

# **BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023**

## **1. Administrative Information**

Bridport United Church (Methodist and United Reformed) is part of the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit (which is part of Southampton Methodist District), and the Wessex Synod of the URC, and is also a member of Churches Together in Bridport & District. The church celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a United Church in 2022, although there has been a Methodist and United Reformed presence in Bridport since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Bridport United Church is registered as **Charity No. 1136354**

**Minister:** Revd Jane Wilson

The Managing Trustees are appointed in accordance with the terms of the Constitution and Schedule (Governing Documents) of Bridport United Church and CPD.

### **Managing Trustees in 2023:**

Revd Jane Wilson (Chair)

Jane Clinton

John Darwood

Susan Herman

Ros Hilliard

Peter Kershaw (to July 2023)

Judy Munden

Richard Plummer

Wendy Plummer

Lyn Wells

Janice Young

**Treasurer:** Peter Kershaw (to July 2023); Richard Plummer (from July 2023)

**Independent Examiner:** Denys Hood

All official correspondence should be sent to the Minister/Secretary/Treasurer at Bridport United Church, East Street, Bridport, DT6 3LJ

## **2. Aims and Objectives.**

The aim of the church as set out in its mission statement is to work to proclaim God's love to all ages through worship, fellowship, outreach, caring, teaching and prayer.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Developing the worship life of the church by offering a range of worship styles and experiences, including Messy Church, Taizé, Café Church, Soul Space, and Healing services encompassing informal and more traditional services.
- Offering ways of deepening discipleship through fellowship groups, prayer meetings, house and bible study groups, and other courses.
- Offering pastoral care and support; the Pastoral Coordinator works with the Minister in reviewing the Pastoral List and pastoral needs. Pastoral care and support for individuals and groups is provided by the Minister and the team of pastoral visitors.

- Reaching out to and serving our local community through various activities including the twice weekly Coffee mornings, and monthly Lunch Club, Fellowship Club, Big Breakfast. Plans are in hand to restart the toddler group.
- Encouraging a deeper prayer life by providing opportunities for prayer in worship and weekly prayer meetings, the prayer chain, prayer request boxes on tables at the Coffee Mornings and Big Breakfast and prayer-focussed events.
- Working with Churches Together in Bridport & District (CTiBD) to support services and outreach events throughout the year, supporting other local community care groups such as Pathways to Care, Foodbanks, Helpful Hampers, Melpash Show and hosing the CTiBD Christmas Day Lunch .
- Working towards a fairer, greener world by seeking to work to attain an Eco Church award.

### **3. Review of Activities, Progress and Achievements**

The Minister is Chair of the Managing Trustees/Church Council, which meets at least 4 times a year, and the Church Meeting, which meets at least 3 times a year, to review the various aspects of the life of the church in the context of its ongoing mission to demonstrate the love of God by witnessing to and serving the community. Trustees and officers are appointed by the Annual Church Meeting.

The Managing Trustees have continued to review and update procedures to manage the risks to which Managing Trustees and members are exposed and risk assessments are carried out as needed. The Managing Trustees are undergoing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

Volunteers are checked, including where appropriate under the DBS legislation, and provided with appropriate training.

The Church Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually by the Managing Trustees and the Church Safeguarding officer ensures that appropriate Safeguarding training and DBS checks are completed by all relevant church officers and volunteers in accordance with the BUC Safeguarding Policy.

The GDPR Privacy Notice is reviewed annually.

This has been another busy year for Bridport United Church.

We continue to seek to offer a variety of worship services and activities, in addition to the main 10.30am Sunday service, and new services introduced during the year included Café Church, Healing services, Taize-style services, an In Loving Memory service, and Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Regular events such as the monthly Messy Church at 3.30pm on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, led by a team coordinated by the circuit-based Children & Families Lay Worker, Peter Jenner, have continued to be well attended by around 25-30 local children and their families.

Soul Space, an informal space to listen, sing, pray, talk and connect with God with tea, coffee & cake, happens monthly at 4pm on 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays and is well supported by members of the church and local community. As more people now attend in person and the team producing videos has reduced, it was decided not to continue with video recordings.

The Prayer Group meets regularly in church on Wednesday mornings and there is also a prayer chain which responds quickly to requests for prayers via email. The prayer boxes on tables at weekly coffee mornings have collected several prayer requests which are passed on immediately. A Quiet Prayer Afternoon and a Holy Week series of morning prayers was well received and there are plans to arrange more prayer events in future.

Our community outreach activities continue to be well supported with an average of 60-70 people attending the weekly Coffee mornings on Wednesdays (including those attending the Knit & Natter group and Walking for Wellbeing) and Saturdays. On Wednesdays during the colder months this was extended to offer a Warm Welcome Space with a simple lunch.

The monthly Big Breakfast has continued to grow in popularity with c.90 breakfasts being cooked for people from the local community and beyond each month.

The monthly Wednesday Lunch Club provides an opportunity for people to meet for fellowship and a 2 course home cooked lunch with an average attendance of c. 60 people.

The monthly Thursday Fellowship Club offers an afternoon for anyone to come and chat, do some crafts, play board games, do a puzzle, or knit, with sandwiches and cake to follow.

Sadly the Stepping Stones Pre-school closed after over 25 years due to a lack of demand for available places, but plans are being made to launch a new Toddlers Group, Little Lambs, in the New Year.

The annual Christmas Tree Festival hosted by BUC was again a major event in the Bridport Christmas calendar and visitor numbers totalled almost 3000. In response to feedback from members and community groups it was decided to retain the reduced number of trees at post-Covid level to allow more space for decorating and viewing trees.

The Christmas Day Lunch run by a team of volunteers from CTiBD provided a lunch for nearly 90 people from the local community who would otherwise be on their own (including some unable to attend in person) alongside songs and fellowship.

#### **4. Finances and Resources.**

The Resources Committee meets regularly to encourage good stewardship of the church's financial and property resources in order to further the church's mission activities and ensure that the premises are a safe and secure space.

The accounts include the employment costs of those directly employed by the Church. The church continues to be grateful for donations and offerings. Regular giving has remained at a similar level to the previous year. Income from lettings was slightly lower than the previous year but is expected to improve as more room space becomes available following the closure of the preschool. Additional one-off items of maintenance and repairs were covered by an increase in donations. Careful consideration has been given to the expenses to be met by the church, most of which relate to essential expenditure. There are plans to refurbish the main kitchen and toilets which are essential to the church's outreach activities, with most of the costs being met by donations and grants.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on income streams and the Church recognises the need to carefully review income sources while maintaining good control over expenditure. The church has a Reserves Policy to ensure that reserves are held to meet unforeseen expenditure or short-term annual deficits, aiming to hold reserves of 50% of average annual operating expenditure.

The on-going challenge of an ageing congregation remains, as does the need to be able to cover annual expenditure with annual income, and replenish reserves when it has been necessary to use them for urgent major work. This is regularly considered and monitored by the Managing Trustees.

Signed:



on behalf of the Managing Trustees



**BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH  
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
12 MONTHS ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2023**

Actual 2022 £		Actual 2023 £		Budget 2023 £	Budget 2024 £
	<u>INCOME</u>				
	Collections - Standing Orders	22645			
31917	Loose Sunday Service	8156	30801	33000	30000
6670	Individual Donations inc £5k Kitch / SSP £2350 Screen		40484	12000	15500
	Circuit Donations Screen £1800/Tables £507		2307		(SSP 10K)
	Car Park		3097		
21570	Lettings		19820	19000	18000
	Insurance Claim ref Car Park wall		6487		
9357	Coffee Mornings		7358	5400	7500
	Big Breakfast		3075	4000	3000
	Monthly/Weekly Wed Lunch Club (net)		1540		1200
2015	Christmas Tree Festival		1291	2000	1300
80	Investment Interest		270	100	200
7663	Gift Aid Tax Rebate/vat refund on listed building		7855	7000	12000
79272			124385	82500	88700
	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
32861	URC M&M / Methodist Assessment	38676		39304	40000
1849	Choir & Organ/Piano Expenses	2239		1500	2000
	Music Licence	772			
1900	Donations inc Youth/Christ Lunch/Bridge /Caid/SS/Ptc	6586		3000	3500
6676	Church Admin/office expenses /tele internet	10095		8000	10000
7059	Heating & Lighting	9180		9500	9500
3242	Cleaning	4236		4500	3000
9157	Repairs / Maint'ce (inc wall £7904 stone, cp hole wc lock£725)	32337		5000	5000
	Fire Equipment	1761			
1813	Printing & stationary	933		1000	1000
4733	Insurance	5898		5000	6000
4480	Sundries (Including loss £334 on MG investment)	687		1700	1500
1214	Christmas Tree Festival (Including new bases and lights/timers)	2095		1500	1500
	<u>Equipment</u>			Kitchen	10000
	Trolley	3046		Chairs	3500
	Tables	634		Screens	Grants
	Chip & Pin M/C plus Till	617		Note Bd	Grants
	New Screen	3714			
	Water Boiler Kitchen	468			
74984			123974	80004	96500
4288	Excess of Income Over Expenditure		411	2496	-7800

Notes

- 1) £17147 + vat of church repairs 2021/2022 came to light has now been paid and included in above accounts
- 2) Budgeted Donation of £10000 plus £15000 extra from South Street Props has been received and included in a/c's
- 3) £5000 donation received towards new Kitchen costs has yet to be spent .(to be restricted for future kitchen cost)
- 4) A donation of £3905 has been received from Stepping Stones Pre School for use on the new Toddler Group only, or possibly a case could be made for some Messy Church use.(to be restricted for future Toddler/Messy Church use)
- 5) The VAT due from the listed building scheme of approx £3500 (from recent outstanding 2021/22 repairs bill) is due, but cannot be claimed untill August 2024.
- 6) HMRC Gift Aid due for the year to 31/12/23 of approx £8500

**BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH**

**RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS / BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2023**

		£	£
<b>Balances at 31st DECEMBER 2023</b>			
Balance at HSBC Bank	Admin A/C Bank Statement 31/12/23	33776.89	
	Less unpresented cheques	42.00	
		20.48	
		104.40	
		188.47	
		244.10	
		100.00	-699.45
Adjusted HSBC Balance Admin A/C 31/12/23			33077
Balance at HSBC Bank Donor A/C			1571
Cash On Hand 31/12/23			185
Central Finance Board CFB 31/12/23			5285
Methodist Charities Account MCA 31/12/23			1856
Debtors (Lettings invoices raised but not yet paid) 31/12/23			962
Sub Total BUC Assets 31/12/23			42936
Less Creditors 31/12/23 (Light & Heat Total Energies Dec Elect/Gas bill D/D paid Jan 24)			-1655
Total Assets of BUC 31/12/23			41281
Note:- M G A/C Closed.(Paid into Admin a/c, loss of £334 see sundries expenditure )			

**Balances at 31 DECEMBER 2022**

Balance at HSBC Bank	Admin	11388	
	Donor	17721	
Central Finance Board CFB		5060	
MCA		1811	
M/G		4890	
Total Assets of BUC 31/12/22			40870
Excess of Income Over Expenditure to 31/12/23			411

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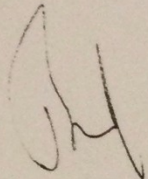
## **EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE**

**I have examined the accounts of Bridport United Church, as submitted to me, for the year ended 31 December 2023.**

**These consisted of the Income and Expenditure Account for the year, and the Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023, together with supporting working papers.**

**The above readily allowed a clear view of the year end situation. Whilst the net income for the year is reduced, when compared with the previous year, there clearly has been dedicated control over overall expenditure.**

**I am able to confirm that the situation is correctly portrayed, and the accounts are in good order.**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'DH' or 'Denys Hood', written in a cursive style.

**Denys Hood B Sc (Econ)**

**External examiner**