

Rev Robin Selmes  
GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*

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Trustees' Report  
And  
Financial Statements  
For the year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2022

Administrative Information

Minister: Rev Robin Selmes

Stewards:

Mr Paul Abel

Mr Mark Frost

Treasurer: Mrs Carol Waldock

Secretary: Allison Clarke

Contact details:

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CAF Bank Ltd

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Kent ME19 4JQ

External Auditor:

Keith Scudder

## **Trustees' Report**

### **Governance and Management**

Gillingham Methodist Church (GMC, known as Third Ave Church & Community) is governed by the Methodist Church Act 1976, the Deed of Union and the Model Trust Deeds of the Methodist Church.

The purposes of the Methodist Church are and shall be deemed to have been since the date of union the advancement of:

- The Christian faith in accordance with the doctrinal standards and the discipline of the Methodist Church, and
- Any charitable purpose for the time being of any Connexional, District, Circuit, local or other organisation of the Methodist Church, and
- Any charitable purpose for the time being of any society or institution or subsidiary or ancillary to the Methodist Church

The Church is one of a group of local churches with the North Kent Methodist Circuit. Circuits combine to form about 30 districts in Great Britain. Although there is some autonomy, all Methodist organisations in Great Britain are governed by statutes determined by the Methodist Conference and which are published in the Constitution, Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church. Both Conference and Council consists of lay and clerical members.

### **Organisational Structure**

1. Overall control rests with the Methodist Conference
2. The Connexional Office implements decisions made by Conference and is also responsible for the stationing of Ministers in individual Circuits.
3. Connexional decisions are passed to the chair of the District and the appropriate Officers of the District for regional implementation.
4. The District pass the control down to Circuit level for local implementation by the Superintendant Minister, Ministerial Staff and Circuit stewards, and authority is delegated to the circuit meeting for certain matters.
5. The Circuit Meeting passes control down to the Church Councils for local implementation by the Minister, the Church Stewards and other officers, and authority is delegated to Church Councils acting as Managing Trustees.
6. The Methodist Connexional year runs from 1 September to 31 August.

### **Charity Registration**

GMC was registered as a charity (number 1155212) in January 2014.

## **Public Benefit**

The Trustees confirm that, in setting objectives and planning our activities, the Church Council Meeting has complied with the duty under the Charities Act 2011, giving careful consideration to the Charity Commissions' general guidance on public benefit.

## **Decision-making Process**

During the year, the Church Council met four times via zoom or hybrid (zoom/face to face) to keep under review the life of the Church. The AGM was held in the heart of the Sunday service on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May when the life of the Church was discussed. This was a new way of holding the AGM, with the aim of allowing more of members/congregation to participate. Financial and Property reports were received and considered at each meeting.

## **Objectives and Activities**

Our mission statement which was adopted by the Church Council in autumn 2012 is:

**Sharing the love of Christ, stepping out in faith and serving our community.**

Through:

Worship, discipleship and teaching- providing biblical teaching, nurturing spiritual growth and encouraging participative, expressive worship.

Reaching the community-working with and in the local community, serving others to make a real difference in Gillingham; encouraging equipping and supporting each other to exercise our faith where we live, work and relax.

Young people- building on our work with children and young people, helping them grow into confident and responsible adults and bringing more people into a relationship with God.

We seek to be:

- A church that puts prayer at the heart of everything we do
- A congregation that expects, and regularly sees, God answering prayer
- A church recognised as making a difference to the lives of the people in the local community
- A church in which everyone is actively engaged in a small group
- Confident and effective evangelists, at whatever level, bringing increasing numbers to faith in Christ.

We aim to do this through:

- Sunday and a monthly 'Prayer & Praise' service.

- Thursday prayer meeting via zoom. Several Saturday mornings when we opened the Church for prayer
- Small groups meeting during the week. Due to COVID and people moving out of the area, the number and attendance of these groups has decreased. We intend to review this and work to improve then during the next Methodist year.
- Membership of, and active engagement in, the North Kent Methodist Circuit
- Constructive discussion and decision making by the church council

## **Trustees**

Paul Abel

John Amoah

Diana Smith

Carol Waldock

Mark Frost

James Hancock

Kirsty Bottiglieri

Karen Willing

David Ellis-Johnson

Sarah Johnson

Amos Duggan

Stephanie Smith

Sally Murphy

Albert Kwake

Allison Clarke

Brian Clarke

Lesterlyn Clarke

## **Review of Achievements 2021-22**

Our site comprises the worship hall, community hall and two meeting rooms and footfall from the various users has continued to grow through this year as the COVID pandemic was managed differently.

The worship group began leading worship again in the church at the beginning of September 2021, after COVID restrictions were relaxed. A slightly different format of Sunday service was introduced with an appointed worship leader taking the entire service with the Minister or local preacher just bringing the message/sermon. A high percentage of members have returned to worship on a Sunday, and we have welcomed quite a few new people/families. A 'Prayer & Praise' service was introduced on the fourth Wednesday of the month beginning at 11am and ending with coffee and chat in the Foyer. This is designed as a more traditional reflective service. 'Tea at 2' was successfully reestablished on the second Wednesday of each month, proving great enjoyment for those attending.

Our relationship with our Methodist Circuit continues promoting a deeper understanding of how our church 'fits' is being gained, such that our whole church seen as part of a bigger picture. With District and Circuit assistance we have upgraded the audiovisual and wifi equipment, hoping to enable a wider audience with 'live streaming' in the near future.

Our website <https://gillinghammethodists.uk> and facebook pages/groups are updated regularly.

The building of teams has always been important, and it is known how much more can be achieved by teamwork than through individual endeavour. 'Hybrid meetings' (a mix of face to face and zoom) have continued to facilitate greater inclusion. Teams include:

- Prayer & Bible
- Mission
- Worship planning
- Youth
- Finance & Property

As confidence returns as the pandemic decreases, we continue to work on rebuilding new teams for our activities and encouraging people to step forward to help create and reshape the vision of our church and its mission.

We have several small/home groups meeting during the week. Many of these groups need to be re-established now the COVID restrictions have lifted.

#### Mission.

Our Charity of the Year on which we voted for during our AGM 2019 for one year, we have decided to extend this due to the pandemic so Medway Street Angels remain our Charity until 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2022. We continue to sponsor a child monthly via the Compassion organisation. Two eco minded breakfasts were held, raising money for the charity and giving an opportunity for fellowship.

## **Marriage and Relationship**

A report on marriage and relationships, 'God in Love Unites Us', was received by the Conference in 2019 and the District Synods were asked to consider the provisional resolutions and report back to the 2021 Conference. The Conference confirmed provisional resolutions on the principles or qualities of good relating, understanding of cohabitation and same sex marriages conducted on Methodist premises or by Methodist office-holders. A vote took place in the autumn of 2021 to decide whether the people of Gillingham Methodist Church (Third Ave) wished for same sex marriages to be conducted in the Church. The vote determined that same sex marriages would not take place in the Church at this time.

## **Youth Ministry Report**

In March, 2022 our Youth Pastor, Helen Young, resigned to take up a new post in Birmingham. A volunteer, Karen Willing, with the support of the youth team, kindly stepped into allow the youth work to continue. Bimonthly youth club for school years 7-13 continued, 3-5pm youth 'Drop-in' continued until mid June when it was deemed that due to very low numbers of attendees it would cease and a new piece of work to be developed later in the year. Youth 'Bible Study' transforming into a bimonthly 'Home Group' for 18-30 year olds.

Weekly videos designed for school age 1-6, were made and posted on the Third Ave facebook page.

The Thursday evening Circuit 'Home Group' on zoom, ceased due to lack of attendees.

The Youth Pastor post was a 5 year fixed term contract with funding pledged by Connexion, District, Circuit and Gillingham Methodist Church; with Helen Young resigning before the end of the five years, there was enough money left to employ a part time youth worker for Gillingham and the Chinese Church, based at Gillingham. The Chinese Church expressed issues with communication with a variety of languages being spoken and decided a Mandarin/Cantonese speaker would now be appropriate. We therefore moved forward with job descriptions for two part time youth workers, one for each Church (16 hours Gillingham/8 hours Chinese). These posts were advertised, interviewed and two youth workers appointed to begin in post 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2022.

## **Safeguarding**

The church follows the Connexional policy on safeguarding as detailed in Creating Safer Space, ensuring adoption of safe practice amongst children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding remains important and our church continues to review this area to ensure we protect individuals and trustees alike in the compliance and execution of policies.

## **Property and Users**

Gillingham Methodist Church continues to employ a caretaker on a part time basis (24.5 hours/week). We are 'real living wage' employers so the caretaker's salary rose with the increased real living wage in January, 2022.

The Property and Finance Team led by the Rev Robin Selmes consisting of Paul Abel and Jim Hancock (Property Stewards), Carol Waldock (Treasurer), Roy Adams (caretaker) and Albert Kwakye (Bookings Manager), continues to meet quarterly using a hybrid format (zoom/face to face).

The site comprises the worship hall, community hall and two meeting rooms and footfall from the various users has grown through this year. The site is also another year older and attention has been made to make efficient use of time & financial resources by the property and finance team to ensure our buildings are fit for purpose and compliant. The Church continues to rent the Wesley Rooms at the rear of the main Church building to the Family Trust. The Main Hall and Blue Room continues to be rented by Kiddiwinks pre-school in term time. A Dance School rents the Main Hall on a Saturday morning, Monday evening and Wednesday afternoon. Girl Guiding use the halls on a Thursday evening. The Blue Room is used for hire by the NCT, NRAS, on an ad hoc basis.

The wild flower garden created in 2021 was partially dug up in the summer due to a major problem with the main drainage system of the Church/halls. A claim was made on the insurance, which sent their own contractor to survey and repair the damage. Unfortunately this proved not to be straight forward, so after several conversations we decided to get our own contractor, the insurance claim was paid in full and the drainage issue successfully resolved. Plans were made to re-establish the wild flower garden in 2022/23.

## **Trustees Expenses 2021-22**

None

## **Trustees Responsibilities**

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Church's activities during the year and its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees have:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently using the receipts and payments method
- Made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Followed applicable accounting standards
- Prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the position of the Church and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the

assets of the church and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees have the right to advise the Independent Examiner of any concerns; none has done so and the Church Council meeting therefore concludes that there are no issues.

### **Financial Review**

The Church prepares payment and receipt accounts. The Church budget is prepared by anticipating the expenditure for the forthcoming year-around 50% of expenditure relates to the Circuit Assessment which is fixed some months in advance of the new year; other expenditure is generally set on a historic cost basis, using actual spend in previous years as a predictor of future needs. In this financial year we have been fortunate that organisations /users have returned to the buildings our rental income increased markedly on the previous year. Tithes and offerings remained similar to the previous year. Weekly emails have gone to Church members and adherants explaining the financial situation and encouraging them to continue their giving if at all possible. A stewardship campaign was undertaken in early spring to encourage Church members and attendees to review both their understanding and commitment to giving of time and financial resources.

A contactless card machine was installed in the Church Foyer after discussion at the Finance & Property meeting. It was decided the option of a different way of giving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should be trialled and has proved successful. The traditional envelope scheme started to be phased out, informing the few people who still used this scheme that an alternative would be provided should they wish to continue to use envelopes.

A complete rental review for all renters/users took place during spring and summer of 2022 with the changes effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2022

The Circuit Assessment for 2021-22 was £54,00 This is a far lower assessment than in previous years, due to COVID it was not possible to offer the North Kent Methodist Circuit any more.

### **Reserves Policy**

This policy draws on the guidelines written by the Methodist Church to assist Church Councils as trustee bodies with the preparation of their reserves policy; to assist them in managing their reserves well; and to ensure that the reserves benefit the mission of the church as part of the wider Connexion.

#### **What are Reserves?**

A reserve is an amount of money that is part of a church's unrestricted funds that is freely available to the church for its general purposes once provision has been made for its other commitments. Part of a reserve may be set aside for a specific purpose, which sets out what a church intends to do with the money that it has designated for this purpose.

#### **Why should we hold Reserves?**

Having a reserves policy is necessary because it highlights good planning of resources, time management, and consideration of the impact of risks on a church's existing commitments.

The practicalities of having a reserves policy in place ensure that the unforeseen is considered as part of the trustees' mission and developmental strategy.

### **Legal Basis for Holding Reserves**

All local Methodist churches, circuits and districts are individual charities and as such are subject to charity law. There is no specific legal rule which states what proportion of funds may or should be held as a reserve. Trustees are under a general legal duty to apply charitable funds within a reasonable time of receiving them. If reserves are held without reasonable justification the trustees may be in breach of trust.

### **Trustees Annual Report**

The Charities SORP requires trustees to include a statement in their annual report about the charity's reserves policy, the level of reserves held and the reasons for this.

### **Reserves Policy Planning Process**

The reserves policy should include, but is not limited to:

- 1) The reasons why the church needs reserves
- 2) The level (or range) of reserves the trustees believe the church needs
- 3) The current level of reserves held (and how this varies over the years)
- 4) The steps the church is going to take to establish or maintain reserves at the agreed level
- 5) Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the policy.

The Charity Commission states that holding up to six months expenditure for reserves is appropriate.

Background:

The Church seeks to use its financial resources wisely and to predict future needs.

The Reserves Policy deals with:

- Our general fund, including the Reserves fund (Designated)

Other funds held which are NOT required to be included in our reserves are:

- Youth Worker fund (restricted)
- Benevolent fund, ,Special Music Fund, Foyer Fund, Messy Church Fund, Charity of the year, Baldwin Gift, Hipkiss Donation, Holiday Club Fund, Garden Fund (all Restricted)

### **Our Reserves**

- The Church believes it should have reserves sufficient to cover two quarters Circuit Assessment (£24,000) and to cover the caretaker's salary for six months (£6,500).
- Other costs of managing and maintaining church buildings, including utility costs, were budgeted at £14,210 for 6 months. The Church deemed it essential to hold sufficient reserves to cover these costs for at least three months. This is higher than previously thought due to CCLI licence etc required to deliver Church online.
- Costs of the youth worker are managed through the youth work fund.

In 2017 Church Council agreed that £25,000 only will be held in the reserve fund to cover the costs. In November 2019, this rose by £5,000 to £30,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2022,

£12,000 is held in the reserves fund. Our aim is to achieve £50,000 ( 6 months expenditure on 2019-20 figures). As of 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2022, £15,753 was held in the general fund,

### **Financial Recovery Plan**

The aim of this plan is to build up the reserves fund (RF). Pre-pandemic it was set at £30,000, currently it is £12K. The reserves policy written in December 2021 and submitted to the circuit suggests the reserves fund should sit at £50,000

The ability to build up the reserves fund is dependent on the monies in the general fund (GF).

Pre-pandemic the GF averaged at £20,000, it currently ranges between £5-12 K.

Current monthly income approx £5-6,000 with monthly expenditure at £6-7000, reflecting the overall decrease in the GF over the year

The Circuit Assessment of £54,000 was paid quarterly to the Circuit from the GF: in September, December, March & June (£13,500/quarter).

Funds are to be transferred from the GF to the Reserves quarterly, after the Assessment has been paid if the GF is in excess of £25,000

### **Approvals**

The Trustees' Report and Financial Statements were approved by the Church Council meeting, held on

Rev Robin Selmes  
Minister

Carol Waldock  
Treasurer