

West Malling Baptist Church

2021 Report for Charity Commission

Statutory Information

Registered Address

61 Swan Street, West Malling, Kent, ME19 6LW

Charity Registration Number 1130977

Trustees

Name	Date appointed
Rev D.Baxter (Minister)	January 2017
Mr. R.Colechin	April 2019 (Stood down March 2022)
Mr. C.Cornwall (Treasurer)	April 2019
Mr. A.Waitt	May 2018 (Resigned March 2021)
Miss J.Webb (Secretary)	March 2020
Mrs.W.Mann	March 2020
Mr J Davis	September 2021

Property Trustees

The Baptist Union Corporation Limited
Baptist House
129 Broadway
Didcot
Oxfordshire OX11 8RT

Bankers

National Westminster Bank Plc
718 London Road
Larkfield
Aylesford
Kent ME20 6AN

Independent Examiner

Precision Accountancy LLP
454 New Hythe Lane
Aylesford
Kent ME20 7UH

Annual Report for 2021

The trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for 2021.

Charitable Object

The Charity is governed by an Approved Governing Document which states that the principal purpose of the charity is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination to include the advancement of education, community service and such other general charitable purposes in such parts of the United Kingdom and the world as the Church shall determine.

The Church occupies premises which are held by the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd. on Trusts which are entirely compatible with the above object.

Organisational Structure and Decision making processes

Members of the Church are accepted in accordance with the Constitution which requires them to be or to have been publicly baptized or by profession of faith in Jesus Christ, or following other modes of baptism to renew their public profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

The members Meeting normally takes place six times per year and has responsibility for the overall policy of the church. In accordance with the Constitution, the members appoint up to ten Trustees (including the Church Secretary and Treasurer) and collectively known as the Deacons, who together with the Minister (when in office), are responsible for the day to day running of the church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. All members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the charitable objective.

Relevant matters may be submitted to the Church Meeting by the Trustees for guidance, or may be raised by members in Church Meeting for further consideration by the Trustees. Though the Constitution permits decisions to be made at Church Meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

Objectives and Activities

In order to achieve the principal objective which is set out above, the Church provides a variety of activities both to its membership and to the community generally. The aim is to show the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed and to bring people into a closer relationship with Him as living Lord.

Central to the work and witness of the Church is the provision of regular public services of Christian worship. These services take place each Sunday at 10:45am. There are also occasional services at other times which are advertised on the Church Notice Board and the website (www.wmbc.org.uk). There is a full children's programme during the morning services. The church seeks to be a friendly and welcoming community and anybody is free to attend any of these services.

The Church runs a series of house groups for the growth of faith and discipleship in the homes of some members, and further details of these can be obtained from the Trustees on request, or at the Sunday services of worship.

The Church runs a number of groups that meet on the church premises, but may not have gathered during the period of Government Covid restrictions in 2021. These include:

- Monthly Messy Church for families (Last Saturday)
- Monthly coffee morning (second Wednesday)
- CAP Money Course

All of these have the purpose of assisting the community and demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ. From time to time the Church runs courses in parenting, marriage preparation, and courses for people interested in discovering more about Christianity. Some of these courses are run in partnership with other local churches.

The Church had an established Pre-School through 2021, which served the local community. In 2021 it has been run by trained qualified personnel and is inspected by Ofsted. The Church also runs various other events for young people, and men and women. (A fuller listing of all our activities is shown in our Annual Church Report for 2021 (which is available on request).

The Church operates systems to ensure that all people working with children and vulnerable adults are appropriately vetted with regard to the Disclosure and Barring Service. We have an appointed Safeguarding Trustee and policy.

The Church Trustees have read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and are satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the Charity is providing a benefit to the public.

Achievements and Performance

The Church does not measure the success of its programmes only in numbers, including financial numbers, but also in less tangible areas like fellowship and encouragement. The Trustees recognise that these are difficult to measure, but believe that 2021 was a positive year in the life of the church despite the restrictions placed through the Government through the national Coronavirus pandemic, and that it is able to pursue its mission purposes in 2022 with confidence.

The Impact of the Covid-19 in 2020

From March 2019 the church closed for Sunday Worship following the UK Government guidance and that of The Baptist Union of Great Britain. Sunday worship moved to an on-line service. All weekly activities closed until restrictions on lockdown were lifted and the Pre-school could recommence. To be inclusive, the congregation who were unable to access the internet were invited to attend a Monday worship service when this was permissible, keeping within the Government restrictions on church gatherings.

Eventually, as Government restrictions were lifted from July 2021, the church members meeting moved from 'zoom' to meeting physically. At this meeting any decisions made during "lockdown" were duly ratified by the members. Written reports from the Treasurer, Secretary and Minister were emailed or posted to all members prior to these meetings.

Other regular gatherings began reopening:

1. Sunday morning worship (including activities for children and youth) reopened from July 2021
2. Monthly coffee morning and Messy Church recommenced from September 2021

In May 2021 the church supported the local community of West Malling by serving as a Polling Station. It has also continued to support the local community, for example: offering lifts for appointments, giving supermarket vouchers and food parcels to those in need.

Swan St Pre-school

For many years the church has run a pre-school. In September 2021 it was becoming obvious that pupil numbers had significantly decreased, as well as local council funding, to the point that it was facing an ever increasing deficit. It was reported by the Pre-school Managers to the Trustees in September 2021.

The Trustees agreed to church funding Pre-School and underpin the deficit for the coming academic year. But, this would be on the firm proviso that a 'rescue plan/plan of action' be drawn up and worked through in this academic year to give the Pre-School the best chance of continuation. It was agreed that there should be an action plan to address:

1. Accountability
2. Preschool as part of the mission of the church
3. Viability

The Trustee kept the development of the Pre-school under constant review. A Special Church Members Meeting gathered in November to allow Members to discuss the situation. However it had become increasingly apparent that by December Pre-school was unsustainable moving into 2022. It was decided by the Church Members at a Special Church members Meeting in December to begin the process of closing the Preschool at the end of July 2022.

Trustees & Membership in 2021

There are appointed Trustees for Safeguarding, Health and Safety, General Data Protection.

The Trustees also continued their monthly meetings in person or over Zoom.

Church membership dropped by three during 2021.

The overall membership total at 31st December 2021 was 70.

Financial Review 2021

The Church continues to raise the funds which it needs to carry on its activities from within its own membership and congregation. No wider public appeal was made for funds during the year.

Total income fell by £15,613 in 2021. Offerings fell by £6,403 (9.6%) mainly due to changes in membership and changes in circumstances. Pre-School income decreased by more than £7,000 as numbers of children attending were lower. As mentioned above the decision to close the Pre-School at the end of the 2021/22 academic year was taken by the Church in December 2021.

Total expenditure increased by more than £3,972 mainly due to carrying out repairs and redecoration of the Church building which had been delayed from previous years due to Covid-19, the expenditure mainly being met from our reserves. Pre-School expenditure decreased by £7,162 reflecting the reduction in income.

Bank and Cash Balances decreased by £8,547 during 2021 to a total of £67,879 at 31 December 2021 which is adequate to fully continue the work of the Church in 2021 and beyond, including meeting redundancy payments arising from the closure of the Pre-School.

The Church expressed its part in the life of the wider church by making grants to national and international Christian organisations and societies with Christian aims and objectives compatible with the church's own charitable purpose.

The Church is heavily dependent on its membership working as volunteers in all aspects of the church's activities, many of which run with little or no impact on the church's expenditure, but nevertheless contribute substantially to the achievement of the church's objectives.

The financial results for the year, together with a summary of the accounting policies adopted are set out in the accompanying Financial Statement.

The Trustees have established a Reserves Policy and are satisfied that there are sufficient reserves at the Balance Sheet date, together with ongoing income anticipated, to enable the Church to function effectively in the coming year.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Report to the Trustees/members of	WEST MALLING BAPTIST CHURCH	
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2021	Charity number 1130977
Set out on pages	1 to 6	
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	<p>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.</p> <p>It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act;• to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (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 statement	<p>My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the 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.</p>	
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention</p> <p>(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:</p> <p>(a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and</p> <p>(b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or</p> <p>(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached</p>	

Signed  Date 22ND AUGUST 2022

Name PRECISION ACCOUNTANCY LLP

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