

Wem Baptist Church

Trustees Annual Report 2020

The trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for 2020.

2020 was a highly unusual year because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Although Wem Baptist Church tried to fulfil its strategic aims and purposes, many adjustments had to be made. The weekly pattern of meetings and events functioned normally during January and February. On March 16th the Trustees had an extraordinary meeting at which it was decided to close all 'face to face' meetings including Sunday Services and to switch to 'on-line services'. A week later HMG announced a 'stay at home' policy and the UK went into virtual lockdown. During the rest of the year there were periods of relaxation of the regulations. However, church life had not returned to normal by December 31st 2020.

Aims and Purposes of the Charity

As an independent, Bible-believing church, Wem Baptist Church's purposes are (as stated in the Church's Constitution): "(a) the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Church's Basis of Faith, primarily, but not exclusively, in Wem and the surrounding neighbourhood; and (b) such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the members of the Church in general meeting further the work of the Church."

As a church, we are committed to spreading the Bible's message concerning Jesus, to develop people's knowledge of Him, and to encourage them to worship, trust and serve Him. We seek to encourage as many as possible to follow Jesus's example of love and compassion in serving each other and the wider community.

Objectives and Activities

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

In order to fulfil the aims and purposes of the Church as stated above, a variety of activities are provided for both the benefit of church members and for the benefit of members of the public. Our weekly Sunday services, at 10.00 am and 6.00 pm, are central to our church life, and are open to the whole community. They are advertised in local publications, on the Church's own and other websites and outside the church building.

We seek to encourage attendance by members of the wider community by making these gatherings friendly, informal and joyful occasions. During most Sunday morning services "Junior Church" is run, which is open to Primary school-aged and younger Secondary-aged children. In addition, these services are "streamed" and are accessible to all via the Internet, whilst recordings of them are available on the Church's website.

The Church provides a variety of midweek prayer and Bible study meetings to encourage fellowship and growth in the Christian faith, both on the Church premises and in the homes of some members. Once again, these meetings are open to all and are advertised on the Church's website and in the Church's weekly news sheet.

Age-appropriate midweek clubs are also provided for children and young people from both within "Church" families and from the wider community.

A term-time, weekly parent and toddler group is also run by the Church. This mainly serves families from the community. Parents, grandparents and child minders very much appreciate the activities, songs and stories organised for the toddlers and the adults enjoy the refreshments and the time to talk and share.

On Wem Market day (Thursday) the church welcomes the community for coffee, tea and cakes. This is not a profit-making opportunity. It is an opportunity to build links with people who do not attend Sunday worship. It is staffed by a committed and enthusiastic group of church volunteers who are always available to provide a listening ear to those who are lonely or troubled.

Where possible, the Church responds to invitations from local Primary and Secondary schools, radio stations and other organisations to teach the message of the Bible.

From time to time, the Church offers courses to all who are interested in finding out more about the Christian Faith.

Individual pastoral and spiritual advice is offered to people living in the church's locality. We conduct marriages and funerals in accordance with the teaching of the Bible. We support missionary and evangelistic work in North Shropshire, nationally and internationally.

These regular meetings took place until March 16th 2020. After this date Sunday services were provided by a link-up between Zoom and an on-line platform called Sherpa. The Zoom element enabled the church musicians to take part from their own homes. Bible readings were also provided from individual homes and the Pastor preached over the Internet from his study.

Contact with members and regular attendees were maintained through phone calls and Zoom meetings. The small fellowship groups were quickly transferred to Zoom and operated throughout the year. These have been very much appreciated.

Contact with children and teenagers proved to be more difficult as they are largely activity-based. However, in August and September the rules allowed for small groups of children to take part in activities outdoors. A roadshow of events were held in the recreational area of Wem. These were greatly appreciated by the residents of the town and were enjoyed by many families who do not normally attend services in the church building.

Wem Baptist Church is supported by considerable on-line giving and therefore, although Sunday collections ceased, the charity income still enabled us to meet all our expenditure obligations. This will be commented in more detail later and is evidenced in the accounts attached.

The Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance of the church building in Chapel Street, Wem, and the manse in Station Road, Wem. They also have oversight of the legal and financial integrity of the charity. The Church has insurance policies in place covering assets and potential liabilities which could arise and meets its legal requirements in this area.

They have agreed a number of policies which are in place and reviewed regularly, including the Child Protection policy which has been reviewed this year and the Health and Safety policy which is reviewed annually. The Trustees have put in place a comprehensive range of employment policies and continue to highlight the importance and relevance of the Data Protection procedures. The Trustees meet four times a year. These meetings are formally recorded and these records are available for inspection by the Charity Commission and the Independent Examiner. This year there have also been a number of extraordinary meetings following operational decisions made as a result of the pandemic.

Achievements and Performance

The Church does not measure the success of its ministries mainly in numbers, including financial numbers, but in less tangible ways like growth of individuals in their Christian faith and in opportunities to share the Christian gospel with members of the community. Such "success" is difficult to measure, but the Trustees rejoice in another year when the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been shared with the town of Wem. This year we have provided free literature both outside the church building in Chapel Street and at the exit from the Co-op supermarket. These include Bibles, books and leaflets. These have proved popular and hundreds of items have been taken. We are encouraged to find that they have not then been dropped in the street and have not contributed to littering.

In normal times attendance at the Sunday services in Wem average around 100 in the mornings and around 40 in the evenings. These numbers have been maintained on-line and, although some of the older members have not had Internet access, we have gained viewers

from other parts of the UK and abroad. In March 2020, the Pastor also started to send out a daily 'Thought for the Day'. These include a Bible reading, words of encouragement and prayers and have proved extremely popular both in Wem as well further afield with subscribers as far away as Florida and Japan. For those who do not have internet access these 'thoughts' can be listened to on a land line via a service called Twilio.

Much of the work of the church was carried out by a large number of volunteers who serve as musicians, home-group leaders, lay preachers, children's and youth leaders, visitors to the sick and elderly, church maintainers, administrators, amongst other ministries. We give thanks to the Lord for their faithful and fruitful efforts. We have one Pastor, Rev Colin D Jones. He leads the majority of the services, contacts those in need of pastoral support and chairs the Trustees and the other decision-making meetings. His experience and scholarship is invaluable to the smooth running of the Church.

In 2020 there were regular weekly meetings for children and young people from January to early March. Since then Toddler, children and teenage groups have continued whenever legal and Covid safe. Where possible they have been held outside on the town recreation ground. Numbers have had to be restricted and detailed 'Risk assessments' have been in place.

The Church's week-long summer Holiday Bible Club was replaced by an event entitled 'Bible on the Beach'. This included many of the activities usually found on a seaside beach but it took place on grassed areas around Wem. The children enjoyed Bible stories and Christian teaching at the appropriate level. The local police were helpful in checking we were Covid safe.

Wem Baptist Church continues to seek to support those facing financial challenges. The Pastor's house became a drop off point for the local food bank and funds support some people known to us who needed immediate help prior to receiving Universal Credit.

Overseas Missionary work has also been supported this year, with continued finance given to a number of organisations. The details of the support given are included in the Treasurer's Report below.

This year we were not able to allow community groups to use our building. But by conviction Wem Baptist Church is a welcoming group which both encourages the community into our building and seeks to support the town of Wem by getting involved in those events that are compatible with our values and beliefs. The pandemic has made this impossible this year.

2020 concluded with two very successful events. Firstly, an outdoor Nativity and town trail for the families of Wem. Secondly, a 'drive in' Christmas Carol celebration took place on the Town swimming pool car park. Nearly fifty cars attended and in addition there were over fifty seated on chairs. All was arranged in a Covid safe way with effective marshalling.

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st December 2020

Summary of the Year

We entered 2020 with a strong cash balance of nearly £46,000. A deficit budget was set for 2020 taking a prudent view of income, with the expectation of additional ministerial costs resulting from the appointment of a new pastor and the cost of significant improvements required in relation to the manse.

The pandemic has seen income and expenditure varying significantly from the budget. However, having taken a prudent position in income the actual income was £83,149 compared to the budgeted income of £78,980. Online giving has more than compensated for the lack of offerings at face-to-face services in the church building.

Expenditure was budgeted at £102,202 but was significantly less at £69,322. Some reduction in costs arose due to the closure of the church building during the pandemic but the main savings arose because the improvements to the manse were deferred until 2021 and a new pastor has yet to be appointed.

The increase in income and reduction in expenses resulted in an unrestricted surplus of almost £14,000 and the closing cash position was almost £60,000.

Other Causes

We earmark approximately 10% of offerings, gift aid and donations to other causes. A total of £7,850 was distributed during 2020 as follows: Operation Mobilisation £4,000, United Beach Missions £750, Cloverley Hall £700, Platform 67 £700, AIM International £700, Good News for Everyone £500, Keele University CU Mission Week £250 and Warwick University CU Mission Week £250. In addition, a further £2,648 was generously given by Church members via restricted offerings which other than £210 was given to Tear Fund (£1,158) and the support of a church member going to serve as a missionary with WEC (£1,280)

Reserves Policy

The Charity Commission expects the Managing Trustees to decide, publish, implement and monitor their charity's reserves policy so that they can comply with their legal duties. The Managing Trustees therefore maintain a balance on unrestricted funds of £10,000 to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. In addition, the Trustees have also set aside a further £10,000 from unrestricted funds as part of the general reserves.

Conclusion

The Church enters 2021 with an extraordinarily strong cash balance of £60,000. This will allow us to deal with the proposed manse refurbishment during 2021 and to manage the potential downturn in income due to the continuing uncertainties arising from the virus control measures still in place in 2021.

The trustees are grateful for the smooth handover of the finances by the outgoing treasurer and for the support of others during the year to ensure the seamless management of the church finances.

The area of church finance requires a prudent approach, but the Trustees are always thankful to God for His continued provision.

Post End of year financial comment

Covid 19

As a result of the above, the Charity Commission has issued guidance to all Charities. In particular:

" Trustees should consider what are their short, medium and longer term priorities, and see if they need to amend their financial planning given their current situation. Trustees are encouraged in particular to think about whether or not certain projects, spends or activities can be stopped or delayed in order to focus on essential spending if they are facing financial challenges at this time."

As a church we have entered 2021 with a strong cash balance, which remains positive even allowing for one off expenditure on our manse of around £20k in our 2020 budget. As a result of the Charity Commission's guidance, the Managing Trustees have been monitoring the churches cash position very carefully during 2020 and will continue to do so during 2021. If needed, the trustees will delay any non-essential expenditure if they consider it places the church finances under any strain.

Structure, Governance and Management

Wem Baptist Church is a charitable unincorporated association.

The way that the church is governed is set out in the church's constitution that was revised and agreed on 4th March 2019. The members of the church elect elders and deacons to govern, manage and serve the church, and together these act as Managing Trustees for the charity. During 2020, one of the elders was a full-time paid worker (as pastor). Two of the Deacons, (Treasurer and Administrator) are also employed part-time. The church's constitution allows for this, with suitable safeguards for the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

The church is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), and FIEC Ltd. acts as holding trustee with regard to the church building and the Manse.

Administrative Information

Wem Baptist Church is situated in Chapel Street, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 5ER, and correspondence can be directed there for the attention of the Church Secretary.

Wem Baptist Church's Charity Registration Number is 1149374.

Managing Trustees who have served from 1st January 2020 until 31st December 2020

Colin Jones (Chairman)

David Rowe (Vice Chairman)

Tim Towers

Jon Berry

Ron Dakin

Nick Larcombe (Trustee & Treasurer until 3rd June)

Lorna Dakin (Secretary)

Lynne Towers

Paul Towers

Graham Joynes

Lyn Towers (from 2nd March, Treasurer 3rd June)

Ashley Bone (from 19th December)

Declaration

The Managing Trustees declare that they have approved the above report.

Signed on behalf of the Managing Trustees (1):

Full Name: Colin Jones

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.D. Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.


Position: Chairman

Signed on behalf of the Managing Trustees (2):

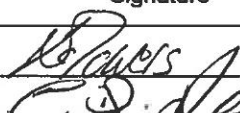
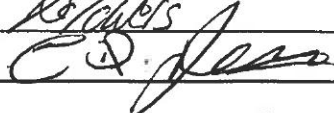
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Towers', with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Full Name: Lynne Towers

Position: Chairman of the Deacons

	CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Wem Baptist Church		1149374		CC16a	
		Receipts and payments accounts					
		For the period from	1st January 2020	To	31st December		
Section A Receipts and payments							
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year		
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £		
A1 Receipts							
Total Offerings	67,033	-	-	67,033	61,613		
Gift Aid & Bank Interest	11,419	-	-	11,419	13,061		
Total Donations	630	-	-	630	9,200		
Total Refreshments	499	-	-	499	1,819		
Total General	921	-	-	921	3,041		
Total Restricted	-	2,648	-	2,648	2,016		
	-	-	-	-	-		
	-	-	-	-	-		
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	80,501	2,648	-	83,149	90,749		
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).							
	-	-	-	-	-		
	-	-	-	-	-		
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-		
Total receipts	80,501	2,648	-	83,149	90,749		
A3 Payments							
Total Ministerial	31,041	-	-	31,041	35,220		
Total Manse	4,342	-	-	4,342	4,689		
Total Chapel Street	10,047	-	-	10,047	24,940		
Total Evangelism	1,402	-	-	1,402	2,604		
Total Children & Youth	1,610	50	-	1,660	871		
Total Other Activities	-	-	-	-	-		
Total Refreshments	344	-	-	344	982		
Total Restricted Donations	-	2,598	-	2,598	1,746		
Total Music/Tech	1,392	-	-	1,392	2,601		
Deacon's Gifts	450	-	-	450	500		
Total Other Causes	7,850	-	-	7,850	9,600		
Total General Expenditure	8,196	-	-	8,196	4,543		
	-	-	-	-	-		
Sub total	66,674	2,648	-	69,322	88,297		
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)							
	-	-	-	-	-		
	-	-	-	-	-		
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-		
Total payments	66,674	2,648	-	69,322	88,297		
Net of receipts/(payments)	13,827	-	-	13,827	2,453		
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-		
A6 Cash funds last year end	45,705	-	-	45,705	43,252		
Cash funds this year end	59,532	-	-	59,532	45,705		

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	59,532	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	59,532	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Church building	Unrestricted	-	-
	Equipment & Fittings	Unrestricted	-	-
	Musical, video & audio equipment	Unrestricted	-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		LYNNE TOWERS	18/08/21	
		COLIN D JONES	18/08/21	

Independent Examiners report to the trustees of Wem Baptist Church
Charity number 1149374

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Wem Baptist Church ('the Trust') for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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



Jane Annette
FCCA MAAT
Beech House, Wentnor, Bishops Castle, Shropshire SY9 5EE