



Background to organisation

Epworth Old Rectory is the childhood home of John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, a global movement of approximately 80 million people. It is a Grade I listed building, a Queen Anne period house, built in 1709 with later additions. An Accredited Museum, it has an extensive collection, including a unique collection relating to Methodist women.

Since 1954, Epworth Old Rectory (EOR) has been held on trust by the Methodist Church of Great Britain on behalf of the World Methodist Council. It has been open to the public since 1957 and before 2020 attracted over 5,000 visitors a year. Visitor numbers are beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels, with just over 4,000 visitors in 2023.

EOR is a place of pilgrimage for Methodists from all over the world. It is one of four major Methodist heritage sites in Britain, the development of which is co-ordinated by the national Methodist Heritage Committee of the Methodist Church.

The EOR Trustees are appointed by the national Methodist Conference and include British and international representatives of the global Methodist Church. Since 2016, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), comprising Trustees and additional volunteer directors, has administered the affairs of EOR on behalf of the Trustees.

Covid presented many challenges and opportunities. In order to respond to these, at the end of 2021, we reviewed our operational model, including the staffing structure and overall visitor experience. We wished to embrace the potential of EOR as a site of global significance, developing new strategic partnerships, building new audiences online and on site, and addressing the challenges of caring for a historic building today.

Our Statement of Purpose

As an organisation, Epworth Old Rectory seeks to inspire and educate present and future generations through the interpretation of the life of Susanna Wesley and her family. This will be done by:

- Providing an excellent visitor experience and making the site accessible to as wide an audience as possible
- Preserving and caring for the fabric of the historic building and giving access to our collections



Chair of Trustees: Sarah Friswell
1, Rectory Street, Epworth, North Lincolnshire DN9 1HX
Telephone 01427 872268
www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk
Registered charity number 1165387



- Ensuring that we are resilient and able to meet the challenges that the future will bring in order to be relevant to future audiences
- Ensuring that we remain financially secure – both in the short and the long term.

Our Vision

To be the centre of excellence for celebrating and studying the stories of Methodist women.

Our Mission

Setting, developing and maintaining the vision and mission of the Old Rectory as a place of Christian pilgrimage, learning and inspiration for all; a museum dedicated to the influence of the Wesley family on faith, social justice, worldwide Methodism and all people today, whether they are of any religion or none.

Our Values

Excellence; Inspiration; Inclusivity; Transformation.

Our Objectives

Inspiring

- Telling the story of this place
- Celebrating Susanna Wesley and her legacy and influence today
- Raising awareness of the Old Rectory's spiritual significance, especially as a place of Pilgrimage
- Offering motivational education programmes
- Developing imaginative modes of interpretation, using exhibitions, costumes, drama, music, crafts and food
- Developing and increasing use of contemporary communications, especially social media
- Researching and sharing the stories of Methodist women and women's movements

Conserving

- Maintenance of the Old Rectory, its ancillary buildings, garden and grounds to a high standard
- Caring for our collections to appropriate professional standards
- Researching and sharing the history of the house and the stories of the Wesley family

Sustaining

- Seeking regular income from grants and developing relationships with funders
- Reporting as required to the Charity Commission and Methodist Heritage Committee
- Maximising income from the Rectory's trading activities (shop & catering)
- Maintaining Accredited Museum status
- Maintaining a volunteer body, including those with specialist skills
- Approaching national funders for major projects

- Encouraging and responding to visitor feedback

Current externally funded projects

Out of the box: unlocking collections at Epworth Old Rectory

- Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund March 2024 – March 2026 (£191,160)
- Creation of a new collections store and research facilities and related programme of activities

Outreach, Learning & Engagement programme

- Funded by Westminster College Oxford Trust January 2024 – December 2025 (£60,000)
- Outreach, Learning & Engagement Manager post in place

Cures from the garden: 18th century medicine at home

- Funded by Royal Society Places of Science grant April 2024 – June 2025 (£3,488)
- Revised interpretation and planting of herb garden in grounds

Memory Garden

- Funded by Epworth Town Council – 2025 (£800)
- Extension of our Reminiscence café work, and development of a Memory Garden (raised beds and interpretation) at the Old Rectory and also Wesley Memorial Church.

Staffing structure

