

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity

Charity Number 1129836

Report and Financial Statements for the year ended
31 December 2023

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Reference and Administrative Information

Address of Principal Charity

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity
Water Lane
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 2JZ

Minister

(In vacancy)

Church Officers

Church Secretary – Gapsun Rhee
Church Treasurer – Anne Hunter

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
20 North Street
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 2LN

Legal Advisors

Veale Wasbrough Vizards
Second Floor
3 Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2JB

Independent Examiner

Hayden Watson BSc (Hons) FCCA
The MHH Partnership
Elstree House
Watson's Yard,
High Street,
Cottenham
CB24 8RX

Corporate Trustee and Agent

United Reformed Church Eastern Province Trust
36 Duxford Road
Whittlesford
Cambridge
CB22 4ND

TRUSTEES REPORT

The Trustees present their report and the independently examined financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. These are produced on the Receipts and Payments basis, taking advantage of the provisions of Section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity is a local church of the United Reformed Church in Great Britain, and is a member church of Eastern Synod of the Church. It was registered on 27 May 2009 as Charity Number 1129836.

Water Lane Church is situated at Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2JZ, tel. 01279 755610.

The members of the Elders' Meeting for the time being are recognised as the charity trustees. Those who served from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Mrs A Hunter	Treasurer
Mrs J Pinnell	
Mr A Booth	
Ms G Rhee	Church Secretary
Mrs P Bayston	
Mrs A M Groves	
Mrs R Dickens	
Mr R Buss	died January 2023
Mrs Michelle Czajkowski	appointed June 2023

The church buildings are vested in the Synod Trust having legal ownership of these premises as trustees and held for the benefit of Water Lane URC in accordance with the trusts applicable to URC properties.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The activities of Water Lane URC are overseen by the Elders meeting of the church in accordance with the provisions of The Structure of the United Reformed Church determined by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and supplemented by the rules of Water Lane Church. The governing document of the registered charity is a statement adopted by the Church Meeting on 1 March 2009.

The Elders' Meeting is responsible for the financial administration of the church and the care and maintenance of church premises and the manse. The Church Meeting (of all members wishing to attend) gives general guidance on the life and work of the church. The members of the Elders' meeting and the minister in pastoral charge and composed of up to 12 members of Water Lane URC nominated, and elected, by Church Meeting. Elders serve for 5 years, retired by rotation, their period of service may be extended by agreement of the Church Meeting. There is no limit on the number of consecutive periods of service. The members of the Elders' meeting are the trustees of the registered charity during their period of service as Elders.

The Elders' Meeting met 10 times during the year. It is assisted in the administration of the Church and its property by Finance & Property Committee (currently 4 members)

The Church Meeting met 3 times during 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

As a local congregation of the United Reformed Church, Water Lane Church seeks to advance the Christian religion through its activities and the facilities offered to the community by its building and described more specifically below:

Object of the charity

- a. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- b. Teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- c. Respond to human need by loving service
- d. Seek to transform unjust structures of society
- e. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation

The Elders' Meeting is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on the public benefit in "The advancement of religion for the public benefit" and has regard to it in the administration of the church.

The Elders' Meeting believes that the church provides benefit to the public by:

1. Providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for the congregation and for anyone else who wishes to benefit from what the church offers.
2. Promoting Christian values and service by the members of the congregation to the community for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Church Buildings

The church and hall are let out to benefit the local community and to provide funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings whilst providing funds for Outreach.

Use of Volunteers

The dictionary definition of a volunteer is that of a person who offers service of their own free will and at Water Lane this means everyone who is a member or regular attender at worship. To be a Christian is to be a volunteer in the service of the Lord.

To the extent that Christians offer their services beyond the local church at synod or national level they remain volunteers, but their service is in a more regional context. This includes those who sit on committees, those who preach, teach and in any way contribute towards the furtherance of the kingdom of God in the United Reformed Church.

Most ministers of word and sacrament are paid directly from the Finance Office of the United Reformed Church in London. Other than that, we are all volunteers.

Organisational Structure

The United Reformed Church is a conciliate organisation. The Government of the Church is exercised through Church Meetings of Members. All major decisions (as required by the constitution) are referred to the Church Meeting. Church Meetings take place approximately every two months and there is an Annual Meeting of Church and Congregation. Extraordinary

meetings are called as required. The body responsible for the overall executive and pastoral decisions is the Elders meeting which meets approximately once a month. The Finance & Property Committee, which is responsible for administrative financial and property issues meets every two months. The Elders review and decide whether to act on the recommendations of the Finance & Property Committee.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The church continues to actively welcome any persons who wish to hear the Good News of the Kingdom of God. In line with many other churches in the UK membership has been in gradual decline. The Elders are aware of the changing profile of its congregation and are investigating likely causes and opportunities for encouraging more individuals, families and young people to worship with us.

The church has been in ministerial vacancy throughout 2022 and 2023 and to the date of this report with Rev. Nigel Uden appointed as our Interim Moderator. The church was part of the WEBS Pastorate together with congregations in Stansted, Saffron Walden with Newport and Clavering. WEBS is no longer operational due to the retirement of both serving ministers in 2021 and Stansted joining the Methodist circuit. Options for a new Mission Partnership with a group of local URC churches are being explored at present time.

Following lockdown restraints on operations of church and hall lettings, several user groups closed altogether or made alternative arrangements due to the prospective closure of the hall.

Opportunities for fundraising have been slow to return to pre-lockdown levels. Our major fundraising effort is the bazaar in November. This was successful and raised £636 for charitable causes.

Our outreach programmes also remain limited, particularly as our 'in person' focus is on the more senior member of our congregation and community. Our normal pattern of activity includes:

- Providing financial contributions to specific Christian projects and through regular communion collections for worthy causes.
- Promoting 'Commitment for Life' financial giving through Christian Aid partners
- Occasional campaigning towards the goal of eradication of Third World debt and poverty.
- Being active members of Church Together in Bishop's Stortford, supporting its agreed activities such as the local street pastors.
- Providing regular coffee mornings that are available to the community.

Redevelopment of Church Estate

The Synod Trustees completed the sale of the Church Hall with East Herts District Council (EHDC) at the end of September 2019. It is now leased back to the Church at a peppercorn rent until such time as the land is required for the EHDC Old River Lane development, which in turn has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in scope. We now anticipate retaining use of the Church Hall until at least April 2025. Proceeds of the Hall sale are held by Synod Trustees with the intention of using the majority to fund the extension and reconfiguration of the Church building to facilitate a wider range of use, together with associated costs. In 2023 Synod agreed to release some of this funding towards costs associated with the project.

Planning permission for an extension and reconfiguration of the church was granted in Autumn 2022. Our initial costings for the Church Extension prior to the hall being sold indicated the works would be covered by the proceeds of the Hall sale. However, the more complex design

required to meet planning concerns together with the recent rapid price increases in building materials means this is no longer the case. The first phase of the works incorporating the internal works to the Church building (per removal, kitchen extension, new screen / vestry, heating system, lighting system, sound/visual system, front doors of church) have now been estimated and work is about to commence in autumn 2024. The Listed Building and Advisory Committee have approved the removal of pews and the design concepts but will still need to approve some of the finer detail before works can commence. Once these works are in progress a review will be conducted regarding Phase 2 works which relate to a side extension – due to increase in costs this may need to be reduced in scope and may be subject to a new planning application.

In late 2022 we successfully applied for grant towards the works from the Town Council, who awarded us the maximum available sum of £50,000 based on the scheme that received planning consent. We are very grateful not only for the finance, but for the civic support for the project that it represents as it is very much our intention to make the enhanced Church building available for wider community use. As we have moved away from building the entire scheme in one phase as envisaged in our original grant bid, we are liaising with the Council as our plans evolve. Currently the Council continues to await the start of the first phase of our project.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity has opted to produce accounts on the Receipts and Payments basis for 2023, taking advantage of the provisions of Section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011. The accounts take the form of a Receipts and Payments account for 2023 and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December 2023. These figures are divided in columns between the separate categories of trust as indicated as best practice by the Charity Commission and show at the foot of the page the resulting changes in the trust totals. Subsequent notes give greater detail.

The charity finds itself in something of a hiatus between the end of pandemic restrictions and prospective closure of the church hall, which has been deferred incrementally as the overall plan for the town centre is reconsidered by the council. Hall and Church lettings have increased over 2021 but have not truly returned to pre-pandemic levels. It is not possible to attract many new regular hall users given its prospective closure since the start of 2022 and some existing users have relocated in anticipation of closure. We are grateful to our lettings secretary for her sterling efforts in attracting new and ad-hoc users. Local conservation party are looking at having another operator for the Hall once we vacate the premises.

We continued to work on our redevelopment project, paying out a further £6,000 on professional fees in relation to the Church extension. This expenditure covered specialist architect and planning consultant fees to help in designing and presenting an extension that was ultimately acceptable to the local conservation officer and the planning authorities. In 2023 Synod agreed to release some funds arising from the sale of the Church Hall towards the professional fees incurred to date on the overall estate redevelopment project.

We lease an area of outdoor space to the owners of Water Lane Bar to accommodate their air conditioning units. Ownership changed in 2020 and the bar reopened in 2022. The previous owners settled outstanding rent due in 2021. The lease has been renegotiated with the new owners and terms agreed early in 2023, from which point regular payments of £200 per month have been made.

The overall deficit for the year of £8,111 can largely be attributed to two factors, costs incurred towards the church development of £6,000, and an increase in the energy costs for the hall and the church. In 2023 Synod agreed to drawdown on funds originating from the sale of the

hall held in the Synod trust towards our costs associated with the development. Separately we were in receipt of a Synod grant in 2023 towards energy costs to maintain our activities going forward. On this basis the Elders are satisfied that the charity can continue with its current objectives and activities for the foreseeable future.

This report was approved by the Elders' Meeting on 20 Oct and was

signed on its behalf by

G Rhee

GAPSUN RHEE
Church Secretary
2 October 2024

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

I report on the financial statements of Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 8 to 17.

Respective responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, and considers that the audit requirement of Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions of the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters in connection with the examination came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by the Independent Examiner:

date:

Hayden Watson BSc (Hons) FCCA
The MHH Partnership
Elstree House
Watson's Yard
High Street
Cottenham
CB24 8RX

Statement of Financial Activities

		<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total Funds</i>	<i>Prior Period Total Funds</i>
		£	£	£	£	£
Receipts	<i>Note 2</i>					
Donations		17,766	355	1,868	19,989	22,381
Charitable activities		14,451	1,983	-	16,433	19,402
Fundraising (other trading activity)		-	1,753	636	2,389	2,844
Investments		47,235	-	-	47,235	45,369
Other		7,082	-	-	7,082	-
<i>Total</i>		<u>86,533</u>	<u>4,091</u>	<u>2,504</u>	<u>93,128</u>	<u>89,997</u>
Payments	<i>Note 3</i>					
URC Ministry and Mission		27,792	-	-	27,792	32,952
Other Ministry, Mission, Worship & Fellowship		15,957	-	-	15,957	15,761
Church Maintenance & Running Costs		18,725	-	-	18,725	15,453
Hall Maintenance & Running Costs		29,243	-	-	29,243	25,838
Church Estate Redevelopment		6,000	-	-	6,000	10,800
Raising Funds		600	-	-	600	-
Donations		-	-	2,921	2,921	3,330
<i>Total</i>		<u>98,317</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,921</u>	<u>101,238</u>	<u>104,134</u>
Net Receipts /(Payments)		(11,784)	4,091	(418)	(8,111)	(14,138)
Draw down from investments		15,000	-	-	15,000	-
Transfers between funds		4,007	(4,091)	84	-	-
Bank and on call deposits at the start of the year		18,586	-	928	19,514	33,652
Bank and on call deposits at the end of the year		<u>£25,810</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£594</u>	<u>£26,403</u>	<u>£19,514</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at Year End

		<i>General Funds</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total Funds</i>	<i>Prior Period total funds</i>
		£	£	£	£	£
Monetary Assets	Note 6					
Cash Funds		25,810	-	594	26,403	19,514
Debtors		1,096	-	-	1,096	673
Gift Aid Recoverable		420	44	252	715	272
COIF deposit held as investment (Note 6)		48,000	-	-	48,000	63,000
		<u>75,325</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>845</u>	<u>76,214</u>	<u>83,458</u>
Liabilities						
Creditors		1,565	-	-	1,565	1,763
Net Monetary Assets		<u>£73,760</u>	<u>£44</u>	<u>£845</u>	<u>£74,649</u>	<u>£81,695</u>

Assets retained for church use are described Notes 7 and 8 of these financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Trustee Date:

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting Policies

Receipts and Payments Accounting

Water Lane United Reformed Church has opted to produce a statement of Receipts and Payments and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities in accordance with section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011, given that the charity's income, from all sources, has not exceeded £250,000.

Most income is received on a cash basis and it is the church's normal practice to pay invoices on receipt.

Freehold property

The trustees of the church buildings and the Guild House are the URC (Eastern Province) Trust who hold them upon trust for purposes connected with Water Lane United Reformed Church. The Guild House is let to long term tenants. Rental receipts from this tenancy are received by Water Lane United Reformed Church and are disclosed in the receipts and payment account.

Tax

Water Lane United Reformed Church is a registered charity and thus exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund Structure Policy

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. The charity operates one designated fund, the Administrative Expense fund. Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes, and it is the policy of the Trustees to monitor the application of those funds in accordance with the restrictions placed upon them.

2 Analysis of Receipts

	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Receipts from Donations and Legacies					
Freewill offerings	14,930	-	-	14,930	15,542
Income from legacies	-	-	-	-	1,500
Communion collections	-	-	927	927	895
Commitment for Life	-	-	453	453	287
Other donations	-	355	311	666	513
Income tax refunds	2,836	-	178	3,013	3,643
Total	17,766	355	1,868	19,989	22,381

Income tax refunds are claimed under Gift Aid or the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme.

	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Receipts from Charitable Activities					
Hire of the Church	1,519	-	-	1,519	1,896
Hire of the Church Hall	9,327	-	-	9,327	11,410
Car Parking	3,336	-	-	3,336	3,570
Coffee mornings	269	1,983	-	2,252	2,526
Total	14,451	1,983	-	16,433	19,402

The offering of facilities to the community falls within the charitable objectives and activities of the charity.

Coffee mornings are held as a time of fellowship for members of the congregation and others within the broader community. Receipts include the sale of baked goods provided by members of the church, the donated value of which is estimated at £600 (2022 £715).

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Money raising					
Bazaar	-	318	636	954	1,284
Gift Stall	-	-	-	-	60
Bric-a-brac stall	-	1,435	-	1,435	1,500
	-	1,753	636	2,389	2,784

The bric-a-brac stall and bazaar relate materially to the onward sale of items donated by members of the congregation. Items are typically given on or near to the day of sale and it is impractical to estimate the fair value of such items other than via sale proceeds.

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Investments					
Guild House Rent	44,750	-	-	44,750	44,750
Coif Deposit Interest	2,345	-	-	2,345	612
Other interest received	140	-	-	140	7
	47,235	-	-	47,235	45,369

	£	£	£	£	£
Other Receipts					
Synod Energy Grant	5,222	-	-	5,222	-
Rent of outdoor space	1,800	-	-	1,800	-
Sundry income	60	-	-	60	-
	7,082	-	-	7,082	-

Ownership of Water Lane Bar, who rent the outdoor space, changed in 2020, at which point payments ceased. The bar reopened as Water Lane Lounge in November 2022. The charity concluded negotiations for a lease with the new owners in early 2023. Rent has been received from that date onwards.

3 Analysis of Payments

	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Raising Funds					
Legal fees re outdoor space	600	-	-	600	-

	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Payments relating to Charitable Activities					
URC Ministry and Mission Fund	27,792	-	-	27,792	32,952
The church contributes to the central URC costs of training and providing ministers (including the centralised payment of stipends, pension contributions and other benefits for ministers), running the denomination and the wider mission of the national church.					
Other Ministry, Mission, Worship & Fellowship					
WEBS expenses	-	-	-	-	(70)
Pulpit Supply	1,257	-	-	1,257	1,586
Organist	3,320	-	-	3,320	3,380
Administrator's salary (a)	5,973	-	-	5,973	5,801
Licences and subscriptions	613	-	-	613	485
Other direct costs	239	-	-	239	464
Share of support costs (see below)	4,555	-	-	4,555	4,114
Total	15,957	-	-	15,957	15,761
Maintenance and running costs – Church (b)					
Repairs and renewals	669	-	-	669	620
Utilities	8,814	-	-	8,814	6,540
Cleaning and refuse collection (40%)	4,805	-	-	4,805	4,359
Grounds maintenance (40%)	829	-	-	829	571
Organ tuning and maintenance	169	-	-	169	332
Other direct costs	147	-	-	147	9
Share of support costs (see below)	3,293	-	-	3,293	3,023
Total	18,725	-	-	18,725	15,453
Maintenance and running costs – Hall (b)					
Repairs and renewals	2,696	-	-	2,696	2,533
Utilities	14,545	-	-	14,545	12,598
Cleaning and refuse collection (60%)	7,207	-	-	7,207	6,539
Grounds (60%) maintenance	1,243	-	-	1,243	856
Other direct costs	48	-	-	48	107
Share of support costs (see below)	3,503	-	-	3,503	3,205
Total	29,243	-	-	29,243	25,838
Church Estate Redevelopment	6,000	-	-	6,000	10,800
Donations	-		2,921	2,921	3,330
Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities	97,717	-	2,921	100,638	104,134

- (a) The role of the paid administrator is to support the Minister, Church Secretary and Elders in the Ministry, Mission, Worship and Fellowship activities of the church.
(b) The Lettings Secretary, Treasurer and Bookkeeper are all unpaid volunteers.

2023	Support Costs	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Independent Accounts Examination 1:1:1	540	540	540	1,620
	Office costs 7:1:2	1,472	210	421	2,103
	Insurance 1:1:1	2,462	2,462	2,462	7,385
	Bank Charges 1:1:1	81	81	81	243
	Total	4,555	3,293	3,503	11,351

2023	Church Estate Redevelopment	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Professional costs	-	6,000		6,000
	Total	-	6,000		6,000

2022	Support Costs	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Independent Accounts Examination 1:1:1	523	523	523	1,570
	Office costs 7:1:2	1,274	182	364	1,820
	Insurance 1:1:1	2,238	2,238	2,238	6,713
	Bank Charges 1:1:1	79	79	79	238
	Total	4,114	3,023	3,205	10,341

2022	Church Estate Redevelopment	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Professional costs	-	10,800		10,800
	Total	-	10,800		10,800

All costs are allocated equally across the three categories, with the exception of office costs which are split based on estimated usage and professional fees re property which are allocated across the church and hall where not directly attributed.

4 Payments to Trustees

Phyllis Bayston received £ 3,320 (2022 £3,380) in her role as church organist for which she invoices the charity monthly. Trustees other than the organist received no remuneration in the year (2023 - nil, 2022 - nil).

During the year, trustees other than the minister were reimbursed £182.65 in aggregate in respect of expenses incurred on behalf of the church (2022 - £220.70). £13.80 was spent on trustee's behalf which was repaid within two weeks.

The church has been in vacancy throughout 2022 and 2023. Hence there have been no ministerial expenses payable to a trustee.

Year ended 31 December 2023

5 **Employment Emoluments**

	Total Funds £	Prior Period total funds £
Part time administrator	5,973	5,801
Employees - part time administrator	.4	.4

6 **Net Monetary Assets**

	General Fund £	Designated Fund	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Bank and Cash					
Expense Account	12,068	-	594	12,662	3,874
Deposit Account	13,563	-	-	13,563	15,368
Petty Cash	178	-	-	178	273
	25,810	-	594	26,403	19,514
Debtors					
Hall Lettings	1,096	-	-	1,096	673
Gift Aid Recoverable	420	44	252	715	272
Creditors					
Creditors	1,465	-	-	1,465	1,643
Payroll taxes due	100	-	-	100	120
	1,565	-	-	1,565	1,763

7 **Assets for Church Purposes**

For reasons explained in the accounting policies the church buildings are not tangible fixed assets of the church. **For insurance purposes the Church is insured for around £5.1million.**

Other assets that the church owns are commensurate with the running of the church and include the organ, one electric piano, church fittings (including pulpit, lectern, communion table and chairs, pews), chairs and tables, kitchen fittings and equipment and office equipment including a basic computer and a second-hand photocopier. As a non-conformist church, the charity does not own assets of intrinsic high value such as items made of silver or gold or works of art.

8 **Investments**

For reasons explained in the accounting policies the Guild House is not a tangible fixed asset of the church. **For insurance purposes the Guild House is insured for £1.3million.** The Guild House is held as an investment property and generates a cash flow for the charity as shown in the receipts and payment account.

The remaining investment is the COIF deposit account, held on a long term basis, although some drawdowns are occurring to fund the professional fees on the church redevelopment project.

	COIF deposit £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
At 1 January 2023	63,000	63,000	63,000
Drawdown in the year	15,000	15,000	-
At 31 December 2023	48,000	48,000	63,000

9 Designated Funds

The church operates one monetary designated fund, the **Administrative Expense Fund**, with the encouragement of Church Meeting. This fund is used to ring fence the proceeds of specific fundraising activities undertaken principally in order to defray local administrative expenses. Such funds are not taken into account in the calculation of our contribution to the wide URC Ministry and Mission fund. It was agreed that this decision could be reversed by consensus in Church Meeting and hence the fund is designated rather than restricted. The surplus on this fund is transferred at the end of each accounting year (other than in the unlikely event of sums raised exceeding local expenses).

Administrative Expense Fund		2023	2022
		£	£
At 1 January 2023		0	0
Donations		355	-
Charitable Money Raising	Coffee Mornings	1,983	2,403
	Bazaar	318	
	Bric-a-brac stall	1,435	1,500
	Total receipts	4,091	3,903
Payments			
	Transfer to General Fund	4,007	3,818
	Transfer to Communion Fund	84	85
	Total transfers	4,091	3,903
As at 31 December 2022		0	0

10 **Restricted Funds**

Charitable Fundraising

This fund records monies raised specifically for charities (outside of the Communion Fund described below). Where funds arise as the result of donations, tax recovered is also paid over to the charity. We held our annual bazaar in November 2023.

Commitment for Life

There is an annual appeal for Commitment for Life, a fund within the wider United Reformed Church. Donations are collected in November and December and are remitted when the appeal is complete.

Communion Fund

At every communion a collection is made for a specific charity and both the donation and the applicable tax recovered is paid to the charity concerned.

The church aims to pay over donations to other charities including relevant gift aid as soon as practicable after the donations are received. This may lead to a negative balance on a fund at a point in time when gift aid has been paid over prior to being claimed and received by the church.

		Charitable Fundraising	Commitment for Life	Communion Fund	Total 2023
		£	£	£	£
At 1 January 2023		953	(25)	0	928
Donations	Donations	311	453	927	1,690
	Gift Aid received	95	-	83	178
Fundraising	Bazaar stalls	636	-	-	636
	Total Receipts	1,041	453	1,009	2,504
Payments	Paid over	1,703	125	1,093	2,921
	Transfer from administrative expense fund			84	84
As at 31 December 2023		291	303	0	594
Gift aid recoverable		6	91	155	252

		Charitable Fundraising	Commitment for Life	Communion Fund	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£
At 1 January 2022		56	-25	0	31
Donations	Donations	313	287	895	1,496
	Gift Aid	18	69	215	302
Fundraising	Bazaar Stalls	1,284			
	Gift Stall	60			
	Total Receipts	1,676	356	1,110	3,142
Payments	Paid over	779	356	1,195	2,330
	Transfer from administrative expense fund			85	85
As at 31 December 2022		953	-25	0	928
Gift aid recoverable		73	0	10	83

Recipients of donations from Water Lane URC during the year

2023 Donations out	Charitable Fundraising Fund £	Commitment for Life Fund £	Communion Fund £	General Fund £	Total 2023 £
Herts & Essex Air Ambulance			66		66
MND Association	200		150		350
The Bible Society			50		50
British Red Cross	318		323		640
Cancer Research			36		36
Christian Aid	211		49		259
Shelter			113		113
Grove Cottage			21		21
Mind			51		51
Isabel Hospice	657				657
Holy Trinity Night Shelter	318				318
Refugee Council			54		54
YMCA			46		46
URC Commitment for Life		125			125
Total	1,703	125	1,093	0	2,921

2022 Donations out	Charitable Fundraising Fund £	Commitment for Life Fund £	Communion Fund £	General Fund £	Total 2022 £
Holiday Bible Week				1,000	1,000
Bible Society			138		138
British Red Cross	657		631		1,288
The Woodland Trust			49		49
Mission Aviation Fellowship			29		29
Mind			44		44
Shelter	63				63
Christian Aid			135		135
Bishop's Stortford Food Bank	60		71		131
Isabel Hospice			54		54
Holy Trinity Night Shelter			45		45
URC Commitment for Life		356			356
Total	779	356	1,195	1,000	3,330

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity

Charity Number 1129836

Report and Financial Statements for the year ended
31 December 2023

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Reference and Administrative Information

Address of Principal Charity

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity
Water Lane
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 2JZ

Minister

(In vacancy)

Church Officers

Church Secretary – Gapsun Rhee
Church Treasurer – Anne Hunter

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
20 North Street
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 2LN

Legal Advisors

Veale Wasbrough Vizards
Second Floor
3 Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2JB

Independent Examiner

Hayden Watson BSc (Hons) FCCA
The MHH Partnership
Elstree House
Watson's Yard,
High Street,
Cottenham
CB24 8RX

Corporate Trustee and Agent

United Reformed Church Eastern Province Trust
36 Duxford Road
Whittlesford
Cambridge
CB22 4ND

TRUSTEES REPORT

The Trustees present their report and the independently examined financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. These are produced on the Receipts and Payments basis, taking advantage of the provisions of Section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity is a local church of the United Reformed Church in Great Britain, and is a member church of Eastern Synod of the Church. It was registered on 27 May 2009 as Charity Number 1129836.

Water Lane Church is situated at Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2JZ, tel. 01279 755610.

The members of the Elders' Meeting for the time being are recognised as the charity trustees. Those who served from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Mrs A Hunter	Treasurer
Mrs J Pinnell	
Mr A Booth	
Ms G Rhee	Church Secretary
Mrs P Bayston	
Mrs A M Groves	
Mrs R Dickens	
Mr R Buss	died January 2023
Mrs Michelle Czajkowski	appointed June 2023

The church buildings are vested in the Synod Trust having legal ownership of these premises as trustees and held for the benefit of Water Lane URC in accordance with the trusts applicable to URC properties.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The activities of Water Lane URC are overseen by the Elders meeting of the church in accordance with the provisions of The Structure of the United Reformed Church determined by the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church and supplemented by the rules of Water Lane Church. The governing document of the registered charity is a statement adopted by the Church Meeting on 1 March 2009.

The Elders' Meeting is responsible for the financial administration of the church and the care and maintenance of church premises and the manse. The Church Meeting (of all members wishing to attend) gives general guidance on the life and work of the church. The members of the Elders' meeting and the minister in pastoral charge and composed of up to 12 members of Water Lane URC nominated, and elected, by Church Meeting. Elders serve for 5 years, retired by rotation, their period of service may be extended by agreement of the Church Meeting. There is no limit on the number of consecutive periods of service. The members of the Elders' meeting are the trustees of the registered charity during their period of service as Elders.

The Elders' Meeting met 10 times during the year. It is assisted in the administration of the Church and its property by Finance & Property Committee (currently 4 members)

The Church Meeting met 3 times during 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

As a local congregation of the United Reformed Church, Water Lane Church seeks to advance the Christian religion through its activities and the facilities offered to the community by its building and described more specifically below:

Object of the charity

- a. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- b. Teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- c. Respond to human need by loving service
- d. Seek to transform unjust structures of society
- e. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation

The Elders' Meeting is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on the public benefit in "The advancement of religion for the public benefit" and has regard to it in the administration of the church.

The Elders' Meeting believes that the church provides benefit to the public by:

1. Providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for the congregation and for anyone else who wishes to benefit from what the church offers.
2. Promoting Christian values and service by the members of the congregation to the community for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Church Buildings

The church and hall are let out to benefit the local community and to provide funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings whilst providing funds for Outreach.

Use of Volunteers

The dictionary definition of a volunteer is that of a person who offers service of their own free will and at Water Lane this means everyone who is a member or regular attender at worship. To be a Christian is to be a volunteer in the service of the Lord.

To the extent that Christians offer their services beyond the local church at synod or national level they remain volunteers, but their service is in a more regional context. This includes those who sit on committees, those who preach, teach and in any way contribute towards the furtherance of the kingdom of God in the United Reformed Church.

Most ministers of word and sacrament are paid directly from the Finance Office of the United Reformed Church in London. Other than that, we are all volunteers.

Organisational Structure

The United Reformed Church is a conciliate organisation. The Government of the Church is exercised through Church Meetings of Members. All major decisions (as required by the constitution) are referred to the Church Meeting. Church Meetings take place approximately every two months and there is an Annual Meeting of Church and Congregation. Extraordinary

meetings are called as required. The body responsible for the overall executive and pastoral decisions is the Elders meeting which meets approximately once a month. The Finance & Property Committee, which is responsible for administrative financial and property issues meets every two months. The Elders review and decide whether to act on the recommendations of the Finance & Property Committee.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The church continues to actively welcome any persons who wish to hear the Good News of the Kingdom of God. In line with many other churches in the UK membership has been in gradual decline. The Elders are aware of the changing profile of its congregation and are investigating likely causes and opportunities for encouraging more individuals, families and young people to worship with us.

The church has been in ministerial vacancy throughout 2022 and 2023 and to the date of this report with Rev. Nigel Uden appointed as our Interim Moderator. The church was part of the WEBS Pastorate together with congregations in Stansted, Saffron Walden with Newport and Clavering. WEBS is no longer operational due to the retirement of both serving ministers in 2021 and Stansted joining the Methodist circuit. Options for a new Mission Partnership with a group of local URC churches are being explored at present time.

Following lockdown restraints on operations of church and hall lettings, several user groups closed altogether or made alternative arrangements due to the prospective closure of the hall.

Opportunities for fundraising have been slow to return to pre-lockdown levels. Our major fundraising effort is the bazaar in November. This was successful and raised £636 for charitable causes.

Our outreach programmes also remain limited, particularly as our 'in person' focus is on the more senior member of our congregation and community. Our normal pattern of activity includes:

- Providing financial contributions to specific Christian projects and through regular communion collections for worthy causes.
- Promoting 'Commitment for Life' financial giving through Christian Aid partners
- Occasional campaigning towards the goal of eradication of Third World debt and poverty.
- Being active members of Church Together in Bishop's Stortford, supporting its agreed activities such as the local street pastors.
- Providing regular coffee mornings that are available to the community.

Redevelopment of Church Estate

The Synod Trustees completed the sale of the Church Hall with East Herts District Council (EHDC) at the end of September 2019. It is now leased back to the Church at a peppercorn rent until such time as the land is required for the EHDC Old River Lane development, which in turn has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in scope. We now anticipate retaining use of the Church Hall until at least April 2025. Proceeds of the Hall sale are held by Synod Trustees with the intention of using the majority to fund the extension and reconfiguration of the Church building to facilitate a wider range of use, together with associated costs. In 2023 Synod agreed to release some of this funding towards costs associated with the project.

Planning permission for an extension and reconfiguration of the church was granted in Autumn 2022. Our initial costings for the Church Extension prior to the hall being sold indicated the works would be covered by the proceeds of the Hall sale. However, the more complex design

required to meet planning concerns together with the recent rapid price increases in building materials means this is no longer the case. The first phase of the works incorporating the internal works to the Church building (per removal, kitchen extension, new screen / vestry, heating system, lighting system, sound/visual system, front doors of church) have now been estimated and work is about to commence in autumn 2024. The Listed Building and Advisory Committee have approved the removal of pews and the design concepts but will still need to approve some of the finer detail before works can commence. Once these works are in progress a review will be conducted regarding Phase 2 works which relate to a side extension – due to increase in costs this may need to be reduced in scope and may be subject to a new planning application.

In late 2022 we successfully applied for grant towards the works from the Town Council, who awarded us the maximum available sum of £50,000 based on the scheme that received planning consent. We are very grateful not only for the finance, but for the civic support for the project that it represents as it is very much our intention to make the enhanced Church building available for wider community use. As we have moved away from building the entire scheme in one phase as envisaged in our original grant bid, we are liaising with the Council as our plans evolve. Currently the Council continues to await the start of the first phase of our project.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity has opted to produce accounts on the Receipts and Payments basis for 2023, taking advantage of the provisions of Section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011. The accounts take the form of a Receipts and Payments account for 2023 and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 December 2023. These figures are divided in columns between the separate categories of trust as indicated as best practice by the Charity Commission and show at the foot of the page the resulting changes in the trust totals. Subsequent notes give greater detail.

The charity finds itself in something of a hiatus between the end of pandemic restrictions and prospective closure of the church hall, which has been deferred incrementally as the overall plan for the town centre is reconsidered by the council. Hall and Church lettings have increased over 2021 but have not truly returned to pre-pandemic levels. It is not possible to attract many new regular hall users given its prospective closure since the start of 2022 and some existing users have relocated in anticipation of closure. We are grateful to our lettings secretary for her sterling efforts in attracting new and ad-hoc users. Local conservation party are looking at having another operator for the Hall once we vacate the premises.

We continued to work on our redevelopment project, paying out a further £6,000 on professional fees in relation to the Church extension. This expenditure covered specialist architect and planning consultant fees to help in designing and presenting an extension that was ultimately acceptable to the local conservation officer and the planning authorities. In 2023 Synod agreed to release some funds arising from the sale of the Church Hall towards the professional fees incurred to date on the overall estate redevelopment project.

We lease an area of outdoor space to the owners of Water Lane Bar to accommodate their air conditioning units. Ownership changed in 2020 and the bar reopened in 2022. The previous owners settled outstanding rent due in 2021. The lease has been renegotiated with the new owners and terms agreed early in 2023, from which point regular payments of £200 per month have been made.

The overall deficit for the year of £8,111 can largely be attributed to two factors, costs incurred towards the church development of £6,000, and an increase in the energy costs for the hall and the church. In 2023 Synod agreed to drawdown on funds originating from the sale of the

hall held in the Synod trust towards our costs associated with the development. Separately we were in receipt of a Synod grant in 2023 towards energy costs to maintain our activities going forward. On this basis the Elders are satisfied that the charity can continue with its current objectives and activities for the foreseeable future.

This report was approved by the Elders' Meeting on 20 Oct and was

signed on its behalf by

G Rhee

GAPSUN RHEE
Church Secretary
2 October 2024

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

I report on the financial statements of Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 8 to 17.

Respective responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, and considers that the audit requirement of Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions of the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters in connection with the examination came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by the Independent Examiner:

date:

Hayden Watson BSc (Hons) FCCA
The MHH Partnership
Elstree House
Watson's Yard
High Street
Cottenham
CB24 8RX

Statement of Financial Activities

		<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total Funds</i>	<i>Prior Period Total Funds</i>
		£	£	£	£	£
Receipts	<i>Note 2</i>					
Donations		17,766	355	1,868	19,989	22,381
Charitable activities		14,451	1,983	-	16,433	19,402
Fundraising (other trading activity)		-	1,753	636	2,389	2,844
Investments		47,235	-	-	47,235	45,369
Other		7,082	-	-	7,082	-
<i>Total</i>		<u>86,533</u>	<u>4,091</u>	<u>2,504</u>	<u>93,128</u>	<u>89,997</u>
Payments	<i>Note 3</i>					
URC Ministry and Mission		27,792	-	-	27,792	32,952
Other Ministry, Mission, Worship & Fellowship		15,957	-	-	15,957	15,761
Church Maintenance & Running Costs		18,725	-	-	18,725	15,453
Hall Maintenance & Running Costs		29,243	-	-	29,243	25,838
Church Estate Redevelopment		6,000	-	-	6,000	10,800
Raising Funds		600	-	-	600	-
Donations		-	-	2,921	2,921	3,330
<i>Total</i>		<u>98,317</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,921</u>	<u>101,238</u>	<u>104,134</u>
Net Receipts /(Payments)		(11,784)	4,091	(418)	(8,111)	(14,138)
Draw down from investments		15,000	-	-	15,000	-
Transfers between funds		4,007	(4,091)	84	-	-
Bank and on call deposits at the start of the year		18,586	-	928	19,514	33,652
Bank and on call deposits at the end of the year		<u>£25,810</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£594</u>	<u>£26,403</u>	<u>£19,514</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at Year End

		<i>General Funds</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total Funds</i>	<i>Prior Period total funds</i>
		£	£	£	£	£
Monetary Assets	Note 6					
Cash Funds		25,810	-	594	26,403	19,514
Debtors		1,096	-	-	1,096	673
Gift Aid Recoverable		420	44	252	715	272
COIF deposit held as investment (Note 6)		48,000	-	-	48,000	63,000
		<u>75,325</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>845</u>	<u>76,214</u>	<u>83,458</u>
Liabilities						
Creditors		1,565	-	-	1,565	1,763
Net Monetary Assets		<u>£73,760</u>	<u>£44</u>	<u>£845</u>	<u>£74,649</u>	<u>£81,695</u>

Assets retained for church use are described Notes 7 and 8 of these financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Trustee Date:

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting Policies

Receipts and Payments Accounting

Water Lane United Reformed Church has opted to produce a statement of Receipts and Payments and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities in accordance with section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011, given that the charity's income, from all sources, has not exceeded £250,000.

Most income is received on a cash basis and it is the church's normal practice to pay invoices on receipt.

Freehold property

The trustees of the church buildings and the Guild House are the URC (Eastern Province) Trust who hold them upon trust for purposes connected with Water Lane United Reformed Church. The Guild House is let to long term tenants. Rental receipts from this tenancy are received by Water Lane United Reformed Church and are disclosed in the receipts and payment account.

Tax

Water Lane United Reformed Church is a registered charity and thus exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund Structure Policy

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. The charity operates one designated fund, the Administrative Expense fund. Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes, and it is the policy of the Trustees to monitor the application of those funds in accordance with the restrictions placed upon them.

2 Analysis of Receipts

	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Receipts from Donations and Legacies					
Freewill offerings	14,930	-	-	14,930	15,542
Income from legacies	-	-	-	-	1,500
Communion collections	-	-	927	927	895
Commitment for Life	-	-	453	453	287
Other donations	-	355	311	666	513
Income tax refunds	2,836	-	178	3,013	3,643
Total	17,766	355	1,868	19,989	22,381

Income tax refunds are claimed under Gift Aid or the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme.

	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Receipts from Charitable Activities					
Hire of the Church	1,519	-	-	1,519	1,896
Hire of the Church Hall	9,327	-	-	9,327	11,410
Car Parking	3,336	-	-	3,336	3,570
Coffee mornings	269	1,983	-	2,252	2,526
Total	14,451	1,983	-	16,433	19,402

The offering of facilities to the community falls within the charitable objectives and activities of the charity.

Coffee mornings are held as a time of fellowship for members of the congregation and others within the broader community. Receipts include the sale of baked goods provided by members of the church, the donated value of which is estimated at £600 (2022 £715).

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Money raising					
Bazaar	-	318	636	954	1,284
Gift Stall	-	-	-	-	60
Bric-a-brac stall	-	1,435	-	1,435	1,500
	-	1,753	636	2,389	2,784

The bric-a-brac stall and bazaar relate materially to the onward sale of items donated by members of the congregation. Items are typically given on or near to the day of sale and it is impractical to estimate the fair value of such items other than via sale proceeds.

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Investments					
Guild House Rent	44,750	-	-	44,750	44,750
Coif Deposit Interest	2,345	-	-	2,345	612
Other interest received	140	-	-	140	7
	47,235	-	-	47,235	45,369

	£	£	£	£	£
Other Receipts					
Synod Energy Grant	5,222	-	-	5,222	-
Rent of outdoor space	1,800	-	-	1,800	-
Sundry income	60	-	-	60	-
	7,082	-	-	7,082	-

Ownership of Water Lane Bar, who rent the outdoor space, changed in 2020, at which point payments ceased. The bar reopened as Water Lane Lounge in November 2022. The charity concluded negotiations for a lease with the new owners in early 2023. Rent has been received from that date onwards.

3 Analysis of Payments

	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Period total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Raising Funds					
Legal fees re outdoor space	600	-	-	600	-

	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Payments relating to Charitable Activities					
URC Ministry and Mission Fund	27,792	-	-	27,792	32,952
Other Ministry, Mission, Worship & Fellowship					
WEBS expenses	-	-	-	-	(70)
Pulpit Supply	1,257	-	-	1,257	1,586
Organist	3,320	-	-	3,320	3,380
Administrator's salary (a)	5,973	-	-	5,973	5,801
Licences and subscriptions	613	-	-	613	485
Other direct costs	239	-	-	239	464
Share of support costs (see below)	4,555	-	-	4,555	4,114
Total	15,957	-	-	15,957	15,761
Maintenance and running costs – Church (b)					
Repairs and renewals	669	-	-	669	620
Utilities	8,814	-	-	8,814	6,540
Cleaning and refuse collection (40%)	4,805	-	-	4,805	4,359
Grounds maintenance (40%)	829	-	-	829	571
Organ tuning and maintenance	169	-	-	169	332
Other direct costs	147	-	-	147	9
Share of support costs (see below)	3,293	-	-	3,293	3,023
Total	18,725	-	-	18,725	15,453
Maintenance and running costs – Hall (b)					
Repairs and renewals	2,696	-	-	2,696	2,533
Utilities	14,545	-	-	14,545	12,598
Cleaning and refuse collection (60%)	7,207	-	-	7,207	6,539
Grounds (60%) maintenance	1,243	-	-	1,243	856
Other direct costs	48	-	-	48	107
Share of support costs (see below)	3,503	-	-	3,503	3,205
Total	29,243	-	-	29,243	25,838
Church Estate Redevelopment	6,000	-	-	6,000	10,800
Donations	-		2,921	2,921	3,330
Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities	97,717	-	2,921	100,638	104,134

- (a) The role of the paid administrator is to support the Minister, Church Secretary and Elders in the Ministry, Mission, Worship and Fellowship activities of the church.
(b) The Lettings Secretary, Treasurer and Bookkeeper are all unpaid volunteers.

2023	Support Costs	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Independent Accounts Examination 1:1:1	540	540	540	1,620
	Office costs 7:1:2	1,472	210	421	2,103
	Insurance 1:1:1	2,462	2,462	2,462	7,385
	Bank Charges 1:1:1	81	81	81	243
	Total	4,555	3,293	3,503	11,351

2023	Church Estate Redevelopment	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Professional costs	-	6,000		6,000
	Total	-	6,000		6,000

2022	Support Costs	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Independent Accounts Examination 1:1:1	523	523	523	1,570
	Office costs 7:1:2	1,274	182	364	1,820
	Insurance 1:1:1	2,238	2,238	2,238	6,713
	Bank Charges 1:1:1	79	79	79	238
	Total	4,114	3,023	3,205	10,341

2022	Church Estate Redevelopment	£ Ministry	£ Church	£ Hall	£ Total
	Professional costs	-	10,800		10,800
	Total	-	10,800		10,800

All costs are allocated equally across the three categories, with the exception of office costs which are split based on estimated usage and professional fees re property which are allocated across the church and hall where not directly attributed.

4 Payments to Trustees

Phyllis Bayston received £ 3,320 (2022 £3,380) in her role as church organist for which she invoices the charity monthly. Trustees other than the organist received no remuneration in the year (2023 - nil, 2022 - nil).

During the year, trustees other than the minister were reimbursed £182.65 in aggregate in respect of expenses incurred on behalf of the church (2022 - £220.70). £13.80 was spent on trustee's behalf which was repaid within two weeks.

The church has been in vacancy throughout 2022 and 2023. Hence there have been no ministerial expenses payable to a trustee.

Year ended 31 December 2023

5 **Employment Emoluments**

	Total Funds £	Prior Period total funds £
Part time administrator	5,973	5,801
Employees - part time administrator	.4	.4

6 **Net Monetary Assets**

	General Fund £	Designated Fund	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds £	Prior Period Total Funds £
Bank and Cash					
Expense Account	12,068	-	594	12,662	3,874
Deposit Account	13,563	-	-	13,563	15,368
Petty Cash	178	-	-	178	273
	25,810	-	594	26,403	19,514
Debtors					
Hall Lettings	1,096	-	-	1,096	673
Gift Aid Recoverable	420	44	252	715	272
Creditors					
Creditors	1,465	-	-	1,465	1,643
Payroll taxes due	100	-	-	100	120
	1,565	-	-	1,565	1,763

7 **Assets for Church Purposes**

For reasons explained in the accounting policies the church buildings are not tangible fixed assets of the church. **For insurance purposes the Church is insured for around £5.1million.**

Other assets that the church owns are commensurate with the running of the church and include the organ, one electric piano, church fittings (including pulpit, lectern, communion table and chairs, pews), chairs and tables, kitchen fittings and equipment and office equipment including a basic computer and a second-hand photocopier. As a non-conformist church, the charity does not own assets of intrinsic high value such as items made of silver or gold or works of art.

8 **Investments**

For reasons explained in the accounting policies the Guild House is not a tangible fixed asset of the church. **For insurance purposes the Guild House is insured for £1.3million.** The Guild House is held as an investment property and generates a cash flow for the charity as shown in the receipts and payment account.

The remaining investment is the COIF deposit account, held on a long term basis, although some drawdowns are occurring to fund the professional fees on the church redevelopment project.

	COIF deposit £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
At 1 January 2023	63,000	63,000	63,000
Drawdown in the year	15,000	15,000	-
At 31 December 2023	48,000	48,000	63,000

9 Designated Funds

The church operates one monetary designated fund, the **Administrative Expense Fund**, with the encouragement of Church Meeting. This fund is used to ring fence the proceeds of specific fundraising activities undertaken principally in order to defray local administrative expenses. Such funds are not taken into account in the calculation of our contribution to the wide URC Ministry and Mission fund. It was agreed that this decision could be reversed by consensus in Church Meeting and hence the fund is designated rather than restricted. The surplus on this fund is transferred at the end of each accounting year (other than in the unlikely event of sums raised exceeding local expenses).

Administrative Expense Fund		2023	2022
		£	£
At 1 January 2023		0	0
Donations		355	-
Charitable Money Raising	Coffee Mornings	1,983	2,403
	Bazaar	318	
	Bric-a-brac stall	1,435	1,500
	Total receipts	4,091	3,903
Payments			
	Transfer to General Fund	4,007	3,818
	Transfer to Communion Fund	84	85
	Total transfers	4,091	3,903
As at 31 December 2022		0	0

10 **Restricted Funds**

Charitable Fundraising

This fund records monies raised specifically for charities (outside of the Communion Fund described below). Where funds arise as the result of donations, tax recovered is also paid over to the charity. We held our annual bazaar in November 2023.

Commitment for Life

There is an annual appeal for Commitment for Life, a fund within the wider United Reformed Church. Donations are collected in November and December and are remitted when the appeal is complete.

Communion Fund

At every communion a collection is made for a specific charity and both the donation and the applicable tax recovered is paid to the charity concerned.

The church aims to pay over donations to other charities including relevant gift aid as soon as practicable after the donations are received. This may lead to a negative balance on a fund at a point in time when gift aid has been paid over prior to being claimed and received by the church.

		Charitable Fundraising	Commitment for Life	Communion Fund	Total 2023
		£	£	£	£
At 1 January 2023		953	(25)	0	928
Donations	Donations	311	453	927	1,690
	Gift Aid received	95	-	83	178
Fundraising	Bazaar stalls	636	-	-	636
	Total Receipts	1,041	453	1,009	2,504
Payments	Paid over	1,703	125	1,093	2,921
	Transfer from administrative expense fund			84	84
As at 31 December 2023		291	303	0	594
Gift aid recoverable		6	91	155	252

		Charitable Fundraising	Commitment for Life	Communion Fund	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£
At 1 January 2022		56	-25	0	31
Donations	Donations	313	287	895	1,496
	Gift Aid	18	69	215	302
Fundraising	Bazaar Stalls	1,284			
	Gift Stall	60			
	Total Receipts	1,676	356	1,110	3,142
Payments	Paid over	779	356	1,195	2,330
	Transfer from administrative expense fund			85	85
As at 31 December 2022		953	-25	0	928
Gift aid recoverable		73	0	10	83

Recipients of donations from Water Lane URC during the year

2023 Donations out	Charitable Fundraising Fund £	Commitment for Life Fund £	Communion Fund £	General Fund £	Total 2023 £
Herts & Essex Air Ambulance			66		66
MND Association	200		150		350
The Bible Society			50		50
British Red Cross	318		323		640
Cancer Research			36		36
Christian Aid	211		49		259
Shelter			113		113
Grove Cottage			21		21
Mind			51		51
Isabel Hospice	657				657
Holy Trinity Night Shelter	318				318
Refugee Council			54		54
YMCA			46		46
URC Commitment for Life		125			125
Total	1,703	125	1,093	0	2,921

2022 Donations out	Charitable Fundraising Fund £	Commitment for Life Fund £	Communion Fund £	General Fund £	Total 2022 £
Holiday Bible Week				1,000	1,000
Bible Society			138		138
British Red Cross	657		631		1,288
The Woodland Trust			49		49
Mission Aviation Fellowship			29		29
Mind			44		44
Shelter	63				63
Christian Aid			135		135
Bishop's Stortford Food Bank	60		71		131
Isabel Hospice			54		54
Holy Trinity Night Shelter			45		45
URC Commitment for Life		356			356
Total	779	356	1,195	1,000	3,330

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

I report on the financial statements of Water Lane United Reformed Church Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 8 to 17.

Respective responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, and considers that the audit requirement of Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions of the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters in connection with the examination came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Signed by the Independent Examiner:

date: 18 October 2024

Hayden Watson BSc (Hons) FCCA
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