

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales · Charity number 1137996

Details

Other names DUC, THE UNITED CHURCH, UCD

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 2010-09-14

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address United Church Dorchester
49-51 Charles Street
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Dorset
DT1 1EE

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Website <http://www.unitedchurchdorchester.org.uk/>

Activities

Objects: THE PURPOSE OF THE CHARITY IS TO ADVANCE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE AREA OF BENEFIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF THE PARTICIPATING CHURCHES.

Activities: We are a Christian Community which meets together to worship, learn, act and care. We are based in a church building in the centre of Dorchester which is in use throughout the week by church groups, other community groups in the town, and national organizations. We have a shop, selling fair trade foods and crafts, Christian books, greetings cards, and CDs. We also run a coffee shop.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE DORSET.
- Dorset

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£157,318	£154,221	-	-
2023-12-31	£181,035	£156,741	-	-
2022-12-31	£167,916	£228,906	-	-
2021-12-31	£120,767	£115,283	-	-
2020-12-31	£115,540	£97,118	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Anna Newbury		2026-04-28
COLIN GANNAWAY		
Frank Wells		2024-05-01
Gillian Robinson		2023-03-30
Janet Keen		2026-04-28
John David Yarrien		2020-09-01
John Parson		2024-05-01
Linda Mary Scott		2023-03-30
Nigel Hewish		2025-05-01
Norma Leigh		2025-05-01

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales - Charity number 1137996

Accounts

United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2024

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EE

The Charity's Constitution, Organisational Structure and Governance.

Overview

The United Church Dorchester (UCD) was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of "Churches Together in Dorset", the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly because of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

The Purpose of the Charity

The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- Celebration of public worship.
- Teaching of the Christian faith.
- Mission and evangelism.
- Pastoral care, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.
- Serving the local community with a Christian ethos
- Supporting charities in the UK and overseas.
- Maintenance of the fabric of the United Church

Membership

Our current membership is 159 members, 45 adherents and three retired Methodist ministers. The latter all have full membership rights under a local arrangement at UCD. During the year, 3 new members were welcomed into the Church and 3 former members died.

The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the Church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected from the membership by Church Members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the Steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Minister is an ex-officio member of the Council of Stewards. All Stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have had Advanced Safeguarding training. Copies of our current governance documents, including the constitution, our management structures, and Policies and Procedures and the role of a trustee, are available to all members in a restricted section of the church website.

The Council of Stewards meets approximately monthly and a major focus for 2024 has been the renewal of our Vision for United Church. The chair is normally the Senior Steward, who is elected from within the Council of Stewards. At the 2024 AGM it was agreed that Michael Humphrey would relinquish the role of Senior Steward to become Church Secretary rather than

continue with both responsibilities. The Council of Stewards would then take on the duties of the Senior Steward collectively and the Minister, Rev John Yarren would chair the Council of Stewards meetings.

2024 Council Of Stewards

Our Minister:

- Revd John Yarren (inducted September 2020)

Stewards who served all year. (Committee/Subgroup membership/ Responsibility)

- Colin Gannaway (2004) • Treasurer (Finance Committee)
- Paul Smith (2021) • (Property and Finance Committees)
- Michael Humphrey (2022) • Church Secretary (Finance Committee)
- Jenny Mair (2021) • (Worship Committee)
- Rev David Cuckson (2022) • (Health and Safety)
- Linda Scott (2023) • (Youth and Family Committee)
- Gill Robinson (2023) • (Pastoral Committee and World Church)
- Frank Wells (2024) • (Property Committee)
- John Parson (2024) • (Communications and Charities)

Stewards who stood down at the 2024 AGM

- Brian Savage (2020)

Stewards elected at the 2024 AGM

- Frank Wells
- John Parson

Observers

Chris Smith (representing the Dorset S & W Methodist Circuit; from Aug 2023)

Minute Takers

- Ellie Minns - (UCD Administrator)
- Pauline Humphrey – (as Maternity Leave cover for Ellie from Aug 2024).

The Council of Stewards also includes the Treasurer. Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4-year term). The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Minister in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical, and charitable work. The Council of Stewards is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church.

The Church Meeting meets at least 4 times a year and can advise the Council of Stewards. The management structure, for the day-to-day management of the church has been re-vamped this year. Management is delegated to five committees (Worship; Pastoral; Youth and Family; Finance; Property) and their constituent subgroups. These report regularly to the Council of Stewards, and to Church Meetings. The committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and some have authority to spend a budget allocation. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the delegated authority of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the Church Meeting. Our AGM was held on the church premises in March 2024. The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2024 comprised (Year of appointment shown in brackets.)

Staff Members

- Minister: Revd John Yarrien
- Pastoral Support Assistant: Ruth Magee
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Peter Jenner (DSW Circuit employee)
- UCD Administrator: Ellie Minns, 13 hrs per week
- Shop and Coffee Lounge Finance Administrator: Di Lawrence, 2 hours per week

Senior Volunteer Managers

Although we have paid members of staff, UCD is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Church Secretary – Michael Humphrey
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance Co-chairs – Rev John Yarrien and Michael Humphrey
- Pastoral chair– Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family chair – Peter Jenner
- Property chair - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings chair– John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Managers – Elizabeth Haynes, Sue Gannaway and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Managers – Pat Smith, Pat Brown and Peter Jenner
- Wednesday Morning Coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officers – Linda Scott and Diana Leeming
- World Mission – Gill Robinson

Relationships with Related parties

The United Church Dorchester is a member of the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The United Church Dorchester and Bridport United Church (also a member of DS&W Methodist Circuit) constitute a joint pastorate within the URC. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community.

GDPR

Wendy and John Hilton manage our other data securely to meet our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations. United Church has its own website at <https://www.unitedchurchdorchester.org.uk> which is maintained internally by Susy and Kevin Rogers. Secure areas allow minutes and other records to be stored and accessed by Members and Stewards.

Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

In 2024 a major versioning exercise has been led by our Minister that included a 'Vision Day' in June resulting in several sub-groups established to examine the key themes raised. Our new Vision statement was agreed at a Church Meeting in November.

Our Vision

"We are a Christian Community seeking to be a Beacon of God's Light and Love for All"

When planning our activities for the year, the Minister and Council of Stewards have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our Vision for the wider Church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our Church community.

The Celebration of Public Worship

As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender, or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Council of Stewards is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Council of Stewards maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament. The Musical Director at UCD is Heather Reed who ensures that the choir and music groups' contributions to worship is of an appropriate standard.

Currently, UCD provides a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week:

- The 10.30am Sunday service - our main act of worship. Services are led by our Circuit ministers, retired ministers, or lay preachers from both the Methodist tradition and the United Reformed Churches. Numbers attending the 10.30am service are usually between 95 and 120. The 10.30 am service at UCD is regularly recorded and edited by Peter Robinson and available on the UCD, YouTube channel.
- Sunday Evening services at 6.30pm are held, usually twice a month, with attendance between 9 and 20. Different types of worship, such as Taizé and modern worship songs are intentionally included in some services.

- On the second Sunday afternoon each month, instead of an evening service we now have Afternoon Tea and Favourite Hymns, known simply as Tea-Pot. People arrive from 3.30pm for a formal start at 4pm. We serve sandwiches and cake with cups of tea. At about 4.45pm we give out hymn books and have an informal time of hymn singing, with the hymns chosen by those present. We finish at about 5.30pm. All are welcome. There is no charge or collection, but we welcome donations towards the cost of the tea. The numbers have gradually built up, and we now usually have between 20 and 30 attending.
- A short (20 min) Market Day service on Wednesday morning regularly attracts 20-30 people.
- Printed services for use at home are made available weekly by the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit, for those unable to attend worship at UCD, but without modern computer technology.

We hold a series of special services throughout the year.

- Around 15 people attended our Quiet Christmas; a gentle Christmas service for those who do not feel able to celebrate Christmas enthusiastically, either through bereavement or because of dementia or autism. Several members of UCD's congregation brought friends because they had enjoyed the service last year.
- On Christmas Eve the Church was busy for our Christingle service. Led by the junior church staff, it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying a relaxed service that enabled them to make their own Christingles, as well as hear the Christmas Story, told very simply.
- On Sunday 22nd December we held our annual carol service, which was well attended. Along with a mix of traditional and newer carols, the choir sang several festive pieces to accompany the story of the nativity as described in the Gospels.
- Special services were held during the year, focusing on our World Mission, particularly the URC and Methodist World Church charities and our Church charity for the year, Wheels for the World.

Teaching of the Christian faith

Our Junior Church has 3 teachers with 1 assistant and a local family who come regularly with 3 or 4 children. Additional children attend as visitors or with grandparents. We meet in the Cerne Abbas room and parents are welcome to stay. Our teaching session is based on the 'Roots' scheme which is a recognised national Christian resource. We follow this with play activities and sometimes a snack and drink.

Mission and Evangelism

United Church undertakes a range of outreach activities. These include 'Story Tots' on a Thursday morning providing a space where children can play while parents and carers can catch up with each other in a safe environment. Many of our families have welcomed a newborns and we have recently had a family baptism in the Church. A monthly clothes exchange allows parents to bring children's clothes to swap for larger sizes for their growing children. We all enjoy celebrating birthdays. We run also 'Story Tots Plus' during school holidays so that older children in the family can come along with their younger siblings. Throughout the year we open our doors to all families with our 'Family Fun Mornings' which offers a range of games, toys and craft activities with tea and toast provided. The Church is very grateful for the wonderful team of volunteers who come each week and make these events happen.

We have continued the 'Forest Praise Café' which is a joint venture with our Anglican friends at St George's Church in Fordington. We meet on the last Saturday of the month and often have 5-10 families attending. Our activities our crafts activities, story and song are themed to reflect the Christian festivals throughout the year. Hot food and drinks available during the morning so the parents and carers can sit and relax, and we use the outdoor space, weather permitting. At the St George's Fair in April, we offer craft activities for children and in December we help our families decorate a Christmas tree as part of the St George's Christmas Tree festival. We have a loyal team who prepare crafts in advance and come on the day which makes the morning enjoyable for those who come.

We join with Churches Together in Dorchester for our biggest outreach event of the year at the Dorset County Show for the first weekend in September. In a large marquee we provide a place of welcome for all the people. Refreshments are provided along with crafts, games, 'Godly Play', toys, 'Prayer Tree' and an eco-activity. The safe and clean baby changing/feeding area is much appreciated by our younger families. We made over 1,000 drinks and over 200 babies were changed or fed. On the Sunday an Ecumenical Harvest Festival service is held in the open air at the showground. People from across the local Churches volunteer their time over the weekend with a core group working throughout the year preparing for the show. Whatever the weather we continue in love to serve all those we meet and look forward to the 2025 Show.

'Journey to the Stable' is our interactive re-telling of the Nativity story for schools and the public. In 2024 over 450 children and teachers from the Dorchester schools attended. Each child went away with items collected at each JTTS station so they could re-live their journey with their family and friends. We also took JTTS to Broadmayne First School in conjunction with the Methodist and Anglican Churches where 150 children attended.

Pastoral Care

Our Minister, Rev John Yarrien, cares for the spiritual and emotional needs at UCD. Mrs Ruth Magee supports the Minister, and the Pastoral Committee as our Pastoral Support Assistant. The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a Pastoral Visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and understand their concerns.

An Annual Welcome Meeting is organised for all new people who have started attending UCD over the last year. This is an opportunity to meet other new members, learn more about the Church and receive a welcome pack.

Every new adherent is asked to complete a GDPR form explaining what information is kept and how it will be used. These details are kept on our Church Member's database. The Pastoral Visitors usually meet twice a year for training and to share experiences. As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. We also held several child baptisms. The baptised children and their siblings received a Christian book from the junior church.

Another component of our pastoral care is the "Prayer Chain" where those in need, are remembered in prayer by several Church Members, including those who are housebound. The prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested both daily and weekly.

The Coffee Shop now regularly opens on Tuesday and Friday mornings and there is a Wednesday coffee morning in the hall. A welcome and a listening ear is given to all those who attend. In the weeks before Christmas, UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. The Quiet Christmas service with refreshments was attended by 12 people and led by the Pastoral Committee.

Serving the local community.

With its central location in the town, the United Church Dorchester is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. The groups that have used the building in 2024 include the Regional Blood Transfusion Service, Alcoholics Anonymous groups, the Dorchester Country Market, an orchestra, several choirs and along with the U3A.

The Church Shop remains open for four mornings a week offering a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and 'fairly-traded' goods, including food. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, we actively promote the use of 'fairly traded' goods within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop volunteers often engage in conversations about the Christian faith. The team of three of the buyers manage the shop.

A small team of volunteers provide monthly lunches for the homeless. No food is wasted as those coming always take a second dinner away with them. Our regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming) all find it a very rewarding experience.

Our buildings are well located for the community to use. Under the oversight of our Lettings Officer John Hilton, there were approximately 1800 bookings, 62% from UCD and 38% from external users. The majority of the UCD bookings are relatively easy to predict and manage as $\frac{3}{4}$ are regular, weekly room bookings, such as the shop four times a week and Sunday morning services 52 times a year, etc. The remaining 160 tend to be individual bookings for meetings but, because most of our church members are flexible, they also are relatively easy to manage. As a result, most of Ellie's time is spent managing the 700 bookings from external organisations. (Our Admin officer, Ellie Minns, has taken six months maternity leave from August 2024 and we have been very pleased to welcome her back in March 2025).

In 2024, we hired rooms to 68 separate customers, ranging from single events, such as a birthday celebration, to seven customers who have regular weekly bookings; these regular customers include the Country market and, in 2024, 5 AA group meetings per week (although one has now ceased to meet). Five choirs and two orchestras, meet at UCD, on different days, generally for three ten-week periods per year. The Child Contact Centre operated from UCD on alternate weeks, until, sadly, it had to close towards the end of 2024. We also hosted the biennial Thomas Hardy International Conference over a week, during which our catering team provided for 100 + attendees each day. Since we give a discount to charities, and bookings per client, range from 1 per year to 52, the booking system is quite time consuming; during Ellie's leave I estimated that it takes 8 hours a week just to keep up with requests to hire rooms and fill in the required paperwork, without any other tasks. However, it does bring in approximately £20,000 per year to UCD.

Supporting charities in the UK and overseas.

The United Church Dorchester has a continuing commitment to local, national, and international charities through members working as volunteers and donations of goods and money. Locally the Church supports the Dorchester Food Bank which continues to have a collection point at UCD. Church Members give financial support to the Family Support charity which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.

During 2024 we supported 'Wheels for the World' for a second year. This is a Christian charity that collects unwanted wheelchairs and other mobility aids in the UK, refurbishes them and then takes them to fit and distribute in developing countries in Africa and the Indian sub-continent. Many events were organised to support this charity including Easter and Christmas Coffee mornings and Sales and various Stalls at Wednesday coffee including a very successful nearly-new Clothes sale. Other events included an enjoyable Quiz Night and a Summer afternoon concert given by our talented pianists Heather and Brenda with guest cellist Tim.

Fundraising events plus individual donations and a retiring collection in October raised the total of £3791.57 this year, which means over the two years of support the magnificent total of ££8294.80 was raised for 'Wheels for the World.' In addition, we collected many wheelchairs and other mobility aids and also knitted hundreds of glove puppets for distribution to children during the charities aid trips.

In October our World Church Sunday service was dedicated to 'Wheels for the World', and we were delighted to welcome back Jill Jenkinson who updated us on the recent distribution trip to Rwanda. The retiring collection at this service raised £479.50.

The other World Church Sunday service this year was held in March, led by Rev David Cuckson with members of the World Church committee. The service focussed on the work of CWM (the United Reformed Church Council for World Missions,) a retiring collection raised £243.73. Additional donations of £114 came from Mission Box holders, shared between CWM and the Methodist World Mission Fund. The church also donated £1000 between these two organisations.

The Church also made £9235 in donations to the following charities in 2024.

Christian Aid £1,200, Dorchester Family Support £600, Dorchester Food Bank £808, Dorchester Poverty Action £935, Dorset Mind £200, Weldmar Hospice £300, Wheels for the World £3,792, Women's Refuge £300, Council for World Mission £500, Methodist Fund for World Mission £500, Churches Together in Dorchester £100.

The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £3409 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing, a quiz night, book sales, charity stalls, several collections at Church services and the "League of Light boxes", which are added throughout the year by regular donors.

At our Wednesday Coffee Mornings, we invite one charity each week to promote their activities and enable them to raise funds. We provide tables and chairs, and there is no charge. John Parson has developed this initiative to help local charities and to encourage more footfall in our building. This has proved very popular and since it started in January a charity stall has been present in all but three weeks during the year. Altogether, twenty charities have used this facility, some more than once.

At the beginning of Christian Aid Week 2024 (May 12-18) an ecumenical service was held at St Mary's Church and was conducted by Revd. Jimmy Holden with an inspirational address by Rob Pearce, a stalwart of Christian Aid which set the tone admirably for the week to come. Christian Aid Week last year focused on the efforts of Aline, a young woman in one of the world's most impoverished nations, Burundi, to set up a successful savings and loans scheme. Christian Aid is about helping people to develop sustainable self-governing projects of their own ("a hand up rather than a hand-out") and about campaigning on issues such as climate change, tax justice and the humanitarian treatment of all people. Never has there been a more urgent time to raise funding to support the range of initiatives. Individual church collections at times of crisis have been very generous and six-monthly street collections have proved fruitful as well as the annual carol singing. House to house collections have proved difficult but the 'Go for Ten' project should make the process less onerous. Other fund-raising events included an evening of poetry in November with Peter Green and Brian Caddy, combined with a fish and chip supper and the annual Bingo evening at St George's in February. The popular Market at United Church is now an Autumn event and combined with ploughman's lunches regularly raises over £1000. The United Church's weekly ploughman's lunches during Lent contributed handsomely as well as providing excellent value for money. Tony Boyden is Chair of Christian Aid in Dorchester and will step down in 2025 after many years of committed service in the role.

Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

A new vision for UCD was discussed in June and the subject of the use and development of the premises was considered specifically at the following Church meeting. An application for the installation of PV Solar Cells was submitted to the LBAC, which was approved in principle. A revised application is in hand. Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church has developed such that only a refurbishment is now proposed, and this is being progressed 'in house'. It was discovered that the southeast corner of No 51 Charles Street

has sunk by some 40 mm and although the structure is not in danger, repair work is necessary. Quotations are being sought for the necessary investigation of the existing foundations.

Five CCTV cameras have been installed, covering the entrances to the premises and the 1st floor landing of No 49 Charles Street. A quinquennial survey was undertaken in the year, the report was highly commendable of the UCD premises with almost all the recommended repairs already in hand. The Hall windows have required more repair work and redecoration. The cleaning contract is working well and the Charminster room is now in use as a store. Members of the Property committee continue to contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance and development of the church premises.

Ecumenical Relationships

Local Relationships

We continue to work closely with friends from various churches and denominations across Dorchester and the surrounding area through Churches Together in Dorchester. Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church, as was the midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Highlights of Churches Together in Dorchester include:

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January
- Walk of Witness on Good Friday
- Sunrise Service at Maumbury Rings at 6am on Easter Sunday
- Christian Aid and Pentecost services in May

Retail Chaplaincy

The Retail Chaplaincy team has continued its effective work during 2024. 13 Chaplains continue to visit around 200 varied outlets in the centre of town, normally on a weekly basis. The good news is that all report how much they enjoy their role as shared during their once-a-year review. One Chaplain has retired from the work and a new one has just been trained and begins sharing. They have completed the training course and is being checked for DBS and safeguarding training. The big issue since December has been the closure of South Street due to the fire. We have been in touch with all interested parties to seek to move forward the reopening of a passage as the businesses at the lower end of South Street have suffered a serious loss of trade. One thing we need to address is finding more potential Chaplains and preferable from all the different churches. Later this year we will have been running for ten years so the Chaplaincy Management Group will decide how to celebrate this important event. Staffing has changed on the Group this year as Chris Warren has stepped down as Chair and Robin Rowles from the Community Church has taken this on. Further the Secretary, Laretta Kerridge, has stepped down and been replaced by Janet Ranger also an Anglican. The work is supported by Churches Together, BID (the business development organisation) and the Town Council.

Staffing and Other Issues

Employed Staff

The Reverend John Yarrien has continued as UCD's Minister as well as Superintendent of the Dorset South & West Methodist Circuit and is proactive in moving forward with our Vision.

Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, particularly, supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Story Tots and Journey to the Stable. Peter also chairs the Youth and Family committee. As well as his work with the wider circuit, Peter has been working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at families and young children, starting with a Family Fun Day at Pentecost

Ms Ellie Minns is our Church Administrator. She helps the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and manages the booking system for letting rooms in the Church.

Ms Di Lawrence is employed for 2 hours a week to manage and support the financial operations of the Church Shop and Coffee Lounge, including paying the bills, and keeping the accounts.

Mrs Ruth McGee is employed as our Pastoral Support Assistant. Ruth has focussed on offering a presence at Market Day services, building relationships with local care homes and offering support and training to pastoral visitors.

Volunteers

Most of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require Church Members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the Coffee Shop and the Church Shop. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.

We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations, who are part of our Church and Circuit. This support in depth was extremely helpful during the recent illness of our Minister.

Financial Review

The 2024 Annual Church Accounts are available as a separate document.

Reserves policy

The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need. Thus, the figure of £80,000 will be used as the target for the Reserves Policy. Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure.

Restricted and Designated funds

Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific use, are not included in the reserves. The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment under which only the interest may only be used for Youth and Family work.

Investment Policy

Our Investment Policy is to hold an accessible balance of £50,000 in Lloyds Bank; a further balance of £80,000 as our Reserve in deposit and low risk funds; our remaining capital of £100,000+ is for longer-term use and invested in managed funds. These amounts are benchmark figures, and the balances held will vary month by month. The Finance Committee will review our Investment

Policy mid-way through the year. It is our practice to hold our longer-term funds as investments held between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

Names and addresses of:

Bankers: Lloyds Bank plc 1-2 High West St. Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UG.

Independent Examiner – Robin Powell, 11 Kit Lane, Owermoigne, Dorchester DT2 8HP.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, Linda Scott and Diana Leeming who share the responsibility. The Church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the Church who work or volunteer with children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse.

We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years. A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers complete an application form and have two references taken up, and those appointed to roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check. continue in their role as Church Safeguarding Officers.

Health & Safety

The Health & Safety sub-group has overseen several Risk Assessments throughout the year. 'Site Safety Rules for Contractors' relating to our premises are available. The General Emergency Evacuation Plan has been updated and Fire Safety training given to Stewards and other volunteers. United Church Dorchester, April 2024.

United Church Dorchester, April 2025

United Church Dorchester Annual Accounts 2024

RECEIPTS

		2024				2023
		£	£	£	£	£
	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total
Collections		12,533			12,533	14,990
Standing Orders		57,124			57,124	50,391
Gift Aid on Giving		14,942			14,942	14,740
Donations	1	3,005			3,005	4,750
Lettings		22,474			22,474	17,162
Investments	2	6,128		1,660	7,788	7,124
Interest	3	311			311	517
Fundraising	4		7,625		7,625	8,681
Other	5	1,507			1,507	305
Grants	6	0			0	20,436
Refunds	7	818			818	12,614
Youth and Family			2,040		2,040	3,453
Church Flowers			1,073		1,073	
Lunches for Homeless			30		30	
Music Fund	8		1,557		1,557	
Old Coffee A/C closure					0	7,500
Church Shop & Coffee Shop A/C	12	24,491			24,491	21,825
Totals		143,333	12,325	1,660	157,318	184,488

PAYMENTS

Church Costs

UCD Assessment		69,552			69,552	62,225
Church Administrator		5,513			5,513	8,429
Pastoral Visitor		6,682			6,682	4,277
Church Shop/Coffee A/C Admin		1,336			1,336	1,241
Church Insurance		7,135			7,135	6,369
Church Cleaning		9,104			9,104	7,412
Waste Collection		277			277	263
Gas		3,902			3,902	4,718
Electricity		7,961			7,961	2,489
Telephone & Broadband		957			957	808
Water		129			129	126
Business Rates & Dor BID		512			512	549
Minor Items	9	5,583			5,583	8,038

Property Costs

Property Maintenance		5,374			5,374	4,621
Property Emergencies		1,248			1,248	5,256
Roof Repairs		868			868	8
Lift		765			765	0
No51 Loft Space		0			0	924
Church Spire		0			0	2,491
Hall Windows		1,194			1,194	0
Hall Floor		0			0	4,243
Church Heating		0			0	405
Kitchen		0			0	1,142

Other Costs					
Charitable Giving	10	9,235		9,235	15,720
Music in Worship	11	1,900		1,900	1,800
Outreach			21	21	165
Church Flowers			823	823	95
Youth and Family			1,337	1,337	3,608
Minister's Discretionary Fund			27	27	70
Music Fund			509	509	440
Lunches for Homeless			465	465	
Maurice Dale Legacy			113	113	
Church Shop & Coffee Shop A/C	12	11,700		11,700	10,147
Totals		150,926	3,295	0	154,221
					158,079

ASSETS

	2024				2023
	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Revaluation	£ Total	£ Total
Fixed Assets					
TMCP-Florence Fare Trust		61,608	6,540	68,148	61,608
TMCP-Surplus Funds Trust	31,581		790	32,371	29,312
TMCP-Elma Burge Trust	2,695		20	2,715	2,691
COIF-Investment Fund	38,712			38,712	37,856
URC -Investments	878			878	30
Current Assets					
Current Accounts					
HSBC Bank	235			235	35,467
Lloyds Bank	12,286			12,286	2,293
Nat West Bank	5,731			5,731	8,450
Deposit Accounts					
HSBC Bank	0			0	0
Lloyds Bank	25,229			25,229	0
COIF Deposit Fund	82,748			82,748	81,345
Cash in Hand					
Church		244		244	55
Church Shop & Coffee A/C	86			86	86
Stock					
Shop	6,555			6,555	6,176
Coffee	131			131	50
LIABILITIES					
Debtors (Note 13)	19,076			19,076	15,393
Creditors (Note 14)	-3,771	-1,358		-5,129	-2,857
Church Groups (Note 15)		868		-1,538	-2,406
Net Assets/Liabilities	222,172	61,362	7,350	290,884	275,549

FUNDS

Summary of Funds at 31 December 2024

	2024				2023
	£	£	£	£	£
	Net Income	Transfer	Revaluation	Total	Total
Endowment					
Florence Fare Trust			6,540	68,148	61,608
Restricted					
Youth & Family	703			2,581	1,878
Outreach	-21			732	753
Homeless Lunches	-435			126	561
Church Flowers	256			351	95
Maurice Dale Legacy	-113			667	780
Music Fund	1,048			1,183	135
Discretionary Fund	-27			1,115	1,142
Shop & Coffee A/C	12,791	-15,000		12,503	14,712
Unrestricted					
General Funds	6,392	15,000	810	203,477	181,275
Totals	20,594	0	7,350	290,883	262,939

Notes for Financial Statements to 31 December 2024

- 1 **Donations** Includes all one-off donations given to the church for general use
- 2 **Investments** All investments are mainly with TMCP and CCLA. All are for general use except for Florence Fare Trust. Our small holding with URC will be sold ASAP.
- 3 **Interest** Earned on CCLA Deposit Account and Bank Deposit Accounts with HSBC and Lloyds.
- 4 **Fundraising** Amounts given for any specific charity, e.g. Wheels for the World.

Gift Aid could be claimed on these amounts if people used a GA envelope. Payments to charities are shown under Charitable Giving.
- 5 **Other** Vision advertising, Ride and Stride, Thomas Hardy week, etc

6	Grants	No grants applied for or received this year.
7	Refunds	Insurance claim for ceiling redecoration after storm damage.
8	Music Fund	Monies from Brass Ensemble fund gifted to the church Music Group
9	Minor Items	Covers a multitude of items, e.g. CCLI licence, candles, sound equipment, support to services, etc.
10	Charitable Giving	Amounts given to specific charities plus Churches Together, Lunches for the Homeless, etc
11	Music in Worship	A gift made to the UCD Musical Director from church funds.
12	Church Shop & Coffee	Income is combination of Church Shop and Coffee Lounge takings. Outgoings also include Sunday after-service coffee in the hall.
13	Debtors	Gift Aid estimate £15,000 yet to be claimed. Plus, a salary refund for Church Administrator of £3,257.
14	Creditors	Monies to be paid to MWF and CWM plus unpaid Journey to the Stable invoice. Also, Outstanding bills to a) Pozitive Energy £2,471, b) Journey to the Stable printing £421.
15	Church Groups	Monies held in UCD bank account on behalf of Badminton, and Country Dancing groups. (Used to include the Brass Ensemble)

ASSETS

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	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Revaluation	£ Total	£ Total
Fixed Assets					
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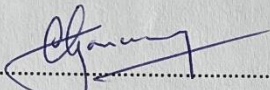
United Church Dorchester

Charity Number 1137996

Declarations and Scrutiny

Treasurer's Statement

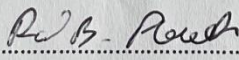
I report to the Trustees that the Receipt and Payment based accounts, together with the Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Representation of Funds for the year ended 31 December 2023 which have been prepared from the records of the Church have now been completed. I confirm that these accounts are an accurate and complete record of all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

Signature of Treasurer.....  Date 14/10/24.....

Name and Address of Treasurer..... 51 Coburg Road, Dorchester, Dorset.....
..... Post Code DT1 2HN.....

Independent Examiner's Statement

I report to the Trustees of the United Church Dorchester that my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 has now been completed. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect, the financial records do not accord with the accounts mentioned above.

Signature of independent examiner.....  Date 14/10/24.....

Name and Address of independent examiner..... ROBIN POWELL, 11 KILN LANE, OWENMOLENE.....
DORCHESTER...... Post Code DT2 8HP.....

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales - Charity number 1137996

Accounts

United Church Dorchester
Annual Report
January to December 2023

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure, and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester (UCD) was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly because of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches.

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship.
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism.
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including

(but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs.

- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Our current membership remains at 165 and three retired Methodist ministers. The latter all have full membership rights under a local arrangement at UCD. During the year, 7 new members were welcomed into the Church, while 1 former member had their membership transferred to another church and 6 former members died.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the Church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected from the membership by Church Members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the Steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Minister is an ex-officio member of the Council of Stewards. All Stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have had Advanced Safeguarding training. All Stewards completed on-line training in EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) during 2023. Copies of our current governance documents, including the constitution, our management structures, and Policies and Procedures and the role of a trustee, are available to all members in a restricted section of the church website.

Brian Savage stood down from his role as Senior Steward on 5th September and Michael Humphrey was elected by the Council of Stewards to take over.

- 1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately monthly. The chair is the Senior Steward, who is elected from within the Council of Stewards. The Council of Stewards also includes the Treasurer and Church Secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4-year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Minister in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical, and charitable work. The Council of Stewards is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church.
- 1.4.3. The Church Meeting meets at least 4 times a year and can advise the Council of Stewards. The management structure, for the day-to-day management of the church has been re-vamped this year. Management is delegated to six major committees (Worship; Pastoral; Youth and Family; Finance; Property; Resourcing Mission) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Council of Stewards, and to Church Meetings. The committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and some have authority to spend a budget allocation. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the delegated authority of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the Church Meeting. Future planning has been problematic since September due to the serious ill-health of both Rev John Yarrien and Mary Martin, Church Secretary. Mary stood down as Church Secretary and sadly, died in November. However, Rev Gwyneth Owen was appointed as Ministerial Support to UCD and Senior Steward, Michael Humphrey has carried out the Church Secretary duties. This temporary arrangement has enabled the smooth running of the Church to continue. John has made a good recovery and Gwyneth has remained an ex officio member of the Council of Stewards.

- 1.4.4. Our AGM was held on the church premises in March 2023.
The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2023 comprised (Year of appointment shown in brackets.)

Our Minister:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- Colin Gannaway (2004)
- Paul Smith (2021)
- Brian Savage (2020)
- Treasurer (Finance Committee)
- (Property and Finance Committees)
- Senior Steward & Chair of Council of Stewards
- Stepped Down as Senior Steward Sept 2023 but remains a Steward until April 2024

- Michael Humphrey (2022) • (Resourcing Mission Committee); Senior Steward from Sept 2023
- Jenny Mair (2021) • (Worship Committee)
- Rev David Cuckson (2022) • (Health and Safety subgroup)
- Mary Martin (2022) • (Pastoral Committee & Church Secretary)
- Sadly, Mary died in November 2023, having stepped back from her roles in September 2023)

Linda Scott (2023)

(Youth and Families Committee)

Gill Robinson (2023)

(World Church Committee and Pastoral Committee)

Stewards who stood down at the AGM:

- Maria Jacobson (2019)

Stewards who stood down during the year

- Elizabeth Martin stepped down Oct 2022
- Mary Martin stepped down in Sept 2023

Stewards elected March 2023

- Gill Robinson
- Linda Scott

Observers

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset S & W Methodist Circuit; retired Aug 2023)
- Chris Smith (representing the Dorset S & W Methodist Circuit; from Aug 2023)
- Catherine Welch (2021) Safeguarding Officer stood down Sept 2023
- Council of Stewards agreed that Linda Scott, with cover from Diana Leeming (as necessary) would hold the role of Church Safeguarding Officer.

Minute Taker Ellie Minns- (UCD Administrator)

1.5. Staff members

- Minister: Revd John Yarrien
- Pastoral Visitor: Mrs Ruth Magee was appointed 1st March 2023.
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Mr Peter Jenner –
 - part time; (employed by the Circuit)
- UCD Administrator: Ms Ellie Minns, 13 hrs per week (Sept 2022)
- Shop and Coffee Lounge Finance Administrator: Di Lawrence, 2 hours per week (Sept 2022)

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, UCD is mainly managed by volunteers.

Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – Brian Savage (stood down Sept 2023)
- Senior Steward – Michael Humphrey from (Sept 2023)
- Secretary – Mary Martin (stood down Sept 2023)
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance chair– Paul Smith
- Pastoral Care chair– Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family chair – Peter Jenner
- Property chair - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings chair– John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Managers – Elizabeth Haynes, Sue Gannaway and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Managers – Pat Smith, Pat Brown and Peter Jenner
- Wednesday Morning Coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Linda Scott
- World Mission – Gill Robinson
- Resourcing Mission – John Yarrien

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Mary Martin, who died in Nov 2023, after a short illness. Mary was our Church Secretary until shortly before her death. She was a very active member of the church. During her membership here she has been a Steward, Senior Steward, Church Secretary, Story Tots organiser, Journey to the stable coordinator, coffee shop volunteer and, as a former nurse, she was always there when someone felt ill in church. She will be greatly missed.

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

The United Church Dorchester is a member of the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The United Church Dorchester and Bridport United Church (also a member of DS&W Methodist Circuit) constitute a joint pastorate within the URC. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community.

1.8. Governance;

- 1.8.1 The Stewards meet regularly, usually monthly, and discuss activities. They revisited the United Church Vision discussion that was started before the pandemic.
- 1.8 Following the absences of the Minister and Church Secretary, the Methodist Circuit appointed Rev Gwyneth Owen as Ministerial Support. Along with Michael Humphrey, Gwyneth undertook a revamp of the duties of Church Secretary to make the role more manageable for new incumbents. Many of the day-to-day duties of the Church Secretary are now shared by the Stewards and the Church Administrator.
- 1.9 UCD has its own website at <https://www.unitedchurchdorchester.org.uk> which is maintained internally by Susy and Kevin Rogers. This year, the re-design launched in autumn 2022 has been bedding in, and new secure areas have been created to support the Church's administrative systems.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

- 2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and Council of Stewards have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our Vision for the wider Church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our Church community through:
- a. the celebration of public worship.
 - b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
 - c. mission and evangelism.
 - d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.
 - e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs.
 - f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
 - g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

- 2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender, or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Council of Stewards is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Council of Stewards maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.
- 2.2.2. UCD is extremely blessed to have a very skilled musician as our Musical Director – Heather Reed; she is an exceptional organist and accompanist and gives up a great deal of her time to ensure that the choir and music groups' contributions to worship is of an appropriate standard. Many new members comment on the high standard of the music at worship.
- 2.2.3. Currently, UCD provides a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week:
- a) The 10.30am Sunday service - our main act of worship. Services are led by our Circuit ministers, retired ministers, or lay preachers from both the Methodist tradition and the United Reformed Churches. Numbers attending the 10.30am service are usually between 100 and 140. The 10.30 am service at UCD is regularly recorded and edited by Peter Robinson and available on the UCD, YouTube channel.
 - b) Sunday Evening services at 6.30pm are held, usually twice a month, with attendance between 8 and 30. Different types of worship, such as Taizé and modern worship songs are intentionally included in some services.
 - c) On the second Sunday afternoon each month, instead of an evening service we now have Afternoon Tea and Favourite Hymns, known simply as Tea-Pot. People arrive from 3.30pm for a formal start at 4pm. We serve sandwiches and cake with

cups of tea. At about 4.45pm we give out hymn books and have an informal time of hymn singing, with the hymns chosen by those present. We finish at about 5.30pm. All are welcome. There is no charge or collection, but we welcome donations towards the cost of the tea. The numbers have gradually built up, and we now usually have between twenty and thirty attending.

d) A short (20 min) Market Day service on Wednesday morning regularly attracts 20-30 people.

2.2.4. Printed services for use at home are made available weekly by the Dorset South and West Circuit, for those unable to attend worship at UCD, but without modern computer technology.

2.2.5 We hold a series of special services throughout the year, in particular over the Christmas period:

2.2.5.1 About 20 people attended our Quiet Christmas; a gentle Christmas service for those who do not feel able to celebrate Christmas enthusiastically, either through bereavement or because of dementia or autism. Several members of UCD's congregation brought friends because they had enjoyed the service last year.

2.2.5.2 On Christmas Eve the Church was busy for our Christingle service. Led by the junior church staff, it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying a relaxed service that enabled them to make their own Christingles, as well as hear the Christmas Story, told very simply.

2.2.5.3 On Sunday 17th December we held our annual carol service, which was well attended. Along with a mix of traditional and newer carols, the choir sang several festive pieces to accompany the story of the nativity as described in the Gospels.

2.2.5.4 Special services were held during the year, focusing our World Mission outreach, particularly the URC and Methodist World Church charities and also our Church charity for the year: Wheels for the World; a charity that sends refurbished wheelchairs and other mobility aids to Africa.

2.2.5.5 In November, 25 donated, Christmas shoe boxes and two bags of assorted box fillers were blessed in the morning service. They had been filled and wrapped for children living in poverty in Southeast Europe.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

2.3.1 Dorset County Show. In September 2023 UCD worked ecumenically as the Churches in Dorchester had one joint marquee pitch at the Dorset County Show. The team consisted of people from across the Churches. We offered refreshments, crafts, games, baby changing & and feeding facilities with a place to relax. Over 1000 drinks were made over the weekend and 250 families used the baby changing facilities. A Harvest Festival service was held on the Sunday led by the Bishop of Sherborne and local clergy. It was a very hot weekend; we had a great location and lots and lots of conversations with folks, lots of fun and were a visible Christian presence at the show. We are working together ecumenically again for the 2024 County Show.

2.3.2 Forest Praise Café: formerly known as Forest Praise, is run in conjunction with our friends at St George's, Fordington on the last Saturday of the month and continues to go from strength to strength. There are at least four activities each session including song and story and we have Forest Praise Café, where bacon rolls, toast, juice and hot and cold drinks are

available. This has been a very successful addition and works really well. On average we have between 12 -18 Families attending each session

2.3.3 A small team of volunteers welcomes a number of children to Junior Church each week. The children generally remain in church for the first part of the 10.30 service before leaving for their own activities, in another room.

2.4. Mission and evangelism

2.4.1 Story Tots is a weekly stay and play opportunity for babies and pre-school children, has gone from strength to strength. We now must use the main hall on a weekly basis, as attendance varies between 25-30 children with Parents, Grandparents, and carers. There are plenty of toys to play with, craft activity and drinks and biscuits. Story Tots suffered a massive blow when the leader, Mary Martin, passed away in November which effected the team and those who attended Story Tots. Story Tots is valued very much by parents and children and is supported by a team of volunteers who work as one.

2.4.2 Journey to the Stable, an interactive re-telling of the Nativity story and was held again in 2023. Over 240 children and teachers from four local schools attended and enjoyed their time and gave positive feedback. We opened the event to the public and those who came were glad that they had experienced it.

2.4.3 This year, two Christmas Family Fun Days were held in Church in the week before Christmas. Children had the opportunity to try different crafts, play on a range of toys and games and have refreshments. We also introduced "Getting in the Picture", where children could dress up in costume and be part of a stable setting to have their picture taken (by a parent or carer.) The church was packed as over 150 children with parents attended over the two days.

2.4.4 On Easter Saturday we gave out flowers and sweets to the community.

2.4.5 The South Street window is changed regularly to depict what is happening throughout the year, i.e. the different seasons, activities and events, local and world concerns.

2.4.6 Our "Outreach" committee has now become the "Resourcing Mission" committee to ensure that appropriate resources are in place, before starting any new projects.

2.5 Pastoral work

2.5.1 Our Minister, Rev John Yarrien, cares for the spiritual and emotional needs at UCD. Mrs Ruth Magee was appointed as a Pastoral Support Worker to support the Minister and Pastoral committee.

2.5.2 The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a Pastoral Visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and understand their concerns. Every pastoral visitor has their own Pastoral Visitor.

2.5.3 An Annual Welcome Meeting is organised for all new people who have started attending UCD over the last year. This is an opportunity to meet other new members and learn more about the Church. Thirteen new adherents were invited to this year's Welcome Meeting. Each new adherent is also given a welcome pack.

2.5.4 Every new adherent is asked to complete a GDPR form explaining what information is kept and how it will be used. These details are kept on our Church Member's database.

2.5.5. The Pastoral Visitors usually meet twice a year for training and to share experiences.

2.5.6 The Quiet Christmas service with refreshments was attended by 20 people and led by the Pastoral committee.

- 2.5.7 As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took 13 funerals this year and provided support to the families; not all the deceased were Church members. Although there were no weddings in our Church this year, we held our first Same-Sex wedding blessing, alongside a couple in the Church also celebrating 25 years of marriage. We also held two child baptisms. The baptised children and their siblings received a Christian book from the junior church.
- 2.5.8 Another component of our pastoral care is the “Prayer Chain” where those in need, are remembered in prayer by several Church Members, including those who are housebound. The prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested both daily and weekly.
- 2.5.9 The Coffee Shop now regularly opens on Tuesday and Friday mornings and there is a Wednesday coffee morning in the hall. A welcome and a listening ear is given to all those who attend.
- 2.5.10 In the weeks before Christmas, UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. During the week before Christmas, the Action for Children group arranged Carol Singing outside the church, offering knitted angels to passers-by.

2.6 Serving the local community.

- 2.6.1 With its central location in the town, the United Church Dorchester is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here three times a week, finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit. The local Child Contact centre has also started to operate from UCD again on a regular basis. Other lettings, such as the Country Market, a local amateur orchestra, several well-established choirs, along with U3A Table tennis and U3A local history classes continue to use our premises throughout 2023.
- 2.6.2 The Church Shop remains open for four mornings a week. It is staffed entirely by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and ‘fairly-traded’ goods, including food. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, we continue to use our premises to actively promote the use of ‘fairly-traded’ goods within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. When open, the shop also acts as an information point for the church. The team of three of the buyers manage the shop.
- 2.6.3 We continued to provide lunches for the homeless; these are organised monthly by members of the Church. We never throw anything away and those coming always take a second dinner away with them. It is a very rewarding experience. We have a small team of regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming); Peter Jenner and John Yarren help as and when they can.
- 2.6.4 Support of other charities in the UK and overseas. The United Church Dorchester has a continuing commitment to local, national, and international charities through members working as volunteers and donations of goods and money.
- 2.6.5 Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:

- a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. In addition, at Christmas, Church Members gave financial support to the Family Support charity, which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.
- b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours' interaction in a supported environment. It is an independent charity, but the Church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are Church Members.
- c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciate the "dry" status of our buildings, receive accommodation at a reduced rate.
- d) The church also made donations of between £100 and £800 to the following local charities: Dorchester Child Contact Centre (£300), Dorchester Carers Hub (£400), Dorchester Family Support (£600), Dorchester Poverty Action (£800), Dorchester Volunteer Centre (£150), Dorset Carers Hub (£400), Dorset Mind (£200), Dorset Nightstop (£300), Dorset Race Equality (£200), Durnovaria Silver Band (£250), Food Bank (£300), Home Start (£600), Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) (£200), NHS Foundation Trust (£300), Quiet Space (£200), Transition Towns (£100), URC Retired Ministers' Housing (£300), Weldmar Hospice (£500) and Women's Refuge (£400).
- e) The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £3590.63 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing, a quiz night, charity stalls, several collections at Church services and the "League of Light boxes", which are added throughout the year by regular donors.

2.6.6 Internationally, the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. Over the year from September 2022 to August 2023, Christian Aid raised funds in excess of £17000. Our primary focus remains Christian Aid Week in May although we have settled into a new pattern for fund-raising activities, spread more evenly across the year. Two very successful collections have been held in South Street during the year; one in Christian Aid Week and the other in the Autumn and carol singing in South Street always makes for further good fund raising. Other successful fund-raising events have been two excellent Dorchester Choral Society concerts at Cerne Abbas and in the Borough Gardens in June; a sponsored 'Walk to the River Jordan' in September; the Christian Aid Market; Ploughman's Lunches during Lent, organised by Sue Gannaway; the 'Evening with Peter Green' with poems and stories accompanied by a 'fish and chip' supper; a bingo evening at St George's in February. We have also sold more than 520 Recipe Books.

In Christian Aid Week (May 2023) our ecumenical service was led by Revd Keith Magee at St Peter's Church. It was a truly inspirational experience with Revd. Martin John Nichols, from Christian Aid, being our keynote speaker. He stressed the need for all Christians to be committed and 'political' in their approach to issues of global justice, quoting the prophet Micah: to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Our World Church Project during 2023 was Wheels for the world; a Christian charity that collects unwanted wheelchairs and other disability aids, refurbishes them, sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation. We organised two World Church Sundays and two World Church Coffee mornings and several smaller stalls throughout the year and raised a total of £4503.23 for the charity.

As well as the fundraising sales we organised a well-attended Quiz evening and an Autumn Concert. A team from the Church was able to collect and deliver used wheelchairs and walking aids to a UK depot to be sent out to Africa and that members knitted numerous glove puppets for distribution to children during those charities aid visits.

The Church contributed £911.90 each to the Methodist World Mission Fund the United Reformed Church's Council for World Mission (CWM) from a combination of and a small amount from general funds and retiring collections. In November 25 shoe boxes and two bags of additional small gifts were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected for the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.7 Maintaining the fabric of the Church building.

- 2.7.1 A contract to replace several rusting iron retaining rings in the Spire with internal stainless-steel rings and replace stonework showing significant external cracking were signed off by the Architects Crickmay Stark.
- 2.7.2 The condition of the Hall windows continues to deteriorate, requiring more repair work. The project has been discussed with the URC Wessex Synod Property Officer on several occasions and in November we learnt that only uPVC windows were not accepted, so the existing windows are to be repaired.
- 2.7.3 Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church has developed such that only a refurbishment is now proposed, and this is being progress 'in house'.
- 2.7.4 The floor tiles in the hall were lifted and replaced. Although the specification of "non-slip" was complied with by the contractor, they were too slippery to play Badminton on. After several rounds of scrubbing, the surface became sufficiently non-slip that Badminton and table tennis could be played. However, when a professional company was brought in to paint the court lines, they immediately started to lift off. After some thought and experimentation, the property committee were able to paint on lines using indelible ink. These lines are still working efficiently and, although they may need to be touched up annually, appear to be working well.
- 2.7.5 The wifi in the building was extended so that good reception was possible on the top floor of number 49 and in the hall.
- 2.7.6 During regular testing, it was found that several of the emergency lights were no longer holding charge. They were replaced by suitably qualified members of the property team. Also, to reduce electricity consumption, some light switches were replaced by sensors to avoid them being left on.
- 2.7.7 The Sydling room was equipped for use by Circuit staff.
- 2.7.8 Our contract cleaner retired after many years of sterling work. A new contract cleaner was taken on but backed out of the contract when they were not able to recruit new staff. After much hard work by Michael Humphrey in finding another contractor and by many church members spending several weeks cleaning the building as negotiations continued, a new contract cleaner has been hired and, to date, things seem to be working well.
- 2.7.9 The chairs in the hall were bought when the United Church opened. Although they had been inspected in the last year for obvious problems in the welds, several chairs

had collapsed when people sat on them. As a result, all the chairs were condemned, and 80 new chairs were bought.

- 2.7.10 Members of the Property committee, along with a few church members, contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways.

3 Ecumenical Relationships

3.1 Local Relationships

We continue to work closely with friends from various churches and denominations across Dorchester and the surrounding area through Churches Together in Dorchester. Mr Anthony Boyden, one of our Church members, is currently the lay chair for Churches Together in Dorchester. Highlights of Churches Together in Dorchester include:

- a very positive response across the churches to taking part in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2023.
- the Walk of Witness on Good Friday with a slightly different format, which attracted perhaps its best turn-out to date.
- the lovely Sunrise service at Maumbury Rings on Easter Sunday which again attracted a record attendance.
- our ecumenical Christian Aid and Pentecost services in May.
- an ecumenical service of support for a range of public service personnel at Dorchester Baptist Church in October.
- a time of prayer and meditation on Peace held at the War Memorial in the week prior to the Civic Remembrance Service.

CTD also produced a pamphlet 'The Way Forward' to highlight the range of services provided by member churches and community facilities to individuals and families experiencing difficulties. The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town, in particular, Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church, as was the midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

4 Staffing and Other Issues

4.1 Employed Staff

- 4.1.1 The Reverend John Yarren has continued as UCD's minister as well as superintendent of the Dorset South & West Methodist Circuit and is proactive in moving forward UCD's Vision. Unfortunately, John was taken seriously ill in September 2023 but has recovered well and led many of our Christmas Services before a full return to duties in January 2024.

- 4.1.2 Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, particularly, supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Story Tots and Journey to the Stable. Peter also chairs the Youth and Family committee. As well as his work with the wider circuit, Peter has been working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at families and young children, starting with a Family Fun Day at Pentecost. In the coming year, he will be exploring the possibilities of a town wide holiday club for school children.

- 4.1.3 Ms Ellie Minns is our Church Administrator. She helps the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and manages the booking system for letting rooms in the Church.
- 4.1.4 Ms Di Lawrence is employed for 2 hours a week to manage and support the financial operations of the Church Shop and Coffee Lounge, including paying the bills, and keeping the accounts.
- 4.1.5 Mrs Ruth McGee was employed as a new Pastoral Support worker, subject to the completion of necessary training and probation period. Ruth has focussed on offering a presence at Market Day services, building relationships with local care homes and offering support and training to pastoral visitors.

4.2 Volunteers

4.2.1 The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require Church Members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the Coffee Shop and the Church Shop. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.

4.2.2 We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations, who are part of our Church and Circuit. This support in depth was extremely helpful during the recent illness of our Minister.

5 Financial review

5.1 Reserves policy

5.1.1 The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need. Although our expenditure in 2022 was higher than normal, there were one off expenses, e.g. repairs to the main roof and refurbishing the Hall floor which will not recur for many years. Thus, the figure of £82K will continue to be used as the target for the Reserves Policy.

5.1.2 Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore, it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, normally, about £82k.

5.2 Restricted and Designated funds

5.2.1 Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific use, are not included in the reserves:

- a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
- b) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church (now stands at £630).
- c) The designated fund of £60K, held specifically for ensuring the Spire was put into a safe condition, has been fully used. The work carried out to stabilise the Spire has been successfully completed this year.

5.3 Investment Policy

It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4 Names and addresses of:

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.

Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

(Due to the closure of the local HSBC branch in 2023, the church's account was moved to the Lloyds Bank in early January 2024. Bank details for the new account can be obtained

6 Safeguarding

- 6.1 Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, sharing the responsibility.
- 6.2 The Church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the Church who work or volunteer with children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3 We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4 A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers complete an application form and have two references taken up, and those appointed to roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- 6.5 Catherine Welch stood down after a number of years of service as our Safeguarding Officer at the November Church Meeting and has been replaced by Linda Scott, with support from Diana Leeming.
- 6.6 The Health & Safety sub-group has overseen several Risk Assessments throughout the year. 'Site Safety Rules for Contractors' relating to our premises are available and Fire Safety training was given to Stewards and other volunteers.

United Church Dorchester, April 2024

RECEIPTS

		2023				2022
Notes		£	£	£	£	£
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total
		14,990			14,990	16,788
		50,391			50,391	44,698
		14,740			14,740	13,321
	1	3,789	961		4,750	2,501
		17,162			17,162	16,758
	2	5,435		1,689	7,124	5,350
	3	517			517	0
	4	0	8,681		8,681	8,777
	4	0			0	0
	5	305			305	1,754
	6	19,000	1,436		20,436	8,670
	7	12,614			12,614	6,530
	8	7,500			7,500	0
	12	21,825			21,825	19,256
		168,268	11,078	1,689	181,035	144,402
PAYMENTS						
Church Costs						
		62,225			62,225	52,350
		8,429			8,429	5,164
		4,277			4,277	0
		1,241			1,241	0
		6,369			6,369	5,660
		7,412			7,412	7,755
		263			263	0
		4,718			4,718	4,003
		2,489			2,489	2,821
		808			808	933
		126			126	85
		549			549	963
	9	5,337	2701		8,038	8,934
Property Costs						
		4,621			4,621	9,869
		5,256			5,256	60
		8			8	32,982
		0			0	6,375
		924			924	338
		2,491			2,491	74,780
		0			0	128
		4,243			4,243	4,126
		405			405	0
		1,142			1,142	0
Other Costs						
	10	7,109	8611		15,720	15,368
	11	1,800			1,800	1,206
		0	165		165	342
		0	50		95	45
		0	3,608		3,608	1,534
		0	70		70	0
		0	440		440	0
	12	8,809			8,809	10,139
		141,051	15,645	0	156,741	245,962

ASSETS

	2023				2022
	£ Unrestricted	£ Restricted	£ Revaluation	£ Total	£ Total
Fixed Assets					
TMCP-Florence Fare Trust		61,608	-2,822	61,608	64,430
TMCP-Surplus Funds Trust	29,312			29,312	29,287
TMCP-Elma Burge Trust	2,691			2,691	2,598
COIF-Investment Fund	37,856			37,856	34,622
URC -Investments	30			30	17
Current Assets					
Current Accounts					
HSBC Bank	35,467			35,467	16,095
Lloyds Bank	2,293			2,293	0
Nat West Bank				8,450	5,695
Deposit Accounts					
HSBC Bank	0			0	50,264
Lloyds Bank	0			0	0
COIF Deposit Fund	81,345			81,345	77,930
Cash in Hand					
Church	55			55	0
Church Shop & Coffee A/C		86		86	86
Stocks					
Shop		6176		6,176	6,253
Coffee		50		50	0
LIABILITIES					
Debtors (Note 13)	15,393			15,393	14,000
Creditors (Note 14)	-2,857			-2,857	-43,343
Church Groups (Note 15)	-2,406			-2,406	-1,985
Net Assets/Liabilities	199,179	67,920	-2,822	264,277	255,949

FUNDS

Summary of Funds at 31 December 2023

	2023				2022
	£ Net Income	£ Transfer	£ Revaluation	£ Total	£ Total
Endowment					
Florence Fare Trust	1,689	-1,689	-2,822	61,608	64,430
Restricted					
Youth & Family	-1,844	1,689		1,878	2,033
Outreach	-165	575		753	343
Lloyd Thomas Legacy	0	-1,150		0	1,150
Homeless Lunches	142			561	419
Church Flowers	50			95	45
Maurice Dale Legacy	780			780	0
Music Fund	-440	575		135	0
Discretionary Fund	-70			1,142	1,212
Coffee & Shop A/C	13,016	-9,000		16,050	12,034
Unrestricted					
General Funds	-2,008	9,000		181,275	174,283
Totals	11,150	0	-2,822	264,277	255,949

Notes to Financial Statements to 31 December 2023

1	Donations	include all one-off donations given to the church for general use
2	Investments	All investments are with TMCP and CCLA. All are for general use with the exception of Florence Fare Trust.
3	Interest	Earned on Deposit Accounts with HSBC, Lloyds, and CCLA.
4	Fundraising	Amounts given for a specific charity, eg Wheels for the World. Gift Aid could be claimed on these amounts if people used a GA envelope. Payments to charities are shown under Charitable Giving.
5	Other	Vision advertising, Ride and Stride, etc
6	Grants	Last year UCD had grants from Dorset S&W Circuit and the URC for the repairs to the Spire.
7	Refunds	Return of VAT from property repairs
8	Church Shop & Coffee	When the 2 accounts were merged into one, the final amount held in the 2 old accounts was transferred into UCD account.
9	Minor Items	Covers a multitude of small items , eg. CCLI licence, candles, sound equipment, etc
10	Charitable Giving	Sums earmarked for specific charities, Churches Together, Lunches for the Homeless, etc
11	Music in Worship	A gift made to the UCD Musical Director from Church Funds.
12	Church Shop & Coffee	Income is combination of Shop and Coffee Lounge takings. Outgoings also include Sunday after service coffee in the hall.
13	Debtors	Gift Aid estimate £15,000 yet to be claimed and a deposit of £393 in Lloyds Bank not yet cleared.
14	Creditors	Uncleared payments at year end. Mainly cheques.
15	Church Groups	Monies held on behalf of Badminton, Brass Ensemble and Country Dancing.
16	Lloyd Thomas Legacy	On the wishes of Kath Thomas, the legacy was split between Outreach and Church Music ie. £575.00 each

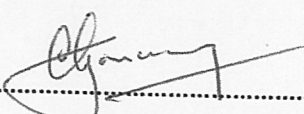
United Church Dorchester

Charity Number 1137996

Declarations and Scrutiny

Treasurer's Statement

I report to the Trustees that the Receipt and Payment based accounts, together with the Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Representation of Funds for the year ended 31 December 2023 which have been prepared from the records of the Church have now been completed. I confirm that these accounts are an accurate and complete record of all funds under the control of the Church trustees.

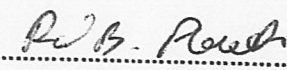
Signature of Treasurer.....  Date 14/10/24

Name and Address of Treasurer..... 51 Coburg Road, Dorchester, Dorset

..... Post Code DT1 2HN

Independent Examiner's Statement

I report to the Trustees of the United Church Dorchester that my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 has now been completed. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect, the financial records do not accord with the accounts mentioned above.

Signature of independent examiner.....  Date 14/10/24

Name and Address of independent examiner..... ROSTA POWELL, 11 K17 LANE, OVERTON (SHE)
DORCHESTER. Post Code DT2 8HP

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales - Charity number 1137996

Accounts

United Church Dorchester

Annual Report
January to December 2022

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester,
Dorset, DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of "Churches Together in Dorset", the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches.

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Our current membership is 165. During the year, 6 new members were welcomed into the Church, 4 had their membership transferred to other churches, 6 members died, 2 former members, with whom we had lost contact, were removed from the list.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio

members of the Council. Policies and procedures for the induction and training of new trustees are in place and available in the restricted section of the church website, containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation. All stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have or are attending Advanced Safeguarding training.

1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately monthly. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Minister in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church.

1.4.3. The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to eight major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community Service, Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings and Outreach) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Minister, Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.

1.4.4. Our AGM was held on the church premises in April 2022.

The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2022 comprised (Years in brackets indicate the year of appointment)

Our Minister:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- Colin Gannaway (2004) Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)

- Maria Jacobson (2019) (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- Paul Smith (2021) (Property and Finance)
- Brian Savage (2020) (Senior Steward & chair of Council of Stewards)
- Jenny Mair (2021) (Worship)

Stewards who stood down at the AGM:

- John Parson (2018)
- Diana Leeming (2019)
- John Hilton (co-opted 2021)

Stewards elected April 2022

- Rev David Cuckson
- Michael Humphrey (Outreach committee)
- Elizabeth Martin (Youth & Family committee)
- Mary Martin (Pastoral Committee & Secretary)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)
- Catherine Welch (2021) Safeguarding Officer

Minute Taker: Di Lawrence (UCD Administrator) until June 2022
Ellie Minns (UCD Administrator) from September 2022

1.5. Staff members

- Minister: Revd John Yarren
- Pastoral Visitor: VACANT
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit)
- UCD Administrator: Mrs Di Lawrence 11 hrs per week until June 2022; 2 hrs per week from June 2022. Ms Ellie Minns, 13 hrs per week from September 2022

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – Brian Savage
- Secretary – Mary Martin
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance Committee chair– Paul Smith
- Pastoral Care chair– Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property chair - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings chair– John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Managers – Elizabeth Haynes, Sue Gannaway and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Managers – Pat Smith, Pat Brown and Peter Jenner
- Wednesday Morning coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Catherine Welch
- World Mission – Maria Jacobson
- Outreach – John Yarrien (deputy chair – Peter Jenner)

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

1.7.1. The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are both members of the Dorset South and West Methodist circuit and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The two churches have been combined into a joint pastorate by the URC.

1.7.2. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community.

1.8. Governance issues:

1.8.1 The stewards meet regularly, usually monthly and discuss activities and revisited the United Church Vision discussion that was started before the pandemic.

1.8.2 The Council of Stewards began to look at the Committee structure, and work has commenced to revise this to improve cohesion and efficiency.

1.8.3 Following the adoption of the God in Love Unites Us report at the Methodist Conference in 2021, each Methodist Church (or those in a part Methodist LEP such as UCD) was required to hold a vote of members to determine if same sex marriages and /or blessings of same sex unions would be permitted in their Church. A ‘Church conversation’ was held where any member was welcome to express their own point of view and then a confidential vote was held at the Church Meeting in July. Under the UCD constitution, the vote to agree that same sex marriages could take place at UCD required a two thirds majority; at the

meeting this threshold was not reached for same sex marriages. The blessings of same sex unions was agreed.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our vision for the wider church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith;
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
- g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

2.2.2. UCD is extremely blessed to have a very skilled musician as our Musical Director – Heather Reed; she is an exceptional organist and accompanist and gives up a great deal of her time to ensure that the choir and music groups' contributions to worship is of an appropriate

standard. Many new members comment on the standard of the music at worship.

2.2.3. Until March 2020, UCD provided a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week. These included: 10.30 Sunday morning worship; 6.30 Sunday evening worship; 9.00 am communion on the second Sunday of each month and a short twenty minute service on Wednesday morning (the town's market day). Following opening up after Covid19 the pattern of services has changed.

The 10.30am service is the main act of worship; the services are led by our minister, retired ministers or lay preachers from both the Methodist tradition and the United Reformed Church. Numbers attending the 10.30am service are approximately 90 - 115. The 10.30 am service at UCD is regularly recorded and edited by Peter Robinson and available on the Churches You Tube channel. Evening services at 6.30pm have resumed usually twice a month with attendance between 8 & 30.

2.2.4. Starting last April, on one Sunday afternoon each month, instead of an evening service we now have Afternoon Tea and Favourite Hymns, known simply as Tea-Pot. People arrive from 3.30pm for a formal start at 4pm. We serve sandwiches and cake with cups of tea. At about 4.45pm we give out hymn books and have an informal time of hymn singing, with the hymns chosen by those who are there. We finish at about 5.30pm. All are welcome. There is no charge or collection, but we welcome donations towards the cost of the tea. The numbers have gradually built up, and we now usually have between twenty and thirty attending. We meet in the hall so that we are well-spaced.

2.2.5. The short Market Day service has continued and regularly attracts 20-30 people.

2.2.6. Zoom Sunday services which were commenced during lockdown for COVID19 have been discontinued; printed services for those without appropriate technology are available weekly from the Dorset South and West circuit.

2.2.7. In November 23 Christmas shoe boxes were blessed and donated. They had been filled and wrapped for children living in poverty in South East Europe.

2.2.8. We were able to have our special services at Christmas: Quiet Christmas and Christingle services,

2.2.8 On Christmas Eve over 100 families crowded into the church for our Christingle service, and it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying a relaxed service that enabled them to make their own Christingles, as well as hear the Christmas Story, told very simply.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

2.3.1. Seekers Course. During 2022 United Church Dorchester piloted a new Outreach course, designed to provide an opportunity for those

seeking a faith or an understanding of faith to get a grounding in the basics of the Christian faith as expressed at UCD. Initially we ran a 10 week version where church members were invited to come and participate. Around 33 came to the initial session, and numbers maintained between 25 and 30 each week. Participants particularly found the small group opportunities helpful in exploring the content provided in the main session. However, when we reviewed the course, it was decided to look again at the course content and structure, with a view to reaching a cohort outside of our main worshipping community. In Autumn 2022, a new 5-week Seekers course, hosted at our local Coffee#1 shop took place. The focus was on us sharing with participants our lived experience of being a Christian, and tackling some of the big questions we often get asked about and why we go to church. The first week we had 3 participants, but by the end of the course we had 15; one even commented on the final session 'we have gone places far deeper than I could have imagined at the beginning-thank -you'

2.3.2. County Show. In September 2022, we were delighted to have a pitch at the Dorset County Show for the first time since 2019. A large team from UCD and across the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit offered a 'Feed me, Change me, Love me' tent where families with very young children could take a few minutes of respite from the large crowds to feed or change their babies in a clean and safe space. Alongside this important offering, we ran a children's craft zone, served refreshments and offered games, which had a prize of a UCD stressball for taking part. Over the weekend, 70 families used the feed me, change me ,love me station and we gave away over 600 stress balls. We had a great location, lots of conversations with folk and a lot of fun being a visible Christian presence at the show.

2.3.3 Forest Praise. Our Forest Praise project, which is run in conjunction with our friends at St Georges Church, Fordington, has gone through a significant re-boot late in 2022. It was decided to take a slightly different approach and format to Forest Praise sessions. It remains a monthly event and has now been re branded as 'Forest Praise Cafe'. The number of activities at each session have been simplified around a core theme and a story and the 'Cafe' elements have been added where bacon rolls, toast, juice and tea and coffee are available.

2.3.4 A small team of volunteers welcome a number of children each week to Junior Church; they generally come in to the first part of the 10.30am service before leaving for their own activities.

2.4. Mission and evangelism

2.4.1 The 'Story-Tots' group, a weekly stay and play opportunity for babies and pre-school children has continued. The numbers attending vary

from 10 to 25. Parents are offered a drink; there are plenty of toys for children to play with and usually a craft activity. We kept going through the School holidays (normally we close for a break) and made it Story Tots Plus so that parents could bring their older school-aged children.

2.4.2 Journey to the Stable, an interactive re-telling of the Nativity story, was held in 2022. Local schools were invited and three classes attended and enjoyed their time, giving positive feedback. When opened to the general public the overall attendance and positive feedback were encouraging.

2.4.3 In the week before Christmas, the church was open for a few hours each day for 'Christmas Joy' to allow people time to escape the busy rush to Christmas and view a range of Nativity sets.

2.4.4 On Easter Sunday we gave out Flowers and Sweets to the community. At Pentecost we had a well-attended Fun Day, which was all part of reaching out to the Community.

2.4.8 The South Street window is changed regularly to depict what is happening throughout the year, i.e. the different seasons, activities and events, local and world concerns.

2.4.10 We have an Outreach committee which looks at what is happening (events we are doing) and planning /suggesting other events for the future.

2.5 Pastoral work

2.5.1 Our Minister, Rev John Yarrien cares for spiritual and emotional needs. We hope to appoint a pastoral care assistant in 2023 to support the minister and pastoral committee.

2.5.2 The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciates their concerns.

Every pastoral visitor has their own pastoral visitor.

2.5.3 An annual welcome meeting is organised for all new people who have started attending UCD over the last year. This is an opportunity to meet other new members and learn more about the church. Twelve new adherents were invited to this year's welcome meeting. Each new adherent is also given a welcome pack.

2.5.4 Every new adherent is asked to complete a GDPR form explaining what information is kept and how it will be used. These details are kept on a church member's database.

2.5.5. The pastoral visitors usually meet twice a year for training and to share experiences. Only one session was held this year which was used to share experiences following Covid.

2.5.6 The Quiet Christmas service with refreshments was attended by 14 people and led by the pastoral committee

2.5.7 As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support

to the bereaved. Ministers took 15 funerals this year and provided support to the

families, not all the deceased were Church members.

2.5.8 Another component of our pastoral care is the "Prayer Chain" where those in need, are

remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are

housebound. The prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has

been requested both daily and weekly.

2.5.9 The Coffee Shop now regularly opens on Tuesday and Friday mornings and there is a Wednesday coffee morning in the hall. A welcome and a listening ear is given to all those who attend.

2.5.10 The Solos Group tried to restart after Covid but decided it was sadly no longer viable.

2.5.11 In the weeks before Christmas UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth

of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. During the week before Christmas, the Action

for Children group arranged Carol Singing outside the church, offering knitted angels to passers-by.

2.6 Serving the local community

2.6.1 With its central location in the town, the United Church Dorchester is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here three times a week, finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit. These continued throughout 2022. Other lettings, such as the Country Market and a local amateur orchestra are also well established, along with country dancing and badminton, which are internal church groups.

2.6.2 The Church Shop remains open for four mornings a week. It is staffed entirely by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop

window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. When open, the shop also acts as an information point for the church. Ms Margaret Knighton resigned as the shop manager and a team of three of the buyers now manage the shop.

2.6.3 We continued to provide lunches for the homeless; these are organised monthly by members of the Church. We never throw anything away and those coming always take a second dinner away with them. It is a very rewarding experience. We have a small team of regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming); Peter Jenner and John Yarrien help as and when they can.

2.6.4 **Support of other charities in the UK and overseas** The United Church Dorchester has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and donations of goods and money.

2.6.5 Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:

a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. In addition, at Christmas, church members gave financial support to the Family Support charity, which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.

b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a controlled environment. It is an independent charity but the church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members. UCD also donated £1,000 from church funds.

c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciate the “dry” status of our buildings, receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.

d) The church also made donations of between £100 and £600 to the following local charities: Dorchester Carers Hub (£400), Dorchester Family Support (£500), Dorchester Poverty Action (£700), Dorchester Volunteer Centre (£150), Dorset Mind (£200), Dorset Nightstop (£300), Dorset Race Equality (£200), Durnovaria Silver Band (£200), Home Start (£600), Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) (£200), NHS Foundation Trust (£300), Quiet Space (£150), URC Retired Ministers’ Housing (£250), Weldmar Hospice (£500) and Women’s Refuge (£400).

e) The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £2,284.90 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing, charity stalls, donations and several collections at church services.

2.6.6 Internationally, the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid.

Because of the lack of very significant funding from house-to-house collections, the committee instigated the publication of a recipe book with contributions from members of Dorchester churches. It was

sponsored fully by two generous supporters and we have so far sold over 500 for £10 each. Christian Aid significantly increased its fund raising in 2022 whilst maintaining the spread of activities it was forced to pilot the previous year and which seemed to be a piece of successful rescheduling.

Our Christian Aid Week Ecumenical service at Dorchester Baptist Church in May 2022 was another very successful event. Led by Rev James East, the guest speaker was the inspirational Katie Roberts, National Head of Strategy and Development at Christian Aid. We also held a highly successful collection in South Street. The response to house-to-house collections and envelopes deposited in local shops was varied with by far the best response in the local villages.

In June and July the Dorchester Choral Society held three concerts at Upwey, Piddlehinton and in the Borough Gardens for the Christian Aid Ukraine appeal. It was a very well received programme of music and a substantial sum was raised. We are very grateful for their support. The by now traditional activities of the 'River Jordan' walk and the Christian Aid Market took place in the autumn. In the middle of October a further street collection was held; combined with the Ploughman's Lunches afterwards, the latter raised over £1,000. The following day the Quakers ran a 'Big Brekkie' at the United Church which was a lovely way to begin a Sunday morning. Carol singing again took place on Christmas Eve and a substantial sum was raised. Lent Lunches, held at UCD were once again a tremendous fund raiser under the indefatigable leadership of Sue Gannaway and her team of helpers. Over £30,000 has been raised over the last two years by the various events.

The committee wish to offer their grateful thanks and appreciation to so many members of our Church for the tremendous support and encouragement Christian Aid continues to have in all it does.

2.6.7 Our World Church Project during 2022 was TWAM (Tools with a Mission); a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade tool kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation. We organised two World Church Sundays as well as our two World Church Coffee mornings and a number of smaller stalls throughout the year and raised a total of £2238.64 for the charity.

2.6.8 The Church contributes to world mission through the Methodist Overseas Mission fund and the Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church, contributing, a small amount to each from general funds.

2.6.7 In November, 23 shoe boxes were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected for the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.7 Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.7.1. Architects Crickmay Stark produced the specification of works to replace a number of iron retaining rings with internal stainless steel rings in the Church spire. During the course of the works significant external cracking of the stonework was discovered, which if left would threaten the stability of the structure. The contract was extended to include the replacement of the affected stonework. All works to the spire were completed just before Christmas. Three submissions for grants were submitted, all of which are expected to be successful.
- 2.7.2 To improve the access to and through the loft space of No 51 Charles St, all the necessary approvals from the URC Listed Buildings Committee, and the Building Controls Officer has now been granted. Work is proceeding to obtain quotations from qualified companies for the work.
- 2.7.3 In early May 2021 high winds and heavy rainfall combined to dislodge a row of hip tiles from the church roof. In view of the general condition of the roof covering and insulation (straw) a decision was taken to strip and replace the whole of the east end of the church roof, which has now been completed. A successful claim was made on the Church insurance and the VAT was recovered from a grant making trust.
- 2.7.4 A defibrillator was purchased and installed in the South Street foyer. It is intended to mount this outside the church so as to be publicly available. Permission was refused by the URC LBAC for it to be fixed to the South Street elevation of the church therefore an application will be made for planning permission to fix it to the alley wall at the South Street end.
- 2.7.5 Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church has developed such that only a refurbishment is now proposed as the provision of additional female cubicles has proved to be impractical.
- 2.7.6 A contract was let for the replacement of the floor covering in the main hall.
- 2.7.7 Research was also initiated into the updating of the church heating, this could include the use of heat pumps instead of gas firing and the installation of fans to circulate the hot air at ceiling level down to the seating area. The installation of secondary glazing within the church is being explored.

2.7.8 Members of the Property committee contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways .

3 Ecumenical Relationships

3.1 Local Relationships

We continue to work closely with friends from various different churches and denominations across Dorchester and the surrounding area through Churches Together in Dorchester. This year a walk of witness was held on Good Friday, culminating in an open air service where over 200 people gathered for worship in the Borough Gardens, and broadcast on local radio. In September, we had a 'Month of Mission', where Gavin Calver from the Evangelical Alliance came and gave some inspirational teaching on doing powerful mission to the town. As a part of our response to this project, UCD opened up a prayer space after our Market Day service each Wednesday in September. This coincided with the death of her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and meant that a large number of folks used the prayer space for their own reflections.

In November 2022, one of our Church members, Mr Anthony Boyden, became the lay chair for Churches Together in Dorchester for one year and we are prayerfully supporting Tony in this ministry.

The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town, in particular, Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church. We are a member of Churches Together.

4 Staffing and Other Issues

4.1 Employed Staff

4.1.1 The Reverend John Yarren has continued as UCD's minister as well as superintendent and is proactive in moving forward UCD's Vision.

4.1.2 Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, particularly, supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Story Tots, Journey to the Stable, and "Feed me, Love me, Change me". Peter also

chairs the Youth and Family Committee. As well as his work with the wider circuit, Peter has been working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at Families and young children, starting with a Family Fun Day at Pentecost.

- 4.1.4 Mrs Di Lawrence resigned as Church Administrator in May; The post was advertised and Ms Ellie Minns was appointed and commenced work in September helping the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and managing the booking system for letting rooms in the church.

4.2 Volunteers

- 4.2.1 The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop and the church shop. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.
- 4.2.2 We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.

5 Financial review

5.1 Reserves policy

- 5.1.1 The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need. Although our expenditure in 2022 was higher than normal, there were one off expenses, eg Repairs to the main roof and refurbishing the Hall floor which will not recur for many years. Thus the figure of £82K will continue to be used as the target for the Reserves Policy.
- 5.1.2 Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, normally, about £82k.

5.2 Restricted and Designated funds

5.2.1 Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves:

- a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
- b) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church (now stands at £594).
- c) The designated fund of £60K, held specifically for ensuring the Spire was put into a safe condition, has been fully used. The work carried out to stabilise the Spire has been successfully completed this year.

5.3 Investment Policy

5.3.1 It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4 Names and addresses of:

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.
Independent examiner - Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.5 Risk Assessments

Several risk assessments were made throughout the year and used to develop safe systems of work which have been successfully applied.

6 Safeguarding

- 6.1** Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, sharing the responsibility.
- 6.2** The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3** We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4** A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers complete an application form and

have two references taken up, and those appointed to particular roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Debtors and Creditors AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

Debtor	Description
HM R&C	Gift Aid

Creditor	Description
Heather Reed	Miusic in Worship
Dorset South & West	Circuit Assessment issues
Church Shop	Stationery
Viking	Stationery
TWAM	World Church Committee
Action for Children	Charitable Giving
Christian Aid	Charitable Giving
CWM	URC Mission
World Mission Fund	Methodist Mission
Dorset South & West	Church Administrator
Paul Smith	Property small items
Sally Strachy Historic Conservation	Church Spire repairs

Church Groups

Total

Debtors and Creditors AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

Amount Owed

13,500.00

13,500.00

Amount Owed

1,205.66

5,018.13

10.88

230.15

61.00

217.58

217.58

673.32

673.32

2,235.63

499.38

32,299.97

43,342.60

1,984.57

45,327.17

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

ASSETS							
2021							2022
	Fixed Assets						
	<i>Investments</i>						
70822		TMCP - Florence Fare Trust					64,430
33618		TMCP - Surplus Funds Trust					29,287
2583		TMCP - Elma Burge					2,598
39176		COIF - Investment Trust					34,622
							130,937
	Current Assets						
14,000	<i>Debtors</i>						13,500
	<i>Current Accounts</i>						
47,720		HSBC Main Account					16,095
0		Cash in hand					0
							16,095
	<i>Deposit Accounts</i>						
126,833		COIF - General					77,930
40,211		HSBC					50,264
							128,194
	LIABILITIES						
-11,515	<i>Creditors</i>						-43,343
-1754	<i>Church Groups</i>						-1,985
363,448	Net Assets/Liabilities						245,383
	REPRESENTED BY FUNDS						
Last Year End		Fund Name	Net Income During Year	Transfer	Revaluation of Investment	This Year End	
	<i>Endowment</i>						
70,822		Florence Fare Trust			-6,392	64,430	
	<i>Restricted</i>						
667		Youth and Family		1,442	575	2,684	
671		Outreach Group		-329	288	630	
	<i>Designated</i>						
55,152		Emergency Reserve		-55,152		0	
83		Lunches for Homeless		168		251	
81		Church Flowers		-36		45	
219		Oven in Kitchen		0	-219	0	
650		Lloyd Thomas Music		500	-1,150	0	
	<i>Unrestricted</i>						
235,103		General Funds		-40,000	288	177,344	
363,448	Total Funds						245,384

Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2022

2021			20
		RECEIPTS	
57,956		Giving	
	3,175	Cash	6,243
	14,391	Envelopes	10,545
	40,390	Standing Orders	44,698
25,232		Donations	
12,885		Lettings	
714		Wednesday Coffee & Stall	
1,466		Investment Interest/Dividends	
14,662		Tax Refund on Gift Aid	
0		Grants	
3,842		Earmarked	
593		Other	
928		Youth and Family	
2,489		Coffee Lounge	
0		Church Shop	
0		Transfers from Reserves	
120,767		Total Income	
2021			20
		PAYMENTS	
69,645		Church	
	53,676	Dorset South & West Circuit	52,350
	5,344	Insurance	5,660
	4,885	Cleaning and Waste Collection	7,755
	3,746	Gas	4,003
	562	Electricity	2,821
	883	Telephone and BB	933
	82	Water	85
	467	Business Rates and BID	963
	0	Other	0
11,787		Minor Items	
23,223		Property	
	4,879	Property Maintenance - General	9,869
	0	Property Maintenance - Emergencies	60
	14,436	Roof Repairs	32,982
	-5,710	Insurance/VAT reclaim	-6,530
	4,500	Access to Flat Roof	6,375
	269	No51 Loft Spce	338
	4,848	Church Spire	74,780
	0	Main Toilets	128
	0	Hall Floor	4,126
7,841		Charitable Giving	
1,095		Music in Worship	
1,692		Youth and Family	
		Church Administration	
115,283			
5,484		Net Receipts/Payments	

Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2022

22
61,486
2,501
16,758
0
1,813
13,321
8,670
8,777
1,754
3,537
4,500
4,800
50,000
177,916
22
74,571
8,934
122,128
15,368
1,206
1,534
5,164
228,906
-50,990

Expenditure

Visual Aid Equipment

CCLI Licence

Piano/Organ

Website

Church Administrator

Photocopying

Y & F

Other Items - Miscellaneous

Church Coffee Supplies

Bank Charges

Property - General

Property - Emergency

Property - Decoration

Property - Church Spire

Property - Roof

Property - Flat Roof Access

Property - Hall Floor

Methodist and URC Assessment

Gas
Charity Giving
Income
Grants
Other Income

New monitor for Organist

Screen in Foyer

Rev JY has reviewed the licences we are paying for.

Replacement piano for the church

Organ repairs

Large upgrade necessary

Di Lawrence hours reduced to 2 per week

Ellie Minns now in post

Payments to Dorset S&W Circuit now up to date

Huge reduction in usage from previous years

A lot of help received towards the Dorset Show costs (Circuit gave £1317 towards cost)

£575 being half of the Lloyd Thomas fund

£1,292 for defibrillator

Now bought centrally using Coffee and Shop Account held in Nat West

Averages out at about £20 per month to HSBC

Just over budget

Wasp nest removal

Stairwell

Church Shop entrance woodwork

Church interior walls

Total is gross figure. This will be effectively reduced by:

- a) Grants from Circuit (£7K) and URC Wessex Trust (£12K)
- b) Reclaim of VAT (20%)

Shows net figure after Insurance claim.

VAT reclaimed

Materials only paid in 2022

~~Payments initially were overpaid over first 5 or 6 months, then delay to putting things right not helped by me being absent for a month or so. All now OK.~~

Well under budget?

This figure contains monies passed to UCD for Paul Wallis trip to Ukraine.

Also monies raised for TWAM

VAT reclaimed for Roof Repairs and Flat Roof Access. Also £500 for defibrillator from Council.

Includes additional charges for Hardy for refreshments over the week

UNITED CHURCH, DORCHESTER

I have examined all the papers and documents submitted to me, relating to the general church accounts, and confirm that they reflect accurately the financial position as at December 31 2022.



Denys Hood. BSc (Econ)

7.2.2023

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales - Charity number 1137996

Accounts

United Church Dorchester

Annual Report
January to December 2021

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Our current membership is 172. During the year, 6 new members were welcomed into the Church, 4 had their membership transferred to other churches, 5 members died, 5 moved away and 8 former members, with whom we had lost contact, were removed from the list. Another 68 people have chosen not to be members but are either regular worshippers or previous regular worshippers, who are no longer able to attend worship.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected, from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio members of the Council. Policies and

procedures for the induction and training of new trustees are in place and available in the restricted section of the church website, containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation. All stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have or are attending Advanced Safeguarding training.

- 1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately every month. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Minister(s) in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church.
- 1.4.3. The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to eight major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community Service, Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings and Outreach) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The sub-committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Minister(s), Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.
- 1.4.4. Our AGM was held on the church premises in July 2021.

The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2021 comprised (Years in brackets indicate the year of appointment)

Our Ministers:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)
- Revd Peter Clark – joint post with Bridport United church – until his retirement in September 2021.

Stewards who stood down at the AGM:

- John Hilton (2017)
- Mary Martin (2017)

Stewards who resigned in 2021:

- Janice Young (2018)
- Marylyn Mould (2021)

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- John Parson (2018) Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards
- VACANCY Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)
- Colin Gannaway (2004) Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)
- Maria Jacobson (2019) (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- Diana Leeming (2019) (Finance)
- Brian Savage (2020) (Outreach)

Stewards elected July 2021

- Jenny Mair (2021) (Worship)
- Marilyn Mould (2021) (Pastoral Committee) – resigned in November 2021
- Paul Smith (2018) (Property and Finance)

Stewards co-opted July 2021

- John Hilton (2021) Acting Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)
- Catherine Welch (2021) Safeguarding Officer

Minute Taker: Di Lawrence (UCD Administrator)

1.5. Staff members

- Joint Minister: Revd John Yarrien
- Joint Minister: Revd Peter Clark, 30% from September 2020, retired September 2021
- Pastoral Visitor: VACANT
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit)
- Clerical Co-ordinator: Mrs Di Lawrence 11 hrs per week

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – John Parson
- Secretary – VACANT
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance Committee – Paul Smith
- Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property - Paul Smith

- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings – John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Manager – Mary Martin, Elizabeth Haynes and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Manager – Margaret Knighton
- Wednesday Morning coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Catherine Welch
- Community Service, Home and World Mission – committee under review?
- Outreach – John Yarrien (deputy chair – Peter Jenner)

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

- 1.7.1. The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are both members of the Dorset South and West Methodist circuit and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The two churches have been combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. Revd Peter Clark retired in September 2021 after spending part of his time looking after the congregation at UCD as well as BUC; his commitment and generosity in his managerial, spiritual and pastoral care for our congregation has been much appreciated.
- 1.7.2. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community.

1.8. Governance issues

- 1.8.1. The third lockdown, just after Christmas 2020, proved to be the most difficult for many. At its end in February 2021, we were waiting for the roadmap to indicate the way ahead. Gradually those under 70 were then being offered the vaccination and those who had received early vaccination were starting to receive their second injection.
- 1.8.2. The stewards were able to meet regularly and discussed opening activities and revisited the United Church Vision discussion that we started before the pandemic.
- 1.8.3. Gradually throughout the year, a few more chairs were brought into the church so additional people could be accommodated at the service of their preference (10 and 11.15 services were maintained). People were asked to book a seat each week at both services initially, then just at the 10 am service.
- 1.8.4. We were able to hold our first AGM in 2 years (July 2021), and a questionnaire was composed to gather the congregation's views on both the church's vision going forward and on the roadmap for moving out of Covid. This informed the stewards' meeting in September.
- 1.8.5. In October everyone could now sit wherever they wished and total numbers were only needed for the first service. The distance between individuals, couples and groups was changed to just one empty seat. If people needed a specific seat due to a hearing problem, a disability issue or they wanted more than one seat gap between them and the next person, they could still reserve a specific seat at either service.

- 1.8.6. During the summer we started serving coffee in a Covid-safe way; this has allowed people to see and chat with each other - some had not done so for many months. Safety measures remained in place, i.e. everyone needing to sanitise their hands on entering the hall, wear a mask and sit at a table before the mask could be removed.
- 1.8.7. In May, some hip tiles were blown off the church roof down the side alley; it was difficult to find scaffolders and roofers to repair the leaking roof, but after much searching, the scaffolding went up later in the month. Covering the roof to stop leaks before work could start, proved a challenge and we were very grateful to those who successfully managed to complete the task. Scaffolding also had to be erected internally for the safety of the roofers. This meant that space in church became very limited, and we had to remove several chairs at the front of the church to accommodate the scaffolding and reorganise the seating. All activities until almost the end of the year had to be planned around the scaffolding, e.g. harvest festival, reintroduction of choir and music group. The re-roofing of the east end of the church is due to be completed early in the New Year. It is hoped that the western end of the roof will be re-roofed in 2022.
- 1.8.8. Also in October and following changing guidance, more restrictions were lifted at church: we were now able to sing, although seated, with the majority wearing masks.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

- 2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our vision for the wider church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:
 - a. the celebration of public worship;
 - b. the teaching of the Christian faith;
 - c. mission and evangelism;
 - d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
 - e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
 - f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
 - g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

- 2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to

become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

- 2.2.2. Until March 2020, UCD provided a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week. These included: 10.30 Sunday morning worship; 6.30 Sunday evening worship; 9.00 am communion on the second Sunday of each month and a short twenty minute service on Wednesday morning (the town's market day).
- 2.2.3. Online church services introduced after the first lockdown in March 2020 have continued: a Zoom Sunday service, a YouTube service, as well as printed services for those without appropriate technology. Zoom Lent and Advent groups and coffee mornings were also held.
- 2.2.4. On Palm Sunday, we opened the church to worship in person for the first time, followed by a Maundy Thursday communion (our first with both bread and wine) and then a full church for two services (10 and 11.15) on Easter Sunday. How great it was to hear the church organ ringing again on Easter Sunday, to see so many faces and to experience Easter worship together.
- 2.2.5. During the summer the music group joined worship again, although sadly the congregation still could not sing. Junior Church also returned.
- 2.2.6. We hosted the Tolpuddle martyrs' service in July with others in the circuit and across the district, welcoming the President and Vice President of conference to lead the service. This was the first service live streamed.
- 2.2.7. For the time being we are continuing to record our first Sunday service which is then available on YouTube for anyone to watch whenever they like.
- 2.2.8. From October we were able to sing, although seated and the majority wearing a mask. The choir also started rehearsing again.
- 2.2.9. When the scaffolding went up in the church, all services and activities had to be fitted around this, and we had our two Harvest festival services with tables underneath the scaffolding laden with produce for the Foodbank; the choir also sang for the first time since lockdown. The service was followed by a Bring and Share lunch, the first in nearly 2 years; it was good to eat together, but numbers were low.
- 2.2.10. From October people were able to sit where they liked during services, with no need to book for the second service. The first Sunday of November saw an array of Christmas shoe boxes filled and wrapped for children living in poverty in south east Europe.
- 2.2.11. We were able to have our special services at Christmas: Journey to the Stable (limited due to scaffolding), Quiet Christmas and two Christingle services, as well as Feed me, Change me, Love me.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

- 2.3.1. Many opportunities for direct teaching of the Christian faith were put on hold by the pandemic. The difficulties in developing trust using virtual meetings has limited our

efforts in this direction, but we offered a Lent Course during 2021 as well as an Advent Course; one House Group resumed meeting, initially on Zoom and towards the end of the year in person.

- 2.3.2. Work on our vision for the future is moving forward under the guidance of Rev John Yarrien.
- 2.3.3. Mission and evangelism
- 2.4.1 Junior Church started meeting half way through the year. Numbers were low but those who lead it remain very enthusiastic and take great care to keep the children safe.
- 2.4.2 Forest Praise has now become a joint venture with our Anglican friends at St George's and has gone from being held in School holidays to once a month.
- 2.4.3 The 'Story-Tots' group, did not meet for the first part of the year. We were able to start Story Tots again in June as there was a demand from parents who just wanted to get out of the house, meet other parents and let their children play - so much so that we now meet weekly in the Church Hall with a regular attendance of 15 – 20 children and a parent/carer. Parents are offered a drink and plenty of equipment (toys) for children to play with. We kept going through the School holidays (normally we close for a break) and made it Story Tots Plus so that parents could bring their older school-aged children.
- 2.4.4 Journey to the Stable was planned, but owing to scaffolding in the church building at the time, the duration was curtailed. This meant that the Youth and Family worker took the Journey experience into one of the local schools. Schools were invited; one school managed to attend but the other which had planned to visit had to cancel due to Covid. Despite this, the overall attendance and positive feedback were encouraging.
- 2.4.5 Our Youth Worker and Minister visited a School and did the Journey to the Stable with the children in class years 3 and 4. Our Youth Worker was also invited into a School to explain to Reception and Key stage 1 and 2 how Churches prepare for Christmas.
- 2.4.6 The annual Christingle service, was held on Christmas Eve, led by the Junior Church leaders but the format was a little different. It was well attended, at both sittings, and many of the congregation were not regular worshippers at UCD. People attending were each presented with a paper bag containing all the elements required to build a Christingle and the congregation were led through the process of building their own Christingle to take home.
- 2.4.7 In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and let their children play and do crafts while the parents and carers had a drink and time to relax. Some parents and children made more than one visit.
- 2.4.8 On Easter Sunday we gave out Flowers and Sweets to the community. At Pentecost we had a well-attended Fun Day, which was all part of reaching out to the Community.
- 2.4.9 The South Street window is changed regularly to depict what is happening throughout the year, i.e. the different seasons, activities and events, local and world concerns.
- 2.4.10 The continuing Covid pandemic meant that the County Show did not take place in 2021.

2.4.11 We have an Outreach committee which looks at what is happening (events we are doing) and planning /suggesting other events for the future.

2.5 Pastoral work

2.5.1 Our Ministers, Rev John Yarren and Rev. Peter Clark offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs.

2.5.2 The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciate their concerns. The visitors themselves are grouped under a number of coordinators, who look after the visitors' pastoral welfare. Due to Covid 19 the pastoral visitors only met once this year for safeguarding training. There have been several changes to the system; the pastoral committee has decided that no pastoral visitor should have more than 10 people in their group. Most of the pastoral visitors have attended a Foundation Course in Safeguarding as part of their role, and DBS checks have been updated where necessary.

2.5.3 Pastoral visitors have tried to keep in touch with their groups by email and by telephone calls and the occasional visit when allowed and have been a vital link distributing information in the rapidly changing world of lockdown. In August they delivered the Vision Magazine in person again for the first time.

2.5.4 Email and the church website remained hugely important in terms of relaying information to all church members, including those who have not yet returned to church. Printed services and newsletters continued to be delivered to those not attending church.

2.5.5 Kevin & Susy Rogers continued to organise a three times weekly Zoom "coffee and chat", with Myra Dawson acting as reserve 'host' on several occasions. Numbers joining each time inevitably varied according to the severity of national restrictions, but over 200 sessions had been held by the end of July. We finally suspended meetings in the summer - though we did gather for a pre-Christmas session in December, just for fun!

2.5.6 As part of the extra support to members throughout the period of Covid 19 restrictions, a shopping support service was offered; but was used less frequently than in 2020.

2.5.7 As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took four funerals this year and provided support to the families, not all the deceased were Church members.

2.5.8 Another component of our pastoral care is the "Prayer Chain" where those in need, are remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are housebound. The prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested both daily and weekly.

2.5.9 The Coffee Shop re-opened in October, as did the Wednesday coffee mornings.

2.5.10 The Solos Group had one meeting in December but only three people attended and had a Quiz; it may restart in March 2022.

2.5.11 In the weeks before Christmas UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. During the week before Christmas, the Action

for Children group arranged Carol Singing outside the church, offering knitted angels to passers-by. The window onto South Street developed the Christmas story through a changing sequence of tableaux. From the feedback that we received, this was much appreciated by many people.

2.6 **Serving the local community**

- 2.6.1 With its central location in the town, the United Church Dorchester is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here three times a week, finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit. These continued throughout 2021. Other lettings, such as the Country Market and a local amateur orchestra have now also returned, along with country dancing and badminton, which are internal church groups.
- 2.6.2 The Church Shop re-opened in April for three days a week rising to four in October. It is staffed entirely by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. When open, the shop also acts as an information point for the church. Ms Margaret Knighton is the shop manager and is assisted by a team of buyers and sales staff. Being classed as a non-essential shop it observed all government lockdowns, Throughout the year we have continued to ask customers to use sanitiser on entry and wear masks, for the benefit of staff and customers.
- 2.6.3 We continued to provide lunches for the homeless after the covid shut down and although we do not have the numbers we had attending pre covid, we do have some new members, which is always good as that is our goal. We never throw anything away and those coming always take a second dinner away with them. It is a very rewarding experience. We have a small team of regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming); Peter Jenner and John Yarren help as and when they can.
- 2.6.4 **Support of other charities in the UK and overseas** The United Church Dorchester has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and donations of goods and money.
- 2.6.5 Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:
- a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. In addition, at Christmas, church members gave financial support to the Family Support charity, which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.
 - b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a controlled environment. It is an independent charity but the church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members. UCD also donated £200 from church funds. The Contact Centre was able to reopen in October, having been closed for 18 months due to covid.

- c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciate the “dry” status of our buildings, receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.
- d) The church also made donations of between £100 and £600 to the following local charities: Alzheimer’s Society (£200), Citizens Advice (£300), Dorchester Family Support (£500), Dorchester Poverty Action (£600), Dorchester Volunteer Centre (£450), Dorset Mind (£200), Dorset Nightstop (£300), Dorset Race Equality (£200), Durnovaria Silver Band (£200), Home Start (£500), Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) (£200), NHS Foundation Trust (£200), Quiet Space (£100), Transition Towns (£100), URC Retired Ministers’ Housing (£250), Weldmar Hospice (£400) and Women’s Refuge (£400).
- e) The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £1,493.98 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing and several collections at church services.

2.6.6 Internationally, the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. Restrictions under Covid 19 legislation meant that little activity was possible in May, the month of the traditional Christian Aid Week. Most of the events were rescheduled for later in the year, including a walk to the River Jordan at Bowleaze, a street collection and the Christian Aid market and lunch (for long the “baby” of the wonderful and much missed Sheila Mann). The ecumenical service led by Revd. John Yarren at the United Church had an excellent motivational speaker in Rob Pearce, a regional Christian Aid representative.

Because of the lack of very significant funding from house-to-house collections, the committee instigated the publication of a recipe book with contributions from members of Dorchester churches. It was sponsored fully by two generous supporters and we have so far sold over 350 for £10 each. The book gained national attention (in the Methodist Recorder) and received orders from across the south-west region.

In addition, Christian Aid held a stall at the Dorchester Christmas Cracker, where there were some healthy sales of Fair Trade goods and recipe books. Carol singing on Christmas Eve also proved an excellent fund raiser.

Christian Aid is also a campaigning organisation. We have written twice to Chris Loder, our local MP, urging him to oppose government reductions in foreign aid expenditure. Our Market focussed on the effects of climate change with Christian Aid’s River of Prayer for Climate Justice as well as a petition to support a “jubilee” to abolish the debt of the world’s poorest countries. We also joined Dorchester Churches Together Ecology Group Global Day of Action for Climate Justice.

It has been very encouraging to see the increase in fund-raising in 2021 to well over £8000 from across the Dorchester churches’ activities. The committee wish to offer their grateful thanks and appreciation to so many members of our Church for the tremendous support and encouragement Christian Aid continues to have in all it does.

Members of the Church have shown great generosity in their contributions both to regular charity collections and in other fund-raising activities. We have extended our support of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) for a third year as the opportunities for fundraising have been limited by Covid. We restarted our fundraising by organising our usual World Church Christmas Coffee Morning, which was well attended and raised a

considerable amount of money. In total over the 3 years we raised an amazing £5,994.81. MAF works in many countries, flying small planes in terrain that is often barely accessible to other forms of transport. The aircraft come to the aid of medical emergencies, but also transport church personnel.

- 2.6.7 The Church contributes to world mission through the Methodist Overseas Mission fund and the Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church, contributing, a small amount to each from general funds.
- 2.6.8 In November 30 shoe boxes and a big bag of loose items were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected for the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.7 Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.7.1. Our Property Chairman, Mr Paul Smith has prepared a significant quantity of paperwork to get approval from the relevant bodies to improve access to the loft space of No 51 Charles Street. Approval has now been gained from the URC Listed Buildings Committee, but some issues are still to be resolved with the Building Control Officer. Work is still proceeding to obtain quotes from qualified companies for the work.
- 2.8.2 A local architect produced the specification of works that is required to replace a number of iron retaining rings in the church spire. Three companies submitted tenders to undertake the work, the lowest of which has been accepted and the works are expected to be undertaken in the summer months of 2022. An inspection by this company had shown that there were up to six rings, most of which were very corroded, threatening to crack the stonework
- 2.8.3 In early May 2021 high winds and heavy rainfall combined to dislodge a row of hip tiles from the church roof. Because of the demand for the services of roofing and scaffolding contractors at the time, it took months to have the necessary repairs undertaken. In view of the general condition of the roof covering and insulation (straw) a decision was taken to strip the whole of the east end to the church roof. This was almost completed by the year end. A proportion of the work carried out will be claimed from our church insurance. It is intended that the remainder of the church roof is refurbished in 2022, hopefully assisted by grants from external bodies.
- 2.8.4 Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church are progressing very slowly. The plans are yet to be presented to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) of the URC Wessex Synod, whose approval is required before work can progress. In order to include a disabled toilet, it will be necessary to incorporate the access corridor into the available space. As a result, alternative arrangements have had to be made for emergency fire evacuation from the kitchen area. Approval has recently been given by the LBAC, the Building Control Officer and Fire Officer for the works to proceed.
- 2.8.5 In 2020 an extreme rainfall event occurred, which overwhelmed the drainage system on the flat roof of the corridor and kitchen and proceeded to discharge water into these areas). The town sewers also backed up so that water came up through the drainage covers in the kitchen and the downstairs toilets and ran into the building at both the

South Street and Charles Street entrances as the streets ran with water. During 2021, the Property Committee have considered how the property might be protected in the future, since this size of event is predicted to increase in frequency owing to Global Warming. Some minor works are proposed for 2022 to reduce the chance of flooding through the roof.

- 2.8.6 During 2021 approval was given by the LBAC, the Building Control Officer and Fire Officer for a door to be formed in the west wall of the Cerne Abbas room, to give safe access onto the flat roof which surrounds three sides of the hall. Research was also initiated into the updating of the church heating, this could include the use of heat pumps instead of gas firing and the installation of fans to circulate the hot air at ceiling level down to the seating area.
- 2.8.7 Members of the Property committee contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways and Margaret Knighton works tirelessly to maintain access to the building for church users and hiring groups, alike.

3 Ecumenical Relationships

3.1 Local Relationships

The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town, in particular, Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church. We are a member of Churches Together, which continued to meet via Zoom, but then was able to resume in-person meetings in the autumn. It was not possible to hold the usual joint services for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, nor have the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, but they will resume in 2022.

4 Staffing and Other Issues

4.1 Employed Staff

- 4.1.1 Reverend Peter Clark, our URC minister, based in Bridport, retired in September 2021. He has supported and encouraged us during some difficult years, always going above and beyond. His irrepressible positivity and his stories are greatly missed. A goodbye tea was held in his honour.
- 4.1.1 The Reverend John Yarren has been making an impact as UCD's new minister as well as superintendent. He has managed to meet and get to know most of his congregation despite social restrictions and safety measures preventing many face to face meetings, and is proactive in moving forward UCD's Vision going forward.
- 4.1.2 Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, particularly, supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Story Tots, Journey to the Stable, and "Feed me, Love me, Change me". Peter also chairs the Youth and Family Committee. As well as his work with the wider circuit, Peter has been working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at Families and young children, starting with a Family Fun Day at Pentecost.

4.1.4 Mrs Di Lawrence continued as Church Administrator helping the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and managing the booking system for letting rooms in the church. She worked from home through the pandemic and has managed to catch up with many of the administrative changes that had been planned. In particular she has worked with our webmaster, Mr Kevin Rogers, to upgrade the website and create two pass-worded areas, one for members and a second for stewards. These areas contain useful information, such as rotas, church governance documents and meeting minutes. She has also worked with the Lettings Chair, John Hilton, to develop a computer booking administration system to improve efficiency and document storage.

4.2 Volunteers

4.2.1 The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop and the church shop. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.

4.2.2 We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.

5 Financial review

5.1 Reserves policy

5.1.1 The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need.

5.1.2 Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, normally, about £82k.

5.2 Restricted and Designated funds

5.2.1 Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves:

- a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
- b) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church (now stands at £594).

- c) Finally a designated fund (£60,000) was set aside by the Church Meeting many years ago, to cover the costs of stabilising the church spire, which is in an unsafe condition. The work specification was completed this year and a qualified contractor has been engaged. The work is expected to start in summer 2022.

5.3 Investment Policy

- 5.3.1 It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4 Names and addresses of:

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.
Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.5 Risk Assessments

Several Covid risk assessments were made throughout the year and used to develop safe systems of work which have been successfully applied during the pandemic.

6 Safeguarding

- 6.1 Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, sharing the responsibility.
- 6.2 The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3 We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4 A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers complete an application form and have two references taken up, and those appointed to particular roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Debtors and Creditors AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

Debtor	Description
HM R&C	Gift Aid

Creditor	Description
Bank Charges Coffee Lounge	Shirley Hood
World Mission Project	MAF
Dishwasher repair	Extracair Installations
First Aid Kit replacements	Accordant Marketing
Charitable Giving	Action for Children
Christingle Services	Linda Gundry
Scaffolding	ADK Scaffolding
Misc Items	Paul Smith
Bookmarks x300	Advantage Digital Print
Posters x2 @A3 & x20 @A4	Advantage Digital Print
Journey to the Stable	Peter Jenner
Forest Praise	Peter Jenner
Organ Tuning	Michael Farley
Roof Repairs	Kavanagh Roofing

No2 Account

Total

Debtors and Creditors AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

Amount Owed

14,000.00

14,000.00

Amount Owed

5.40

1673.37

326.89

56.56

31.00

87.04

3330.00

962.42

48.00

36.00

124.73

33.59

330.00

4470.00

11,515.00

1754.00

13,269.00

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

		ASSETS					
2020	Fixed Assets					2021	
	Investments						
60,178		TMCP - Florence Fare Trust		70822			
28,641		TMCP - Surplus Funds Trust		33618			
2,581		TMCP - Elma Burge		2583			
34,290		COIF - Investment Trust		39176			
						146,199	
	Current Assets						
14,000	Debtors						14,000
	Current Accounts						
45,067		HSBC Main Account			47,720		
167		Cash in hand			0		
						47,720	
	Deposit Accounts						
126,818		COIF - General			126,833		
40,207		HSBC			40,211		
						167,044	
		LIABILITIES					
-15,577	Creditors						-11,515
	Church Groups						-1754
336,372		Net Assets/Liabilities					363,448
		REPRESENTED BY FUNDS					
Last Year End		Fund Name	Net Income During Year	Transfer	Revaluation of Investment	This Year End	
	Endowment						
60,178		Florence Fare Trust			10,644	70,822	
	Restricted						
1,355		Youth and Family		-764		591	
594		Outreach Group		-17		577	
	Designated						
60,000		Emergency Reserve		-4,848		55,152	
325		Lunches for Homeless		-242		83	
180		Church Flowers		-99		81	
219		Oven in Kitchen		0		219	
650		Lloyd Thomas Music		0		650	
	Unrestricted						
212,871		General Funds		12,518	9,884	235,273	
336,372	Total Funds						363,448

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

				27,076				
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Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2021

2020			20
		RECEIPTS	
61,358		Giving	
	2434	Cash	3,175
	19984	Envelopes	14,391
	38940	Standing Orders	40,390
20,579		Donations	
7,005		Lettings	
1,785		Wednesday Coffee & Stall	
35		Bank Interest	
1,553		Investment Interest/Dividends	
14,424		Tax Refund on Gift Aid	
3,934		Earmarked	
774		Other	
1,093		Youth and Family	
1,500		Coffee Lounge	
1,500		Church Shop	
115,540		Total Income	
2020			20
		PAYMENTS	
72,090		Church	
	53,676	Dorset South & West Circuit	53,676
	5,045	Insurance	5,344
	5,562	Cleaning and Waste Collection	4,885
	2,358	Gas	3,746
	4,145	Electricity	562
	959	Telephone and BB	883
	81	Water	82
	264	Business Rates and BID	467
	0	Other	0
8,354		Minor Items	
3,044		Property	
2,527		Property Maintenance - General	4,879
0		Property Maintenance - Emergencies	0
0		Roof Repairs	14,436
-1,553		Insurance reclaim	-5,710
		Access to Flat Roof	4,500
		No51 Loft Spce	269
216		Church Spire	4,848
0		Lift	0
10,980		Charitable Giving	
1,062		Music in Worship	
398		Youth and Family	
97,118			
18,422		Net Receipts/Payments	

Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2021

21
57,956
25,232
12,885
714
0
1,466
14,662
3,842
593
928
2,489
0
120,767
21
69,645
11,787
23,223
7,841
1,095
1,692
115,283
5,484

INCOME

Giving	Disappointingly lower than 2020 by over £4K (use of the Envelope ?
Donations	A huge bequest from the estate of Tony Ford was the main contribu
Lettings	Lettings had a stop/start year with many refunds made, but overall
Wednesday Coffee & Stall	Recommenced as a Coffee Morning only (ignoring Charity Stalls) in
Investment Interest/Dividends	Lower returns due to exceptionally low interest rates.
Tax Refund on Gift Aid	A useful source of funding, which will start to decline if Giving conti
Earmarked	Apart from World Mission there was virtually little fundraising again
Other	This is largely the income from advertising in the Vision magazine.
Youth and Family	As for investments above.
Coffee Lounge	The Coffee Lounge closed its account with HSBC, and gave the end
Church Shop	No income received from the shop this year.

EXPENDITURE

Church

Dorset South & West Circuit The DS&W Circuit gave each church in the circuit a 3 month holiday

Insurance Premiums were increased by 5.92%

Cleaning and Waste Collection Cleaning bill started to increase as the church started to get back t

Gas Our energy supplier went to-the-wall late on in the year. It looks lik

Electricity As for Electricity we received a large rebate in May of £559. This wa

Telephone and BB No change here.

Water Just keep quiet!

Business Rates and BID Payments of Business Rates were recommenced in July. Plus norma

Minor Items Church Administrator salary increased. Retiring gifts of £250 to Re

Property

Property Maintenance - General Within budget.

Property Maintenance - Emergencies No emergencies this year.

Roof Repairs Only part payment fell this year.

Insurance reclaim Early repayments for scaffolding.

Access to Flat Roof Pre-payment made to hold cost of materials. Work carried out in ne

No51 Loft Spce Little progress made during year.

Church Spire Architects' fees, etc.

Charitable Giving	The principle reason for lower giving was no support for Christian A
Music in Worship	Increase in line with CPI September figure.
Youth and Family	£500 donation to Daniel Jacobson, increased activity for Forest Prai

System continued to decline)

itor to this large sum

a better year.

September. Slow to get going at first.

inues to fall.

i this year.

l-of-year balance to UCD

y for paying its Assessment. We actually had 4 months as our Financial Year overlaps with that

owards 'normal'

e we had an Interim Supplier who extortionally debited our account in December by £1,048. (

s on top of no payments being taken in the first 4 months of the year.

l annual BID levy.

v Peter Clark and £100 to Gwyneth . Church Organ service £368.

ew year.

id (eg no Lent Lunches)

se £564, JTTS £397, and Storytots £198.

: of the circuit.

This has since been refunded by HSBC).

**Flat Three
Victor Jackson House
Victor Jackson Avenue
Poundbury
Dorset**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
United Church, Dorchester**

**I have completed my examination. I confirm that no
material matters have come to my attention to which
attention should be drawn in this report**



**Denys Hood BSc(Econ)
Independent Examiner**

February 4 2022

UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

England & Wales - Charity number 1137996

Accounts

The United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2020

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Membership of the United Church Dorchester is open to anyone who formally accepts the Faith and Practices of the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church with regard to Baptism and Reception into Membership. Our current membership is 186. During the year, no new members were welcomed into the Church, 6 members died and 2 moved away. Another 78 people have chosen not to be members but are either regular worshippers or previous regular worshippers, who are no longer able to attend worship.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected, from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible

for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio members of the Council. We are currently drafting policies for the induction and training of trustees. Our current procedure is to give every new trustee a bound folder containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation.

- 1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately every month. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Ministers in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church,.
- 1.4.3. The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to eight major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community Service, Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings and Outreach) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The sub-committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Ministers, Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.
- 1.4.4. Restrictions on meetings imposed as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic had an overwhelming effect on both the working of the church and on worship. As a result we were unable to hold an AGM in 2020 and the Stewards agreed, on behalf of the members, that, where people were willing to do so, officers elected at the AGM in 2019 would remain in post until the 2021 AGM. Plans are now being made to hold an AGM in 2021 via Zoom.
- 1.4.5. The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2020 comprised: (Years in brackets indicate the year of appointment.)

Our Ministers:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)
- Revd Peter Clark – joint post with Bridport United church.

Stewards who stood down at the time of the planned AGM in April 2020:

- Paul Smith (2018)
- Gillian Daniel (2017)

Stewards who resigned in 2020:

- Debs Brazier (2019) - July 2020

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- John Parson (2018) – Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards
- Mary Martin (2017) – (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- John Hilton (2017) – Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)
- Colin Gannaway (2004) Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)
- Maria Jacobson (2018) (Youth & Family)
- Janice Young (2018) (Safeguarding Officer)
- Diana Leeming (2019) (Finance)

Stewards co-opted April 2020

- Brian Savage (2020)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)

1.5. Staff members

- Joint Minister: Revd John Yarren; inducted in September 2020.
- Joint Minister: Revd Peter Clark, approximately 50% to August 2020; 30% from September 2020
- Pastoral Visitor: Mrs Angela Fisher 5 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit) Retired March 2020.
- Youth and Family Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit to September 2020)
- Outreach Worker: Mrs Debs Brazier 15 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit from June 2019 – resigned August 2020.)
- Clerical Co-ordinator: Mrs Di Lawrence 11 hrs per week (employed jointly by the Circuit and UCD from June 2019 to August 2020; employed by UCD from September 2020)

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – John Parson
- Secretary – John Hilton
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings – John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Manager -Shirley Hood
- Church Shop Manager – Margaret Knighton
- Wednesday Morning coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Janice Young

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

1.7.1. The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are both members of the Dorset South and West Methodist circuit and are combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. We were very thankful that members of Bridport United Church kindly allowed us a greater (50%) share of the Revd Peter Clark's time (our URC minister based in Bridport) from January to August 2020 as the retirement of Revd Stephanie Jenner had left us with no Methodist Minister. The Revd John Yarren was inducted as Circuit Superintendent based at United Church Dorchester in September 2020.

1.7.2. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community. The Southampton Methodist District, of which the Circuit is a part, said farewell to its Chair, Revd Andrew Wood, in February 2020. He was succeeded by Revd Andrew De Ville.

1.8. Governance issues

1.8.1. We were able to hold Stewards Council and Church meetings until March 2020 when the Covid 19 induced lockdown began and dominated our lives for the rest of the year. The rapidly changing guidelines on group meetings meant that from mid-March most of the stewards' time was spent in, first of all, closing down the church then in trying to make sure that the church was Covid secure in time to open for services (see later) when it was allowed. In addition, it took some time for all stewards to become familiar with the new technology, in particular Zoom, so that Stewards Council meetings did not resume until

September, on line, via zoom. Since September much of the Stewards' time has been taken up initially with catching up with administration which had been pushed aside by Covid 19, then with maintaining church services, when allowed, and then closing down the church again in early January 2021.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our vision for the wider church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith;
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
- g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

2.2.2. Until March 2020, UCD provided a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week. These included: 10.30 Sunday morning worship; 6.30 Sunday evening worship; 9.00 am communion on the second Sunday of each month and a short twenty minute service on Wednesday morning (the town's market day).

2.2.3. On Sunday 15th March we worshipped together as usual and, during the after service coffee, celebrated a member's birthday with cake. By Wednesday we had cancelled the

Wednesday morning Market service and by the next day we were rushing to inform members what service arrangements had been made for lockdown and to highlight ways in which pastoral support would be offered. By the Saturday we were in lockdown and the church was closed. Since then Covid 19 has dominated church life.

- 2.2.4. By the following Sunday we had organised for a recorded service to be made available on "YouTube". A printed service sheet was also delivered to those without internet capability. Both these forms of worship have continued ever since under the auspices of the Dorset South & West Methodist Circuit and have been made available to all the churches in the circuit. Live morning worship on Zoom followed in the next weeks, led by our, then, acting Methodist Superintendent, Rev Gwyneth Owen. These 45 minute services were attended by worshippers from all our local Methodist and URC churches and typically, between 80 and 90 screens join the service each Sunday. Because of lockdown, no live Easter Services were possible.
- 2.2.5. In June, the Government allowed churches to open for "Private Prayer". Following a thorough risk assessment and the development of safe working practices, we opened the UCD for "Private Prayer" in early July. 11 members attended on the first Sunday. The church continued to open for "Private Prayer" on Sundays and Wednesdays until we were able to open for services. At the end of July the socially-distanced wedding of one of our members was held in church.
- 2.2.6. At the end of July we began to show the weekly "YouTube" service in church at 10.00am on Sunday mornings. The worship area can hold up to 45, socially-distanced individuals and seats had to be booked. This arrangement proved popular and numbers attending increased. After three weeks numbers had increased sufficiently that we were able to hold a live service again, led by Rev Peter Clark, albeit, with the congregation being unable to sing. One of our members volunteered to video the service, which was edited and uploaded to the church "YouTube" site for those who were unable to join us physically. The following week we had live music with our Musical director singing and playing for the service, although the congregation is still not allowed to sing. By the end of August we had to start a second service at 11.15am, which allowed 30 minutes to sanitise the seats in between services. Wednesday morning services became live in early August and in October we held our first communion service, but with only the bread being distributed under a strict, covid-safe protocol.
- 2.2.7. Lockdown returned for four weeks from the 5th of November but church services were still able to continue. However, the rising number of cases through December meant that we had to be even more careful about our preparations for Christmas services. As a result we were unable hold our annual "Journey to the Stable" presentations. The annual Dorchester "Christmas Cracker" night was cancelled. However, with careful preparation, we were able to hold a very successful Carol service, a well-attended build your own Christingle service, Midnight communion and Christmas day services. In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for a "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and reflect at various prayer stations based on the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

2.2.8. We welcomed our new Methodist minister, Rev John Yarrien in September in a Zoom induction service shared with the rest of the Dorset South and West Circuit.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

2.3.1. All opportunities for direct teaching of the Christian faith were put on hold by the pandemic. The difficulties in developing trust using virtual meetings has limited our efforts in this direction.

2.3.2. Work on our vision for the future is moving forward slowly under the guidance of Rev John Yarrien.

2.4. Mission and evangelism

2.4.1. The Covid pandemic meant that the County Show, Journey to the Stable and Forest Praise were unable to take place in 2020 but our Youth Worker was able to visit some schools to explain the message of Christmas. The South Street window became a regularly changing tableau showing the true meaning of Christmas.

2.4.2. The annual Christingle service, was held on Christmas Eve, led by the Junior Church leaders but the format was a little different. It was extremely well attended, requiring two sittings, and many of the congregation were not regular worshippers at UCD. People attending were each presented with a paper bag containing all the elements required to build a Christingle and the congregation were led through the process of building their own Christingle to take home. In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for a "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and reflect on various prayer stations based on the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

2.4.3. The 'Story-Tots' group, did manage to meet for a few weeks during the summer, much to the relief of the parents and carers who attend with their children but everything was, again, curtailed by Covid restrictions in November.

2.5. Pastoral work

2.5.1. Our Ministers offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs, Rev. Peter Clark (United Reformed Church Minister) from the Bridport Pastorate, offered 50% of his time for the year up to the end of August, when Rev John Yarrien was able to take a significant part of the load.

2.5.2. The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciate their concerns. The visitors themselves are grouped under a number of coordinators, who look after the visitors' pastoral welfare. Normally the pastoral visitors would meet a few times a year to discuss concerns and to get additional training, but this has not been possible this year owing to Covid 19.

- 2.5.3. Pastoral visitors have tried to keep in touch with their groups by email and by telephone calls and have been a vital link distributing information in the rapidly changing world of lockdown.
- 2.5.4. Email and the church website became even more important conduits to relay information to members during lockdowns. In order not to exclude people without computer access from many services, an effort was made to identify those with no access. 40 people were identified and a network was developed to deliver a printed service every week and a newsletter each month.
- 2.5.5. Our webmasters, Kevin & Susy Rogers, organised a three times weekly Zoom “coffee and chat” which has been well attended with up to 18 screens linked per session. By the end of the year 120 sessions had been held.
- 2.5.6. As part of the extra support to members throughout the period of Covid 19 restrictions, a shopping support service was developed; volunteers carried out shopping and collected prescriptions for any of our members who were unable to access shops themselves.
- 2.5.7. After the Sunday services members of the congregation had met, masked and socially distanced, in South Street to chat with friends they had been unable to see for months. The importance of this interaction was quickly recognised and a series of socially-distanced coffee mornings for members were arranged in the hall. After carrying out a risk assessment and developing safe working practices, 24 people at any one time were allowed to join together in socially-distanced conditions to chat with each other. It managed to run from August through September but was brought to a halt again by the second lockdown in November.
- 2.5.8. As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took nine funerals this year and provided support to the families, not all Church members.
- 2.5.9. Another component of our pastoral care is the “Prayer Chain” where those in need, are remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are housebound. The Tuesday prayer chain also keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested.
- 2.5.10. The Coffee Shop was closed from early March for the rest of the year. The Solos Group, which would normally offer friendship and activities has also been unable to meet since March due to Covid 19 restrictions.
- 2.5.11. In the weeks before Christmas UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. On the Two Saturdays before Christmas, the Action for Children group offered knitted angels, chocolate coins and Christmas activity packs to passers-by. The window onto South Street developed the Christmas story through a changing sequence of tableaux. URC Advent “Hope and Joy” packs were handed out in three schools (164 packs) and another 43 were given to families in Story Tots, Junior Church and other families with UCD links. From the feedback that we received, this was much appreciated by many people.

2.6. Serving the local community

- 2.6.1. With its central location in the town, the United Church is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here three times a week, finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit.
- 2.6.2. As with other aspects of church life, Covid has severely curtailed the use of our premises by third parties. Only the Blood donors have continued to hold collection sessions throughout the pandemic. AA groups ceased during the first lockdown but have subsequently resumed in the autumn, under Covid secure restrictions, and have continued through the December lockdown.
- 2.6.3. All other bookings, except those mentioned previously, ceased on the commencement of the first lockdown. By late August we had begun to have enquiries from regular room hirers about the possibility of returning. We carried out an assessment of the maximum numbers which could safely use each room under Covid restrictions and prepared a new set of safe working practices, compliant with Government regulations. Before returning, each group, including our own groups, had to provide a safe system of work for their own particular room use, based on advice given by a national body responsible for their activity. Several groups, including country dancing, Story Tots, badminton and a local amateur orchestra returned in September, only to have to stop again when new restrictions came into place in November.
- 2.6.4. The Church Shop normally opens six mornings a week from 10.00am to 12.30pm and is manned by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. Mrs Margaret Knighton is the shop manager and is assisted by a team of volunteers. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality. In July the shop re-opened for one morning per week, which had expanded to two days a week by September. Again, a new set of safe working practices had to be developed, particularly for handling cash, as the church has no credit card machine. The shop closed again during the November lockdown but maintained a "click and Collect" service. It reopened for a few weeks before Christmas.
- 2.6.5. UCD offers a once per month lunchtime meal for Homeless People in the Dorchester Area. All food costs are covered by church member donations. Numbers attending the lunches have varied between 12 and 18, with a number of "take-aways" being provided for those not wishing to come into the church premises. This service continued through both lockdown periods with Covid safe working practices being strictly applied.

2.7. Support of other charities in the UK and overseas

2.7.1. The United Church has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and by donations of goods and money.

2.7.2. Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:

- a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. At Christmas, six large boxes of Christmas food were donated by members to help fill 250 hampers for local families on free school meals.
- b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre, which provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a safe and controlled environment. This year the centre was only able to open until the middle of March. The church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members. UCD also donated £200 from church funds.
- c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciated the “dry” status of our buildings, receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.
- d) The church also made donations of between £100 and £600 to the following local charities: Dorset Race Equality, Quiet Space, Transition Towns, Volunteer Bureau, Dorset Mind, Durnovaria Silver Band, NHS Foundation Trust, URC Retired Housing, Citizens Advice, Dorset Nightstop, Dorford Holiday Lunch Club, Weldmar Hospice, Women’s Refuge, Home Start and Dorchester Poverty Action.

2.7.3. We continue to give financial assistance to the Dorchester Support Group for Action for Children (AfC) through a combination of personal giving via home collection boxes (£660), and donations (£200). The distribution of knitted angels and the presence of Father Christmas, outside the church front door for two days before Christmas raised £541. As a result we were able to raise £1401 for the charity in total during the year, which was about half the normal amount. A further £100 was sent directly to AfC from the donation of collections made at services over the Christmas period.

2.7.4. Internationally the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. Normally the main focus of fund raising was through Christian Aid Week, particularly the annual house-to-house collection and the Christian Aid Week market, an example of ecumenical cooperation, hosted by our Church. Unfortunately our traditional means of fund raising have been severely curtailed so that Christian Aid Week was restricted to a few one-off fund raising activities. Carol singing at Christmas was able to ahead and combined with the Church collection raised in excess of £250. The Committee was searching for alternative means of fund-raising and have come up with a Recipe Book to which members of all our churches were invited to contribute. A further £1057 was sent directly to Christian Aid from church funds.

2.7.5. Members of the Church have shown great generosity in their contributions both to regular charity collections and in other fund-raising activities. We have extended our support of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) for another year as the opportunities for fundraising have been limited by Covid. A socially distanced, one-way Christmas fair was held on a Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning in early December. The flow of

people and arrangement of stalls was organised so that everything was Covid safe. The sale of cakes, Christmas decorations and take-away refreshments raised £583 for MAF.

MAF works in many countries, flying small planes in terrain that is often barely accessible to other forms of transport. The aircraft come to the aid of medical emergencies, but also transport church personnel. This year we sent £884 to MAF from church funds.

- 2.7.6. The Church contributes to world mission through the Methodist Overseas Mission fund Church and Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church. This year the URC contributed £337 and £953 from general funds to OMF and CWM, respectively.
- 2.7.7. In November nineteen shoe boxes and a big bag of loose items were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected by the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.8. Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.8.1. Our Property Chair, Mr Paul Smith has been required to prepare a significant quantity of paperwork to get approval from the relevant bodies for the plans to improve access to the loft space of No 51 Charles Street. Approval has now been gained and work is now proceeding to obtain quotes from qualified companies for the work.
- 2.8.2. A local architect began to work with us on the specification of works required to replace a number of iron strengthening rings in the spire, The skills required to do this very specialised building work are quite rare and it took some time to find a company capable of carrying it out. A subsequent inspection by this company has shown that the rings are very corroded. The corrosion has lifted the spire by about a centimetre and has begun to cause significant spalling (breaking up) of the stonework. A final work specification is now being prepared by the architect with a view to letting the work in mid 2021.
- 2.8.3. Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church are progressing slowly. The plans are yet to be presented to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) of the URC Wessex Synod, whose approval is required before work can progress. In order to include a disabled toilet, it will be necessary to incorporate the access corridor into the available space. As a result, alternative arrangements have had to be made for emergency fire evacuation from the kitchen area. Approval has recently been given by the LBAC to proceed with the necessary changes to the kitchen. Building regulation and fire approval are currently being sought.
- 2.8.4. To add to the problems caused by Covid, on Thursday 27th August, while the Blood Donors were in residence, an extreme rainfall event occurred, which overwhelmed the drainage system on the flat roof of the corridor and kitchen and proceeded to discharge water into these areas. (Typically the gutters were due to be cleaned the next day!) The town sewers also backed up so that water came up through the drainage covers in the kitchen and the downstairs toilets and ran into the building at both the South Street and Charles Street entrances as the streets ran with water. Fortunately when everything had been dried out only slight damage remained. The Property Committee are now looking at how to protect the property in the future, since this size of event is predicted to increase in frequency owing to Global Warming.
- 2.8.5. Members of the Property committee contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways and

Margaret Knighton works tirelessly to maintain access to the building for church users and hiring groups, alike.

3. Ecumenical Relationships

3.1. Local Relationships

- 3.1.1. The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town. We are a member of Churches Together, which has continued to meet via Zoom but joint projects have been severely curtailed by Covid restrictions.

4. Staffing and Other Issues

4.1. Employed Staff

- 4.1.1. The congregation at Bridport United Church, with whom we form a joint URC pastorate, kindly allowed the Revd Peter Clark to increase the proportion of his time spent at UCD from 30% to 50%. This generosity helped significantly in seeing us through our reduced staff numbers until the Revd John Yarren joined us in September. During this time Revd Clark led worship more frequently, shared leadership of one of our Fellowship groups and served on the Council of Stewards. He also came regularly to our Coffee Shop and made himself available to church members and visitors alike. He has now returned to his previous (30%) share of time between Dorchester and Bridport.
- 4.1.2. The Reverend John Yarren joined us as circuit Superintendent and our minister in September 2020. We welcomed him and his wife, Cora, at a Zoom induction service; a first for all of us.
- 4.1.3. Mrs Debs Brazier, continued as outreach worker for 15 hrs per week. As well as carrying out her outreach role she has also supported the minister and leadership teams through active involvement in worship and planning meetings and has worked well beyond her contracted hours. She left the post in August 2020 when she and her husband moved to Leeds to lead a church there. We wish her every success.
- 4.1.4. Mrs Angela Fisher, our pastoral visitor, retired in March 2020. She remains a member of our congregation and we thank her for all her hard work during the time she has worked for us.
- 4.1.5. Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, around supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Journey to the Stable, Journey to the Empty Tomb and the County Show Outreach project, "Feed me, Love me, Change me". Peter also chairs both the Youth and Family Committee and the Outreach Committee. In September 2020 the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit, redrafted Peter's role and he took on additional responsibility in other churches across the circuit, whilst maintaining some of his work at UCD. During the Covid-Pandemic Peter has supported the pastoral team in making contact with some

of our most vulnerable and isolated members. In the year to come Peter will be working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at Families and young children.

- 4.1.6. Mrs Di Lawrence continued as Church Administrator helping the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and with managing the booking system for letting rooms in the church. She continued to work from home through the pandemic and has managed to catch up with many of the administrative changes that had been planned but had been postponed due to having no Administrator for over a year. In particular she has worked with our webmaster, Mr Kevin Rogers, to upgrade the website and create two pass-worded areas, one for members and a second for stewards. These areas contain useful information, such as rotas, church governance documents and meeting minutes. She has also worked with the Lettings Chair, John Hilton, to develop a computer booking administration system to improve efficiency and document storage.

4.2. Volunteers

- 4.2.1. The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop, the church shop or Contact centre. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.
- 4.2.2. We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.

5. Financial review

5.1. Reserves policy

- 5.1.1. The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need.
- 5.1.2. Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, currently £82k.

5.2. Restricted and Designated funds

- 5.2.1. Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves:

- a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
- b) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church (now stands at £594).
- c) Finally a designated fund has been set aside by the Church Meeting to cover the costs of stabilising the church tower, which is in an unsafe condition. Work is progressing to fully specify the work before progressing to engage a qualified contractor who is prepared to take on the work.

5.3. **Investment Policy**

- 5.3.1. It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4. **Names and addresses of:**

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.
Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.5. **Risk Assessments**

- 5.5.1. Several Covid risk assessments were made throughout the year and used to develop safe systems of work which have been successfully applied during the pandemic.

6. **Safeguarding**

- 6.1. Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. A new member of the congregation was appointed to act as joint safeguarding officer during the year, and the church also takes the lead in the circuit for safeguarding.
- 6.2. The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children and young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3. We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4. A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers have two references taken up and those appointed to particular roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Statement of Financial Activities for Year Ended 31 December 2020

2019			2020
		INCOME	
67,351		Collections	61,358
	6971	Cash	2434
	24088	Envelopes	19984
	36292	Standing Orders	38940
3,237		Donations	20,579
18,153		Lettings	7,005
9,226		Wednesday Coffee & Stall	1,785
0		Bank Interest	35
1,656		Investment Interest/Dividends	1,553
13,977		Tax Refund on Gift Aid	14,424
10,857		Earmarked	3,934
810		Other	774
1,415		Youth and Family	1,093
8,000		Coffee Shop	1,500
4,500		Gallery	1,500
139,182		Total Income	115,540
		EXPENDITURE	
102,437		Church	72,090
	78,296	Dorset South & West Circuit	53,676
	4,762	Insurance	5,045
	10,522	Cleaning and Waste Collection	5,562
	3,682	Gas	2,358
	2,924	Electricity	4,145
	907	Telephone and BB	959
	79	Water	81
	1,265	Business Rates and BID	264
	0	Other	0
9,834		Minor Items	8,354
4,166		Property Maintenance - General	3,044
0		Property Maintenance - Emergencies	2,527
8,662		Church Decoration	0
7,952		Church Sound System	0
2,590		TV Powerpoint System	-1,553
0		Church Spire	216
1,080		Lift	0
15,316		Charitable Giving	10,980
1,029		Music in Worship	1,062
1,388		Youth and Family	398
154,454		Total Expenditure	97,118
-15,272		Net Surplus Income	18,422


BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

		ASSETS				
2019	Fixed Assets					2020
	Investments					
61,031		TMCP - Florence Fare Trust		60,178		
29,040		TMCP - Surplus Funds Trust		28,641		
2,565		TMCP - Elma Burge		2,581		
32,221		COIF - Investment Trust		34,290		
						125,690
	Current Assets					
16,002	Debtors					14,000
	Current Accounts					
12,533		HSBC Main Account		45,067		
1,728		HSBC No 2 Account		0		
0		Cash in hand		167		
						45,234
	Deposit Accounts					
126,485		COIF - General		126,818		
40,172		HSBC		40,207		
						167,025
	Liabilities					
-3,993	Creditors					-15,577
317,784	Net Assets (i.e. Total Funds)					336,372
		REPRESENTED BY FUNDS				
Last Year End		Fund Name	Net Income During Year	Transfer	Revaluation of Investment	This Year End
	Endowment					
61,031		Florence Fare			-853	60,178
	Restricted					
660		Youth and Family	695			1,355
678		Outreach Group	-84			594
	Designated					
60,000		Emergency Reserve	0			60,000
487		Lunches for Homeless	-162			325
150		Church Flowers	30			180
219		Oven in Kitchen	0			219
0		Lloyd Thomas Music	650			650
	Unrestricted					
194,778		General Funds	16,074		2,019	212,871
317,784	Total Funds		17,203	0	1,166	336,372

United Church Dorchester: Bookshop Income and expenditure account:
Year ended December 31 2019 **Year ended December 31 2020**

Sales:	Year ended December 31 2019	Year ended December 31 2020
Books	2,284.22	845.24
Cards	5,151.41	1,768.15
Stamps	1,853.36	912.15
Traidcraft	5,122.59	2,943.38
Music	724.95	279.73
TLM	492.02	364.63
Toybox	10.00	9.99
Sundries	475.22	291.14
Total sales	16,113.77	7,414.41
Purchases	12,140.51	1,974.55
Opening stock	6,450.00	7,617.00
Opening stock plus purchases	18,590.51	9,591.55
Closing stock	7,617.00	6,808.00
Stock consumed during year	10,973.51	2,783.55
Net profit in year	£5,140.26	£4,630.86
Cumulative Funds:		
At start of year	8,277.51	8,917.77
Net profit in year	5,140.26	4,630.86
	13,417.77	13,548.63
Transferred to United Church	4,500.00	4,500.00
Total funds at end of year	£8,917.77	£9,048.63
Represented by:		
Bank balance	4,244.48	2,339.44
Less unrepresented cheques	3,000.00	184.24
	1,244.48	2,155.20
Cash	56.29	85.40
Shop stocks	7,617.00	6,808.03
Total funds at end of year	£8,917.77	£9,048.63

I have examined the papers and documents supplied to me, and consider that the above accounts are an accurate representation of the financial position.


Denys Hood
BSc (Econ)
February 11 2021