

BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

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.

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 2024:

Rev Jane Wilson (Chair)

Jane Clinton

John Darwood

Susan Herman

Ros Hilliard

Judy Munden

Wendy Plummer

Richard Plummer (to 31 January 2024)

Lyn Wells

Tim Tarling (from 8 March 2024)

Treasurer: Richard Plummer (to 31 January 2024); Tim Tarling (from 8 March 2024)

Independent Examiner: Scott Vevers Accountants, Bridport

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, and Big Breakfast. The Toddler group was restarted in February 2024.

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- Encouraging a deeper prayer life by providing opportunities for prayer through weekly worship and prayer meetings, the prayer chain, prayer request boxes on tables at the Coffee Mornings and Big Breakfast and specific prayer-focussed events.
- Working with Churches Together in Bridport & District (CTiBD) to support services and outreach events throughout the year, including Pray Bridport, and supporting other local community care groups such as Pathways to Care, Foodbanks, Helpful Hampers, Melpash Show and hosting 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 Church Council and 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 have undergone Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

Volunteers are recruited and checked in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy, which is reviewed annually by the Managing Trustees. 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 offer a variety of worship services and activities, in addition to the main 10.30am Sunday service, and additional services introduced during the year include Café Church, Healing services, an In Loving Memory service, and Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. In March we hosted the 'Gethsemane Garments' exhibition in March which was open to the local community.

Regular events such as the monthly Messy Church at 3.30pm on 4th 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 1st Sundays and is well supported by around 20-30 people from the church and local community.

The Prayer Group meets in church on Wednesday mornings to pray for prayer requests received in person, by email, via the prayer boxes at coffee mornings, and the prayer chain, for individual, local, national and international events and concerns. The prayer chain responds to requests for prayers received by email and in person. 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.

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

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

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

A new weekly Toddler Group, Little Lambs, was set up in February 2024 and welcomes around 20 babies and toddlers and their carers every Monday morning during school term time, for play, stories, songs and snacks.

The annual Christmas Tree Festival hosted by BUC was again a major event in the Bridport Christmas calendar with visitor numbers totalling almost 3000. In response to feedback from members and community groups it was decided to maintain the number of trees at 31 to allow more space for decorating and viewing.

The Christmas Day Lunch hosted by BUC and 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 net incoming resources for the year amounted to £3,328 (2023: £411) and the reserves at the year-end were £44,609 (2023: £41,281).

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. A DONA card machine has been installed to enable contactless donations and a link had been included on the church website. The transition to online banking is ongoing.

Regular giving has reduced slightly compared to last year, due in part to the death of several members who were regular givers, but this has been partially offset by the introduction of the DONA machine. Gift Aid is claimed on all donations where appropriate. Income from lettings was slightly lower than the previous year, rates have been reviewed and increased this year.

Careful consideration continues to be given to the expenses of the church, most of which relate to essential expenditure in maintaining church life and buildings. The kitchen has been refurbished and there are plans to upgrade the female toilets which are essential to the church's outreach activities; most of the costs are being met by donations and grants. A quinquennial report was carried out in

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**

November 2024 which confirmed that the premises had been well cared for and no urgent work was required. Ongoing maintenance continues to be scheduled and grants applied for where appropriate.

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.

5. Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Charity for that year. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees of the Charity on 28th April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Signed: J. M. Wilson
on behalf of the Managing Trustees

Revd J. M. Wilson
Chair of Trustees

**BRIDPORT UNITED CHURCH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 6 to 7.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act;
or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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


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Mr. M.J. Cridland BA (Hons) FCA
Scott Vevers Ltd
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
65 East Street
Bridport
Dorset DT6 3LB

Date: 1/5/25
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Bridport United Church
Receipts and payments accounts
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Income	Actual To 31.12.24	Actual To 31.12.23
Collection	£6,703	£8,156
Standing Orders	£20,760	£22,645
Sub	£27,463	£30,801
Lettings	£17,326	£19,820
Dona/Sum up Net	£1,582	
Other income/donations		
Dorset South and W Mission Award - Circuit Grants (kitchen, signage etc.)	£8,164	£2,307
Car Park	£1,344	£3,097
Other donations	£6,801	£40,484
J Stevens Fund	£2,481	-
Little lambs, Big Breakfast, Lunches, coffee etc.	£10,713	£11,973
South Street Properties Donation (Church Council 08.	£10,000	-
Insurance Claim ref Car Park Wall	-	£6,487
Sub	£39,503	£64,348
Christmas Tree Festival - BACs	£360	£1,291
Interest	£300	£270
Gift Aid (for 2022/23) and VAT reclaim	£11,816	£7,855
Total income	£98,350	£124,385
Expenditure		
Assessments	£43,232	£38,676
Choir, Organ expenses, Licence	£1,278	£3,011
Donations out/Youth for Christ etc.	£1,650	£6,586
Admin, Office, Secretarial	£9,897	£10,095
Rent	£850	
Heat & Light	£5,729	£9,180
Cleaning	£505	£4,236
Repairs & Maintenance	£9,156	£34,098
Printing & Stationery	£1,464	£933
Insurance	£6,132	£5,898
Sundries	£344	£687
Christmas Tree Festival	£1,225	£2,095
Equipment, Chairs, Kitchen, Screens, Dona	£13,560	£8,479
Total expenditure	£95,022	£123,974
Net Surplus	£3,328	£411

Notes

Income was up by £10k on budget.

Gift Aid was not as much as predicted but the Dona machine gave us £1.6k unbudgeted additional income. We didn't receive as much cash collections as expected but did better than anticipated with our VAT reclaim.

We received all the grants we applied for to help pay for the kitchen refurb., new screens and outside notice boards.

Overall expenditure was as expected. We overspent on building repairs and our assessments were higher than expected. We underspent on heat & light and cleaning.

We show a £3.3k surplus for the year.

As at 31 December 2024

Reserves @ 31.12.23

HSBC Admin	£32,384	
HSBC Doner	£1,571	
Cash	£185	
CFB	£5,285	
MCA	£1,856	
Total reserves brought forward		£41,281

Surplus for the year to 31 December 2024	£3,328
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Reserves @ 31.12.24

HSBC Admin	£21,179
HSBC Doner	£15,526
Cash	£462
CFB	£5,555
MCA	£1,887
Total reserves carried forward	£44,609

Approved on behalf of the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
J. M. Wilson	J. M. WILSON (REV)	28/4/2025