



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From: 1st October 2023 To: 30th September 2024

Charity name: Strood Gospel Mission Church (SGMC)

Charity registration number: 1137729

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith. SGMC may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the UK and/or other parts of the world.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	Regular public worship, prayer, bible study, preaching, teaching and baptism. Education and training for Christian and community service. Giving and encouraging pastoral care. Supporting and encouraging social action. Supporting and caring for the local community.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>SGMC has continued to engage with the local community in a safe, helpful and encouraging way by running a myriad of activities to help meet the needs of people.</p> <p>Our "Grassroots" project continues to progress. It is a clothing (and other small, non-electrical, household items) project where items are donated, and then made freely available to anyone. Anyone can come into the church building and take what they need, for free. If they choose to make a voluntary cash donation, these are collected and 100% of these donations are then given to local good causes, such as foodbanks and hospices. Over £2200 of voluntary cash donations have been given by members of the public since the project began, and these monies have been donated to five Medway-based charities. SGMC covers all the costs of operating the project. The project continues to prove very beneficial - recycling clothing and goods that might otherwise go to landfill; helping people, particularly young families starting off in life, to obtain what they need in difficult times with cost-of-living pressures; and channelling 100% of voluntary cash donations to assist worthy local causes. We also held our popular Christmas Christingle and candle-lit Carol Services, our family-friendly Christmas Fayre as well as an Easter Party, and these were well supported by the community.</p> <p>Our "Hope Hut", which is a converted wheelie bin store placed outside the church building, is a continuing talking point within the community. The Hut has a display inside with a perspective front and lighting, and so the display is visible 24 hours a day, with arresting and colourful tableaux regularly changed through the year.</p> <p>Meal Club, which commenced last year, is a project we undertake, working with volunteers from the Royal Mail as well as food provided by Gillingham Street Angels. The Club provides a free hot meal to anyone that attends, and we also open up Grassroots at the same time to provide individuals with the</p>

		<p>opportunity to choose any items that they might need. We have a good following amongst the homeless community, and the Club is also popular with young mums and children, as well as more elderly residents, as it provides much need social contact for those living alone.</p> <p>There are other activities for the community held in the church, almost every day of the week, including a Parents and Toddlers group, a coffee morning (Coffee Stop), a Quilting Group for those that enjoy sewing, quilting, crochet, embroidery, and Knit & Natter, an opportunity to chat and sew in a relaxed atmosphere at the Bread of Life café, near to the Church. These are in addition to our Sunday services (which include a Sunday School and a Bible Class) as well as a number of informal small groups that meet at various times during the day and evening to suit different working schedules, for bible study, prayer and pastoral support. We have also run a number of online “Alpha” courses throughout the year, to help those curious about understanding Christianity in more detail.</p> <p>Finally, this year we were able to offer the use of the church building as a polling station on two occasions, at the request of Medway Council, given our central position in the heart of North Strood.</p>
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Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	<p>SGMC posted a surplus of £784.08 for the financial year, compared to a surplus of £3,152.60 for the previous financial year. Total income increased by 14%, compared to 2022/23, principally due to an increase in donations (up 16%), the contribution received from Borstal Baptist Church under our 3-Year Secondment Agreement, and various one-off items. Total expenditure also increased, by 19%, primarily due to the first year of employing a full-time Minister, and general increases in costs across some budget lines, particularly utilities. SGMC is the beneficial owner (subject to the relevant trusts) of the church building at Brompton Lane, as well as the Manse, the legal title to which is held by the Church's custodian and holding</p>
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		<p>trustee, the Property Trustees. These properties are together insured for £1.96m.</p> <p>The principal long-term liability of the Church is its membership as a participating employer of the Baptist Pension Scheme, the Defined Benefit Plan. At the last formal valuation of the Plan in December 2019, there was a deficit of £18m and the Church, and the other participating employers in the DB Plan, are collectively responsible for funding this deficit. The Trustee of the Scheme informed all churches in the Scheme that an agreement had been signed, on 30th June 2022, with the insurance company Just Group, to secure DB Plan members' pension benefits. Just Group are now providing financial backing for all DB pensions provided through the Scheme's DB Plan, and the transaction takes the Scheme out of a shortfall position for the first time in two decades. Because the Just Group policies cover the overwhelming majority of the DB Plan's liabilities, the risks to employers are substantially reduced. The Trustee of the Scheme and the Baptist Union expect the assets of the DB Plan will be sufficient to cover all the costs and liabilities that remain; however, this is not certain until the completion of the buy-out process (which is the setting up of annuities for each member of the DB Plan). In view of this, deficit recovery contributions from each participating employer have been reduced, but will continue at a nominal amount of £1 per month until completion.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	<p>When setting and/or reviewing the appropriate level of reserves, the Church takes into account the level of funds required to cover immediate commitments and planned expenditure, as well as an analysis of future needs, opportunities, contingencies and risks that are not likely to be met out of forecast income, and the consequences of not being able to meet them. At just over £124,000, the level of reserves covers just over 2 years of current expenditure, but it does include £12,506.77 which will be used in the 2024/25 financial year (please see "Amount of Reserves" below for a full explanation). In addition, the Church has agreed to firstly assist the Property Trustees in resolving some outstanding legal issues in relation to their trusts,</p>

		and secondly, to undertake the process to convert SGMC to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, for the benefits that brings in being able to hold property and reduce charity trustee liability. This will result in additional expenditure, principally legal costs, over the next few years to complete these tasks. Given the above, and in addition, given the ages of the Church building and the Manse, and the likely need of significant maintenance expenditure over the coming years, as well as the reliance on a relatively small number of donors, the level of reserves is felt appropriate to ensure that SGMC can meet commitments when they fall due.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	Total reserves have increased to £124,675.452, excluding a reserve of £8,872.19 specifically designated for use in Youth Work. In addition, we also hold £8,363.83 in a restricted legacy reserve, held in a separate account, to be used for Mission and Outreach. Finally, the total reserves figure also includes the final tranche under the 3-year Secondment Agreement from Bortsal Baptist Church (this was included in the Settlement Amount which Bortsal Baptist Church paid us when it closed in January 2023). This amounts to £12,506.77, and this amount will be used over 2024/25 financial year to help mitigate payroll costs, in accordance with the original Secondment Agreement.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed , royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g. unincorporated association , CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Unincorporated Association
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g., election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are appointed and removed by the Church Members, as detailed under the Constitution. This process is public, clear and open, but the vote is undertaken by way of a secret ballot of the membership of the Church. The Church membership will also vote for the appointment to the roles of Minister, Minister-in-Training, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, Elder and Deacon.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Strood Gospel Mission Church
Other name the charity uses	N/A
Registered charity number	1137729
Charity's principal address	Brompton Lane, Strood, Rochester, Kent. ME2 3BQ
Correspondence address	58 King Arthurs Drive, Frindsbury, Rochester, Kent. ME2 3NB

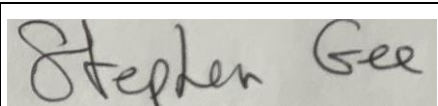
Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Nigel Briston	Deacon		
2	Hayley Prestidge-Briston	Minister		
3	Stephen Gee	Treasurer & Deacon		
4	Diana Morgan	Deacon		
5	Rick Morgan	Deacon		
6	Femi Okanlawon	Deacon		
7	Marion Hollebon	Deacon		
8	Mark Wicker	Deacon		
9	Karen Charles	Deacon		
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Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Stephen Gee	
Position (e.g., Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer & Charity Trustee	

Date

20th March 2025

STROOD GOSPEL MISSION CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

GENERAL RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Note	2024	2023
Income			
Sunday Offerings		5,322.60	4,108.45
Regular Giving		30,606.47	26,621.00
Rental Income		13,513.80	13,510.73
Designated Mission Giving		833.56	583.62
Sundry Income		2,451.70	2,385.75
Interest Received		3,903.03	1,198.82
Gift Aid Recovery		5,562.61	6,831.22
Borstal Secondment Agreement		12,506.77	9,949.45
Total Income		74,700.54	65,189.04
Expenditure			
Payroll		34,961.43	17,722.44
College Accommodation & Travel (NAM's Training)		648.10	2,288.55
Pastor's Discretionary Fund		750.00	750.00
Tithe Fund		3,072.94	3,193.71
Mileage		-	84.15
Designated Mission Gifts		833.56	583.62
Outreach & Publicity		986.03	1,369.30
Training & Teaching Materials		50.00	926.30
Preaching Gifts		150.00	150.00
Ministry (incl Sundries)		1,021.87	1,494.47
Licenses & Website		515.30	507.89
Resources		1,630.80	2,050.09
Youth Work		173.20	366.61
Property Church		4,465.31	5,283.90
Property Manse		3,729.19	6,997.42
Property Frindsbury		-	950.00
Property Borstal		12,809.88	12,245.00
Utilities Church		5,373.73	2,643.52
Utilities Frindsbury		-	338.34
Utilities Borstal		2,745.12	2,091.13
Total Expenditure		73,916.46	62,036.44
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	1	784.08	3,152.60
Transfers to/from Reserve Accounts		-	-
Balance at previous year end		25,882.93	22,730.33
Balance at current year end		26,667.01	25,882.93

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	Note	2024	2023
Assets			
Bank and other cash balances			
Current Account		19,443.64	22,562.59
Reserves Account *		42,108.78	37,076.82
Restricted Legacy Account (Mission)		8,527.94	8,363.83
Charity Bank Account		54,322.22	52,965.60
United Trust Account		37,116.64	35,809.59
Other monetary assets:			
Debtors		-	-
Loans made		-	-
Gift aid claimed but not received		-	-
Investment Assets		-	-
Assets Held for Church's own use	2	1,961,658	1,898,797
Total Assets		2,123,177.22	2,055,575.43
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities		-	-
Long Term Loans		-	-
Pension Scheme liability	3	21.00	33.00
Other liabilities		-	-
Total Liabilities		21.00	33.00

* Included within the Reserves Account is a figure of £8,872.19 representing the outstanding balance from the closure of the Playgroup, and is to be used for Youth Work.

The accounts and statement of assets and liabilities relating to the year ending 30th September 2024 are as approved by the Charity Trustees, and by the Members at the AGM of 24th November 2024.

Signed: Stephen Gee, Treasurer & Charity Trustee (authorised to sign on behalf of the Charity Trustees)

Date: 24.11.2024

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Basis of accounts

These accounts have been prepared on a 'receipts and payments' basis and in accordance with Section 133 Charities Act 2011.

2. Assets Held for the Church's own use

The Church is the beneficial owner (subject to the relevant trusts) of the following assets, the legal title to which is held by the Church's custodian trustee, the Property Trustees:

- Church premises at Brompton Lane valued in the accounts at £1,380,232 insured value.
- Church manse at 1 Weston Road valued in the accounts at £503,218 insured value.
- The Church also owns fixtures, furniture and equipment with an insured value of £78,208

3. Pension Scheme Liabilities

The Church is a participating employer in the Baptist Pension Scheme ("the Scheme"), which is a separate legal entity administered by the Pension Trustee (Baptist Pension Trust Limited). The assets of the Scheme are held separately from those of the Employer and the other participating employers.

The Scheme, previously known as the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund, started in 1925, but was closed to future accrual of defined benefits on 31 December 2011. Prior to this date the main benefit provided through the Defined Benefit (DB) Plan was a pension of one eightieth of final minimum pensionable income for each year of pensionable service together with additional pension in respect of premiums paid on Pensionable Income in excess of Minimum Pensionable Income. Since 1 January 2012, benefits have been provided through a Defined Contribution (DC) Plan.

A formal valuation of the DB Plan as at 31 December 2019 was carried out by a professionally qualified Actuary using the Projected Unit Method. At the valuation date the market value of the DB Plan assets was £298 million, whilst the level of assets needed to pay benefits was £316m, giving a deficit of £18m (equivalent to a past service funding level of 94%). The Church and the other participating employers in the DB Plan are collectively responsible for funding this deficit. The next actuarial valuation of the DB Plan within the Scheme was due to take place not later than as at 31 December 2022. However, the DB Plan is to be wound up, and the process to wind it up was started with effect from 31 March 2024 and therefore no formal valuation is due to take place.

Under the Schedule of Contributions, the Church makes a monthly payment in respect of the DB scheme deficit, and historically these increased in line with increases in Minimum Pensionable Income. The Schedule of Contributions foresaw these contributions continuing until June 2026.

On 30th June 2022, the Baptist Pension Scheme signed an agreement with the insurance company Just Group ("Just") to secure DB Plan members' pension benefits. Just are now providing financial backing for all pensions provided through the Scheme's DB Plan and following this transaction, the Scheme no longer has a shortfall. An updated Recovery plan was then signed in August 2022 under which recovery contributions from each participating employer in the DB Plan reduced to £1 per month from August 2022.

However, there remain elements of the DB Plan's finances that are uncertain prior to the completion of the buy-out process (which is the setting up of annuities for each member of the DB Plan). These uncertainties include: the sale values that will be achieved in the disposal of the residual investment assets; the costs of operating the DB Plan until the completion of the buy-out process; the costs of the buy-out process itself, and the cost of making any amendments to the DB Plan to enable the buy-out to proceed.

The Baptist Union and the Trustee of the Scheme expect the assets of the DB Plan will be sufficient to cover all the costs and liabilities that remain. However, it is possible that this will not be the case and that further funds will be needed from employers. It is not possible for the Baptist Union and the Trustee of the Scheme to quantify or estimate these funds at this time, but the direct debit mandates remain in place should there be a need to collect additional monies in the future.

Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Strood Gospel Mission Church

On accounts for the year
ended

30 September 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1137729

Set out on pages

General Receipts & Payments Account, Statement of Assets and Liabilities
and Notes to the Accounts 1-3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner

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

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

Basis of independent
examiner's statement

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.

Independent
examiner's statement

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
 2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

13 March 2025

Name:

Lionel Robbins

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):