies at the local primary school. I (as the current incumbent) am scheduled to lead mid-week communion twice each quarter, and lead Sunday worship and/or preach approximately every four to six weeks at St Nicholas’ church. The current clergy and leadership at St Nicholas parish church are very amenable to local Methodists being involved in their activities, but do not feel they have the resources to take on the management of the Methodist chapel building, despite having used these premises for some of their activities (considering them far more appropriate and usable than their own).

A survey asking where people would worship if the chapel closed revealed:

3 people would worship at the parish church (St Nicholas’);

4 people would split worship between St Nicholas’ and Methodist churches in York Circuit;

1 person would attend St Nicholas’ mid-week communion services

2 people would attend St Nicholas family worship (held monthly, and on special days)

6 people would like and would attend Methodist led worship at St Nicholas’ church.

**7.   What impact will the closure have on the local community?**

The parish Church which although nominally quite ’high’ theologically worships using ‘lighter’ liturgies, and modern hymn books. Their acknowledgement of being in an LEP means their services are Anglican, but using RCL rather than the Anglican Lectionary, and they use straightforward liturgies rather than default Anglican material or the BCP. This means a majority of the Methodist congregation are OK to worship with the Anglican community at St Nicholas’.

The village community has seen the Methodist chapel as a resource for local organisations to use, as it has a flexible worship area (easily moved chairs), and fixed projector and screen, and a small but adequate kitchen area, with a reasonably large garden space to the rear. **Clearly, however, the village has other venues where the community organisations can (and clearly have taken to using as Lockdown has eased).**

**8.    What other Methodist Churches and Sunday Schools are there in the neighbourhood and what are their distance from the property to be sold?**

Stamford Bridge Methodist church is 4.0 miles away, east of Dunnington.

Heslington (Anglican-Methodist) Church LEP is 3.2 miles away (towards York).

There has not been a Sunday School at Dunnington for many years, but Heslington LEP does have provision for children on Sundays, with a few attending each week.

**9.    What initiatives have the membership tried, if any, to encourage the residents of the community to become part of the worshipping family?**

There is a regular news-sheet circulated throughout the local community advertising what goes on in the parish church and at the chapel – one of the LEP initiatives. This may have facilitated a number of locals to be users of the building, but has not resulted in anyone taking on any role to facilitate these, or join with the worshipping community. Making the building available to the village community and as a user-friendly space for ecumenical activities (regular coffee mornings) and Messy Church has not increased the numbers in membership. Attempts to encourage others to take on responsibilities in local leadership have resulted in a failure to have sufficient volunteers to run the church.

**10.   Does the membership consider that their mission is complete from this building and why?**

The membership does not consider its mission is complete, but there is no one able to take on what is required to do this.

**11. Who will offer Christian worship, mission and on-going pastoral care of the community?**

Experience of recent links with the Anglican parish church have been good. Joint worship and use of their building has been facilitated by their leadership, and their view of cooperation is also amenable. For those in the Methodist community for whom Church of England practice is not to their taste (acknowledging it has formalities which are quite relaxed, however, and use of the RCL and a range of modern liturgies) there are Methodist churches not too distant.

**12.  What arrangements have been made for on-going pastoral care in the community?**

Transferal of membership, while continuing with local activities under the banner of the parish church, would provide pastoral care within the village and add cover within both the Methodist Church and the parochial system of the parish church.

**13.Have discussions taken place with other denominations in order to maintain a Christian presence in the locality and what was the outcome?**

Yes, within the current LEP arrangements. These are ongoing, to provide the best in the situation.

**14.   What is to happen to the building? If it is to be sold, how will the proceeds of the sale be used to promote an effective presence in the community the Church once served?**

We are looking to see whether local community organisations (which are strong in the village) may take on responsibilities for running the building as a resource of the community. Local council and parish church use have been part of discussions, but finding those who would take on the demands and duties associated with such management is proving very difficult. People see the possibilities but are so far unwilling to take on any responsibilities.

**15.    Has the District Archivist been consulted regarding records and artefacts and records that might need to be conserved?**

No. All paperwork associated with activities at the chapel are either held at the York Circuit Office, or in filing at the chapel building. Transferal to archives would therefore be straightforward. *[ J. Schofield (Presbyter) 13-Oct-2021]*