



BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

For the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021

Registered charity: 1125230

Company limited by guarantee: 06501443

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Birchwood Evangelical Church, more commonly known as Birchwood Community Church, is a registered charity (charity number 1125230) and a company limited by guarantee (company number 06501443).

Our principal address is:

25 Benson Road
Birchwood
Warrington
WA3 7PQ

Website: www.birchwood-church.org

During the period of this report the following charity trustees were responsible for managing the charity.

John Rockley
Dorothy Seed
Surinder Chahal
James Towers
Allan Stevenson
Derek Ellison

All trustees served for the full period of the report.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity is governed in accordance with a Memorandum and Articles of Association and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee.

The trustees of the charity are the members of the Church Leadership Team (CLT) in office (elders and deacons), as permitted by the professional circumstances of each leadership team member or unless otherwise prevented through conflict of interest. The trustees may also invite others who are not members of the CLT to serve as a trustee. The members of the CLT are appointed and agreed by church members in accordance with the church constitution. The trustees are responsible for the management of the Church and approval of all expenditure. During the reporting period the CLT met 9 times. The trustees met 3 times.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objects of Birchwood Community Church are set out in our governing document and can be summarized as follows:

- i) To advance the Christian faith in accordance with our statement of beliefs, in the area of Birchwood and beyond

- ii) To provide services and support which promote good health and relieve sickness and financial hardship.

Our vision is '**Jesus Changing Lives**' – connecting up to our Lord, connecting in with each other and connecting out into the community. Through this we aim to bring healing and meaning to people's lives, and encourage belonging to Jesus and His Church family. We want as many people as possible to have access to our worship services, the opportunity to hear about the Christian faith and to benefit from our groups, ministries and caring support. Over the last 3 months of 2021 the Church Leadership Team worked on developing a **new vision and strategy for BCC**. When completed this will be shared with the church early in 2022.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to hold **Sunday morning worship services on our Zoom platform**. We progressed over the summer months to holding services outdoors, outside the Encounter Centre. Following further easing of national restrictions and after due discussion of risk by the Trustees we returned in September to holding our services in the **Performing Arts Centre of Birchwood Community High School**. Responding to the challenges of maintaining our ministries and supporting our community required constant adaptability throughout the year.

We have welcomed people of all ages, backgrounds, nationalities, cultures and abilities, online and in person. They have included friends, family, missionaries around the world, local residents and those simply seeking to engage with a church community. Other groups have met and other activities have taken place during the week as changing circumstances permitted, for example life groups and young people's groups taking advantage of our Zoom facilities or meeting outdoors.

Due to ongoing Covid restrictions our **multi-purpose Encounter Centre** had to remain closed for the first half of the year. People said they really missed it and many experienced increased isolation, loneliness and mental health issues. Following a phased re-opening most regulars returned, along with some new additions. A strong core group of around 15 people formed; they were present whenever the centre opened its doors.

We worked in partnership with the other two churches in Birchwood, and a number of events were planned jointly through the year. We enjoyed good relationships with Birchwood Shopping Centre and the management team who remained highly supportive of the work we do in and through the Encounter Centre.

We maintain a church website www.birchwood-church.org and two Facebook pages www.facebook.com/BirchwoodCommunityChurch and www.facebook.com/EncounterCentre/ to help us communicate our faith and promote church, our activities and events.

In enabling all the activities and the ministries of the church to take place the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on **public benefit** and in particular

the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. More information about these activities during 2021 is provided in the next section of the report under Achievements and Performance.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During the year we set ourselves three goals for our church life:

- **Prayer** (eg holding church-wide prayer events)
- **Care** (eg everyone to make regular connections with others)
- **Share** (eg inviting people to Easter celebrations)

We reviewed our progress against these at our November AGM. Here are some highlights of what we did:

- On Good Friday we produced and showed a very powerful 'One Friday' film, telling the story of Easter. It was viewed hundreds of times on Facebook as well as by people on the day.
- External funding, as well as financial support from Birchwood Community Church and the other two churches in Birchwood, enabled the provision of over 400 food parcels to the local community.
- We sent out 50 contemplative prayer emails, each of which reached 100 people every week of the year.
- 15 people from Hong Kong signed up for our 10-week 'Everyday English' course.

These are some of the highlights of our **Encounter Centre** activities:

- We engaged with people over Zoom for our Easter outreach, both on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.
- An average of 15-20 people came on Tuesday and Friday mornings for '**Take a Break**' coffee and chat. Initially drawn in by our summer outdoor services, a number of the regulars started to attend church and to express faith in the Lord. The intention is to start an Alpha course for this group in 2022.
- The Encounter **Community Fridge** continued through the year, run through Neighbourly, the national umbrella surplus food organisation. During periods of lockdown the ministry adapted, for example taking food directly to doorsteps or to a network of Encounter/BCC friends who then distributed it to their own neighbours. This enabled us to stay connected to many people by chatting on doorsteps. Once restrictions eased, we opened up for people to come to collect food safely from the centre, with home deliveries for the more vulnerable or isolating individuals.

- As 'The Church Together' in Birchwood we worked on the **Food Pantry**, helping to supply food parcels for households across Birchwood throughout the pandemic.
- The **Chat & Charity** group was not able to function in the first half of the year, although some of the individuals continued to support each other in whatever way possible. In September the group started to meet again every Thursday afternoon with around 5 or 6 people coming to chat over coffee, knitting blankets for refugees together whilst having fellowship.
- **Birchwood Blokes** – one men's group for the three churches in Birchwood – finally met again in person for breakfast and chat on the relevance of the bible. Following a good response, with around 18 men taking part, the men were looking forward to enjoying real breakfasts and more activities together again in 2022.
- We ran our very popular **HeART** Bible study as an integral part of our weekly arts and craft activity. As the year progressed and Covid restrictions eased we were able to meet in person and share art materials more easily. New people joined.
- We continued with **Encounter Connect** up to the beginning of June. This online drop-in facility for one hour every weekday helped to keep people talking with each other during lockdown.
- In partnership with Warrington Speak Up (lead advocacy provider in Warrington) we started an initiative called **Talking Well**, enabling people to access help and support eg on health and wellbeing.

The crèche ministry became known as **Sparklers** as part of a 'fire of God' themed rebranding for all our children's work. Sparklers reopened in person in September, being run in conjunction with Torches (see below), under new leadership and a shared teaching syllabus. KFC was initially held online for our older children then was able to move to meeting in person. It became known as **Torches** with new leadership from the end of June. The church expressed sincere thanks to both the former leaders of our children's work who retired in the summer after many years of faithful service.

Our **youth activities** had another disrupted year, however we were very encouraged to see Jesus changing the lives of young people as they deepened their relationship with him. Our supported worker with Youth for Christ in Birchwood High School celebrated her first full year of working with us. She was able to develop strong relationships with the young people from Birchwood Community Church. Although her ability to work in school was restricted for most of the past year, she provided support to young people suffering with mental health issues as a consequence of the pandemic. The last term saw more of a return to normal activities. She succeeded in building good links with staff and teachers and provided open Christian witness. **Fresh**, our after school club, was able to start up again. Our other youth ministries **Edge** (for church young people) and

Omega (for high school young people) were able to resume meeting in person. We have been thankful for open discussions and especially for those who have re-connected with Omega.

We continued with our regular Facebook posts for **Saplings**, our ministry for pre-school children. Subsequently we were all pleased to reopen Saplings in September. We welcomed back some of our regulars and were delighted to be joined by new families too.

All our children's and young people's sessions/activities were conducted in accordance with our **safeguarding policy and procedures**. A new Safeguarding Officer took over the role in 2021. A review of policy and procedures is scheduled for 2022.

We maintained regular contact with 9 **students** in the UK and one on a gap year with OM in Belgium. They received parcels of 'goodies' and supporting letters/Facebook messages as well as continued prayer support.

Life Groups were a vital way of staying connected and supported through 2021. We maintained 7 groups over the year, with at least one group taking place every weekday. From the summer we were able to meet up again in person and many groups took advantage of this to hold their meetings outside, often involving a meal together.

We had to put our **BSL (British Sign Language)** signed services on hold as we had no facility to offer BSL online. However we were able to resume signed services in person in October, enabling the deaf community to be included in our worship once again.

An evening Bible study called **Deeper** continued to be popular over the year, mainly on Zoom, enabling in-depth study of topics such as suffering, the end times and baptism. From November we were able to return to holding Deeper in the Encounter Centre, with people also able to join on Zoom. All the sessions were recorded and made available online.

JOY is our ministry amongst older people intended to address the issue of isolation. Due to firstly Covid, and then health issues, no JOY activities took place in 2021. However in the spring we were able to bless the residents of Mosslands (supported housing) by giving out daffodils to everyone who lived there. We knocked on doors and many enjoyed the opportunity to chat.

We held two **online ladies events**. The first of these was an online English Garden Tea Party in June. This provided spiritual reflection as well as much enjoyment of online games and a home-delivered goodie bag. In December more than 40 ladies attended an online Christmas Tea.

We extended our **Prayer Programme** with the help of an expanded prayer planning team. In addition to Friday morning prayer meetings over Zoom our WhatsApp prayer

group was active throughout the year. We held 4 special prayer events and maintained a prayer week to support all our Christmas activities.

In November we started **Everyday English** - a 10 week conversational course, aiming to help people from Hong Kong practise their English listening and speaking skills and introducing them to our culture. Feedback from participants was extremely positive.

At **Christmas** we invited friends, family and community to an outdoor carol service on the grass outside the Encounter Centre. We also held a Christmas Chill Out in the Encounter Centre, with good support from the shopping centre.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Total incoming resources for the year amounted to £85,223. Total resources expended amounted to £85,104. Net income amounted to £119. Income decreased by around 6% compared with 2020. Expenditure also decreased by around 6%, mainly due to continuing Covid-19 national lockdown restrictions and associated government guidance/regulations. In particular we continued to incur decreased expenditure on school hire costs, utility costs for the Encounter Centre, hospitality and youth worker costs.

Including bank and cash balances brought forward at the beginning of the reporting year the balances carried forward at 31 December 2021 totalled £27,541. The trustees keep financial expenditure under close and regular review at quarterly meetings.

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees' aim is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds if possible which equates to three months unrestricted payments. This was sustained throughout the year.

COVID-19 – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

During the year the Trustees kept the COVID-19 situation under regular review for any potential financial impact on the church. The church's financial situation has not been adversely affected by the pandemic and the church has continued to be a going concern. Although income reduced over the year, expenditure also reduced due to continued lower operating costs. The church does not have any debtors, loans, onerous contracts or lease commitments, and has not required to seek government grants or other assistance.

The Trustees continue to keep the situation under review.

Approved by the Trustees on 1st May 2022 and signed on their behalf

Surinder P Chahal

Dorothy K Seed

BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Year ended 31 December 2021			Year ended 31 December 2020
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	85,084		85,084	90,220
Activities for generating funds	0		0	0
Investment income	0		0	0
Other incoming resources	139		139	455
Total incoming resources	85,223		85,223	90,675
Resources expended				
Charitable activities	66,044	1269	67,313	69,740
Governance costs	14,632		14,632	19,975
Other resources expended	3,159		3,159	833
Total resources expended	83,835	1269	85,104	90,548
Net (outgoing) resources	119		119	128
Net movement in funds	119		119	128
Total funds brought forward	27,422		27,422	27,294
Total funds carried forward	27,541		27,541	27,422

BALANCE SHEET

	At 31 December 2021 £	At 31 December 2020 £
Cash at bank and in hand	27,541	27,422
Profit and loss account	27,541	27,422

Approved by the Trustees on 1st May 2022 and signed on their behalf

Surinder P Chahal

Dorothy K Seed

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Birchwood Evangelical Church

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2021, which are set out on pages 9 to 10.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Martin F Smith

Relevant professional qualification or body: ACA

Address: 6 Hapsford Close, Locking Stumps, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6NA

Date: ____ May 2022