

Simon,

Please attach the following report to the accounts for Churches together in Willenhall.

Thanks

Roger

Governing document: Constitution adopted 10th January 2002, last amended 20th October 2005.

How the Charity is constituted: Association of Christian churches in the locality

Trustee selection methods: Trustees are appointed or reappointed at the Annual General Meeting held in October. The Constitution also provides for co-option under certain circumstances.

Administrative Information:

Churches Together in Willenhall is an unincorporated association under the responsibility of an Executive (trustees) who met four times during the year.

Structure, Governance & Information:

The Charity has a voting membership. The members are Christian churches in the locality of Willenhall which commit themselves to furthering the objects and have paid the annual subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive. The Charity is managed by an Executive (trustees) appointed at the Annual General Meeting by the member churches through votes vested in their nominated representatives. Trustees are appointed to serve for two years and may stand for re-election. Member churches have a voice into decision-making at quarterly general meetings. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefit.

Activities:

Our principal activity continues to be the running of a Community Resource Centre called Bridging the Gap, located in one of the main shopping streets in our Town. There we employ a part time centre manager and operate with fifteen or so volunteers who, typically, give a half a day a week. Volunteers receive no benefit. We also run a foodbank in association with The Black Country Foodbank. This opens every Thursday and provides three days of emergency food to people in need.

The Centre is housed in a three storey, shop-fronted building which we lease from the Brownhills and Willenhall Methodist Circuit. In April we entered into a new four year lease with a break clause at two years. We are aware that the landlord intends to dispose of the building at the end of this period and we have relinquished our right to renew the lease. The operation of the Centre is our main activity. During the year we continued, as in previous years, to offer help with benefits applications, general form filling, bereavement support and other similar helps to people in need or who are vulnerable because of mental health issues, social isolation, lack of literacy or numeracy skills or who are otherwise disadvantaged.

Members of the public and beneficiaries of our services, all of whom are received without distinction, enter our Centre through our on-street charity shop. This becomes the point of contact, help or referral for all who make such a request. We maintain a good reputation in the community

and offer a warm welcome to all. Our costs are funded almost entirely by the sale of second hand goods in our charity shop.

In September 2023, we expanded our presence on the high street by taking on lease the next door shop at 79 Stafford St. We hold this on a four year lease too. This shop gives us more floor space to display larger items of donated goods for sale. This shop opens on three market days only. The additional sales more than covers the cost of outgoings and provides a means of preventing furniture and household goods going to landfill by giving them a second life.

In addition to running the Centre, the Charity coordinates joint public Christian witness events to the community such as a Walk of Witness on Good Friday, a presence at the annual Town Carnival and carol singing in public places in the Christmas season. These events generate a small income to the Charity; always in excess of any costs incurred in running the events.

Public Benefit Test:

The previous heading (**Activities**) provides good evidence that, in the carrying out of our charitable purposes, we provide significant and widespread public benefit to the people of Willenhall. Other than an annual subscription of £25 paid by each member church, all our income is provided in kind by Willenhall people (mainly) who donate second hand items for sale and other local people who buy those items, with the income generated being used for the benefit of Willenhall people who seek our help. Part of our strength is that we raise our income from local people and expend it for the benefit of local people in need. We always keep in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Risk Analysis:

The trustees have carried out a general review of the Charity and consider that there are no major risks to its continuing to the end of the current lease. We are making plans to wind down the Resource Centre at the end of the lease. We are mindful of the age demographic of our volunteers and the advanced age of most of the people in church locally. As we are dependent on our volunteers, we intend to continue our endeavours for as long as possible. We have no plans to further expand our work, rather we seek to maintain what is regarded as a most useful and highly appreciated help to struggling people in our community.

We are alert to the possibility of unforeseen risks and maintain a responsible view of what our response should be in the event of such an occurrence.

Financial Review:

This report covers the twenty second year of operation since registering as a charity. During the year, **receipts amounted to £XXXX. Payments in total amounted to £XXXX.** Through prudent management, we have maintained financial stability throughout the twenty two years of our operation.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees are committed to ensuring that there are sufficient reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the net settlement of all debtors and creditors, redundancy payments and any costs in meeting its legal obligations. The Trustees have set a 'warning' threshold at £10,000 which will

trigger a priority review of our finances, thus maintaining a reasonable financial margin over and above what we need to close the charity.

Trustees responsibilities:

The Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities and to provide reasonable assurance that:

- the charity is operating efficiently and effectively
- its assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposition
- proper records are maintained and financial information used within the charity or for publication is reliable
- the charity complies with relevant laws and regulations

Certain day to day management activities of Bridging the Gap are delegated to the Centre Manager, while all major decisions are taken by the trustees.

Declaration:

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on