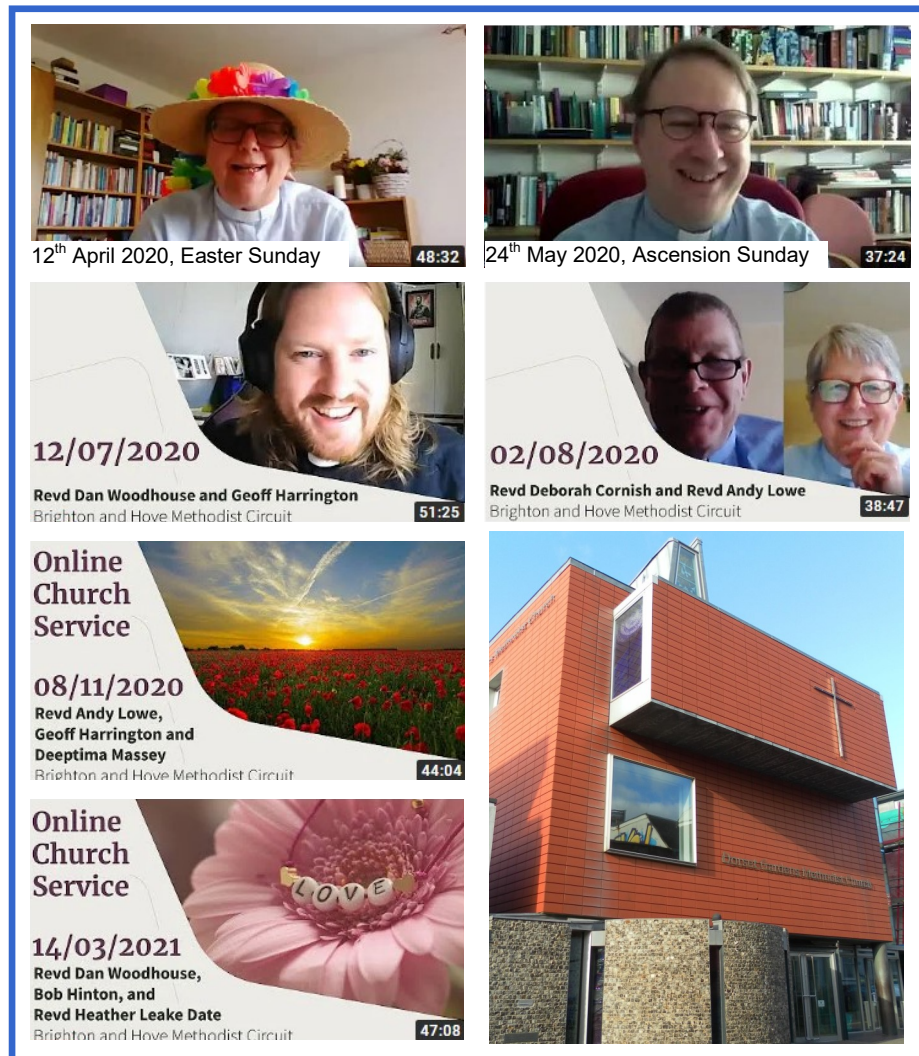


# Dorset Gardens Methodist Church Brighton

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## Annual Report 2020 - 2021

Registered Charity No. 1160211

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***The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.***

## **INTRODUCTION AND MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

This, our ninth, report is written against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, which has brought immense challenges, not just to Dorset Gardens Methodist Church and the Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit, but to the world. Many of the activities that would usually take place in the building have either been cancelled or moved to an online mode of delivery.

However, although the doors to the building have been closed to all but a few activities, the church (which is the people – the ekklesia) continued to worship and offer opportunities for learning and caring, together with service and evangelism; albeit in different ways. Lunch Positive has been the one constant onsite activity throughout this very strange and challenging year.

As you read through the reports, I hope you get a glimpse of the amazing people who have risen to the challenge of being church in a new way. I am grateful to those who have made online worship possible; the pastoral team for their valiant efforts in keeping in touch; to Angela who worked from home ensuring that people received weekly letters and worship material; to those who ensured that when the building was being used it was as COVID-secure as humanly possible. The children's holiday clubs have been offered with @home packs, and on site when permissible – Liz has been very creative in making sure that our children and families have been supported.

Throughout the course of this year, there have been a few personnel changes, several of which are named within the reports. I would like to add my personal thanks to Vikki, Alan, and Mikala who have stepped down from their respective roles as Treasurer, Pastoral Secretary and Church Steward. Also, Brandford, Derek and Paul who have redefined their roles.

As a church, there are many people that we need to thank for their continuing support and the work they have done to maintain the worshipping and missional life of the congregation and those with whom we are connected. Over the coming months we will together seek the future direction of travel in God's name, constantly bearing in mind the Government advice to help prevent the spread of the virus.

*Revd Deborah Cornish*



## **SECTION 1: WORSHIP AND EVANGELISM**

*The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.*



In March 2020, the world changed and we as a church had to do likewise. We began by sending out 'worship@home' material together with a weekly letter to everyone on our pastoral list. This has proved very popular as it helped people feel connected. This practice will continue for those who are unable to connect online or onsite after we return to regular worship in the building.

By the beginning of April 2020, it was agreed that we would hold worship online across the Circuit. We are very grateful to those who have facilitated this. It has meant that we have been able to broaden the scope of music used, along with interactive prayer using the chat option. We have also seen people return to church, who prior to lockdown were unable to attend onsite worship. These services have included an 'intergenerational' section as there are a couple of young families that take part.

In addition to the morning worship, there are two evening services each month, one is a meditative style and the other giving space for conversations about faith. Following morning worship there is also an invitation for people to join 'Coffee-Time' for a chat – bringing their own drink.

During the summer months a couple of Communion services were held in gardens and, in the autumn, we returned to the church building for an

act of worship. In preparation for the online Love Feast at Pentecost everyone received a piece of cake, and at Christmas everyone received a candle and mince pie for the online carol service.

Apart from Sunday worship, online services were also offered for Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, and the World Day of Prayer, together with twice daily acts of reflection during Holy Week.

**The Worship Consultation Group** met in October, taking advantage of the fact we could meet on the church premises. This was an opportunity to reflect on what had been offered during the time that the doors to the church were closed. The group postponed its meeting in March, as several members are unable to access online technology. There is a meeting planned during the summer months, when we will consider both Sunday and midweek worship going forward.

*Revd Deborah Cornish*

## SUNDAY CLUB

I have endeavoured to keep in contact with our teenage family by email. The family have been tuning into the online services.

They did quite a lot of cutting out of letters for Christmas and Easter last year and this year. Although the Church has not been open for worship, these were put up in the front window of the Church to send a simple seasonal message to the people who come into the building and those who pass by.

*Rosemary Cuthbert*

## SECTION 2: LEARNING AND CARING

*The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care.*



## STUDY GROUPS

Revd Deborah Cornish led four sessions of Advent Conversations, using material adapted from *Making Room for Jesus*, by Liz Babbs; Published: CWR, 2014.

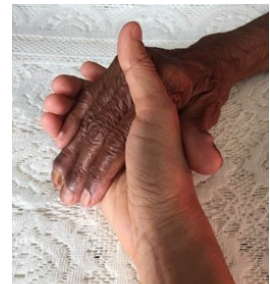
The Lenten material was produced by Revd Cornish based on parables and the hymn by Brian Rees '*The Kingdom of God*'. Both study groups were held online, with written material provided for those unable to connect to online groups.

Cynthia Tudor has also continued to provide material for folk to study and when permissible they have met up in a park to talk these through. The studies have included: "Problems in the early church according to 1 Corinthians" and some of the shorter books of the bible e.g. Jonah, Ruth and Esther. There is a post-Easter series "The Return from Exile" (See Cynthia Tudor's report).

*Revd Deborah Cornish*

## PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Pastoral care is at the centre of the church's mission and ministry. Currently, there are seven pastoral group leaders, along with the Minister, gladly giving their service. The Committee meets twice a year and is responsible for the provision of pastoral care.



Deeptima Massey, as the new Pastoral Secretary, commenced her role in November 2020. She will be working closely with the Minister, the Pastoral Team and the Church Administrator, and also with the stewards in nurturing the life of the church. She is also responsible for maintaining an up-to-date record of members and adherents ensuring that everybody has some kind of pastoral link.

One way the pastoral leaders demonstrate their faithfulness as a Christian community is by offering help and care to a range of people both in the church and wider community. Care and friendship are offered by home visits, over coffee and/or through regular phone calls or emails. During a wide range of circumstances and in demanding situations, the pastoral leaders seek to be a helpful presence, often listening attentively, supporting, encouraging, offering compassion, celebrating joys and helping people discover God's will and love.

The act of praying is at the heart of pastoral work. Besides being in touch through visits and/or phone conversations, pastoral care providers continue to support members through a prayerful ministry.

Pastoral care is available for all, irrespective of whether anyone attends church regularly or not.

Going forward our vision is to invite new members to become pastoral group leaders and expand the team. We will be exploring ways of improving pastoral effectiveness that might be helpful in developing a fresh approach to pastoral work and then use it in the contemporary circumstances and according to distinct individual and collective needs.

Please continue to pray for our pastoral team and the work and responsibility we have committed ourselves to.

*Deeptima Massey, Pastoral Secretary*

## **SAFEGUARDING**

There has been no Circuit Safeguarding Officer for eighteen months. It is anticipated that this will be part of the role of the Circuit Operations Manager (COM) when that person is appointed. However, it will take some time for the person to get into the full role and it was agreed at the Circuit Meeting in March 2021 that Mr Andy Willis be appointed on a short-term basis. Andy has some experience of safeguarding and is currently living with Revd Dan Woodhouse in his community at the Patcham Manse.

*Rosemary Cuthbert*

## **FAREWELL TO ART & CRAFT CLUB AND CAMEO**

Sadly, due to the long shutdown, declining numbers and Shirley's health we have decided to close Art & Craft Club. We are very sorry to have come to this decision and we thank everyone who helped for their support.

Cameo has also closed and we wish to send enormous thanks to all those who helped with set-up, tea, music, clearing away and to all the

speakers. But do not be disconsolate, it is being replaced by a shiny new version where we can all meet and share some lovely times together...

## **INTRODUCING OPENHOUSE@DG**

This isn't quite a report of something that has happened over the past year; but something that almost happened – and will happen (please, God) in June.

OpenHouse@DG is the brainchild of Graham Wall who met a while back with the Chichester Diocesan community worker, Diane Watts, to learn about Mental Health Cafés. Diane was hoping to establish these cafés in churches around Brighton & Hove as a way to support people with mental health issues and to signpost them to professional services. Although starting one up at Dorset Gardens was a great idea, finding a time to do so proved difficult. The formalities of joining up in a scheme which would be overseen by the Diocese and mental health services presented further hurdles. The idea was put aside.

However, as the pandemic began to take hold last spring and it became clear that many people were suffering loneliness and anxiety during lockdown, the idea was reviewed. It was decided to establish a less formalised gathering that could offer friendship, a listening ear and a cuppa to all comers. We decided to call it Open House and invite anybody and everybody from the church, the neighbourhood and beyond to come along. Tea, coffee and cake would be served (free), games would be on offer, and craft activities would take place. Helpers would be good listeners and there would be information available if people needed further support. We did our risk assessment and were at the starting line, ready for the opening shot – when the second lockdown was declared. When it was lifted, with Christmas imminent, it was decided to wait until the new year. And then the third lockdown was declared.

But wonderfully we are now looking forward to the easing of all restrictions in June and we can begin again to plan our grand opening.



The hope is to meet every week on a Thursday from 2 to 4 pm. A little team of helpers has come forward; some folk have offered to make cakes; but more helpers and cake makers are always welcomed. We hope to start as soon after 21<sup>st</sup> June as we can. More information will be available in due course.

*Graham Wall, Cynthia Park*

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SUPPORT

**Tearaway Tots** welcomed families back into church in the autumn term, providing much needed fun for the little ones. We saw new babies in church, and caught up with toddlers who have grown so much since the spring! Two sessions ran per week and parents and carers enjoyed a cuppa and a natter with friends. We continue to post themed craft ideas on our Facebook page, *Tearaway Tots at Dorset Gardens*, with ideas and inspiration for 100+ members each week. We are hopeful about our reopening in the summer... and we continue to encourage new volunteers from the congregation to join us, please!

**Virtual** activities took on a life of their own through the lockdowns. July saw an action-packed three days of fun with our HOLIDAY@home CLUB, providing awesome activities for more than 50 children. Our theme was 'close together or far apart, you are always in our hearts', and we proved we are so much more than just a building by moving all the fun and games @home instead. Children were sent a free craft pack with all materials provided, as well as instructions and top tips on how to have maximum fun. Deborah, Liz, Rosemary and Sue recorded a few how-to videos offering some tips and advice and a bit of comedy too. These were posted on our Facebook page: *Tearaway Tots at Dorset Gardens*, as well as on our website: [dgmc.org.uk](http://dgmc.org.uk) and are still available to view. Harvest@home Club proved just as popular and the packs were filled with free ingredients so everyone could participate. Many families sent in fantastic photos, contributing to a wonderful festival atmosphere! Shrove Tuesday Club was a new pop-up for 2021, with tongue-in-cheek posters reminding us 'We're flipping at home!' And more than 30

children joined us at home for our first Easter Club. The Easter Garden biscuit decorating proved particularly poignant on Easter Sunday.

**Our Christmas Club** was very special: a lovely group of 16 children spending the day in the Sanctuary. We played Christmas carols and made 'Baby Jesus in a candy cane manger.' Chocolate Yule logs were absolutely first class, looking good enough to sell in a cake shop. We're looking ahead to another real-life holiday club this July.



**Huge thanks** as ever to the volunteers who support the wonderful work we do with children and young people at DG. I couldn't manage this on my own and I really appreciate your involvement as we bring fun and laughter to families near and far.

*Liz Neale*

## CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Over the last 12 months three editions of the Newsletter were published; each issue in partnership with our friends at Woodingdean

Methodist Church as well as Dorset Gardens. The Newsletter includes a letter from the Minister and Pastoral page. Special themes were adopted including a focus on *Good News* last winter and the most recent was *Hope Springs Eternal* which contained news from some of our members, sharing stories of hope during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The newsletter remains free of charge and is issued to members and "Friends of Dorset Gardens"; the majority now receive an electronic copy and it is posted on our website. Contributions to the newsletter are always welcomed and my continued thanks to those who have done so in the past.

*Alan Cutting, Editor*

### **CHURCH STEWARDS**

As reported last year the plan to differentiate the role of stewards between dedicated Worship/Vestry stewards and Church/Leadership stewards was carried out and confirmed at the June 2020 Annual Church Meeting. Brandford Osei and Derek Clark opted to be Worship stewards while Beth Whittaker, Steve Preston, Ian Lamb and Sue Harrington stood for Church/Leadership stewards with Graham Wall joining this team. A big thank you to Mikala Benson, who has stepped down, for all her hard work and dedication over the years.

Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom enabled the team to regularly connect online and ensure the business of the church continued and at such an uncertain time there is much to discuss and react to. The focus of our September 2020 online meeting was on arrangements for the service to be held at Dorset Gardens on 11<sup>th</sup> October, our first service since lockdown. A great deal of time and effort went into ensuring the premises were COVID-secure and we were so appreciative of the various volunteers for providing music, flowers, AV and stewarding the service. Although all wore masks, and there was no singing, no refreshments or socialising allowed, it felt good to be back and Revd Deborah Cornish led an impactful service.

For our January meeting we were delighted to be joined by Deeptima Massey, our new Pastoral Secretary, and Jennie Lamb, our new

Treasurer and to hear about and support their plans. Going forward both Deeptima and Jennie will be invited and included in our leadership meetings. We know the future will be different and challenging, but we are optimistic and look forward with faith.

*Steve Preston*

### **FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

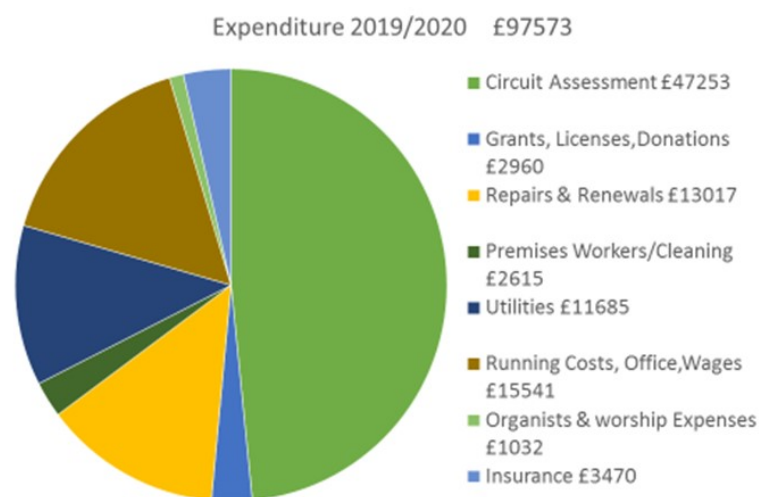
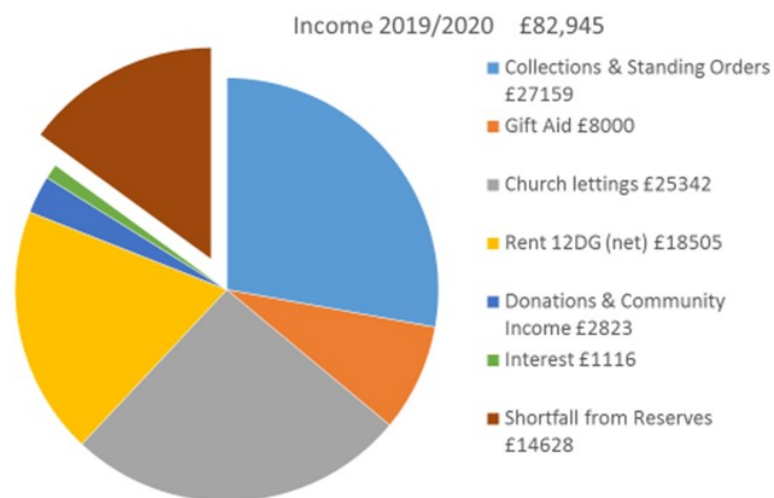
**Finance:** Last year we recognised the need to reduce an ongoing and growing deficit. Whilst many of our members have been generous in increasing their giving our income is much reduced this year due to the loss of lettings with Covid-19 closing our church building in March. Work is ongoing to reduce our costs and some of these savings will begin to show in the 2020/2021 accounts. However, Covid-19 restrictions continue and this will also be a year with much reduced lettings income. The diagrams on the next page show the income and expenses for the September 2019 to August 2020 year, with the separate segment indicating the deficit. A full copy of the accounts is available on request.

Since the financial year end, we have been blessed with a large legacy from the estate of the late Eva King who was a member at DG for many years. In the short term the legacy has been made available as a loan to the Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit, looking forward we need to explore how we will use this money to remember Eva King and to further God's work in our City.

Thanks are due to Vikki Kennedy who has stood down after seven years as our treasurer and to Stuart Neate for preparing the accounts.

*Jennie Lamb, Treasurer*

**Property:** Although the church building has operated under many opening restrictions over the last year, maintenance and security continued to require attention and we are very grateful to Ian Lamb who has taken over as Property Steward looking after Dorset Gardens Church. He has focused on a variety of maintenance jobs as well as regularly checking the building during lockdown.



As a consequence of COVID-19 considerable work was undertaken to create a risk assessment template for the church building and a re-opening of building checklist, utilising material and guidance prepared by the Methodist Church to meet UK government regulations and ensure our duty of care. Physical changes included addition of comprehensive safety signage, furniture and material removal and enhanced cleaning regime. Whilst there was a major reduction of user

groups able to use the premises, for those that were allowed to return, individual meetings were held by F&P reps to ensure all safety and security protocols would be observed plus provide support and advice. These risk assessments needed to be monitored and updated, particularly as national rules and guidance changed throughout the year.

As reported last year cleaning had been outsourced to an external contract cleaning company, however, many time-consuming issues including unsatisfactory standard of cleaning, unreliable staff and poor customer service led to a termination of this contract and a replacement provider sought. A new firm commenced before Christmas 2020, with an experienced and dedicated cleaner, and results and feedback so far indicate an improvement of service and reliability.

We are indebted to Paul Harrington who retired after many years as Property Steward for the church, however, we are pleased to benefit from his knowledge and experience as he will continue to support as Property Steward covering the flats at 12 Dorset Gardens. In this role he has coordinated external painting of the building as well as a quinquennial survey as required by the Methodist Church. Although a number of issues were identified and quickly addressed, considering the building dates from about 1830, the report was generally good. In a challenging property market, we have continued to benefit from consistent rentals.

*Steve Preston, Secretary, Finance & Property Committee*

## BRIGHTON & HOVE METHODIST CIRCUIT

The Circuit churches have continued to meet through interactive services and meetings throughout the year. The tech team have developed a wide range of Zoom skills as a result and we have been very grateful for their time and talent in enabling our 'virtual reality'. The circuit leadership team have met with church stewards to explore the shape and function of the Circuit as we navigate our exit from Covid restrictions. There is an expectation that the online services will continue. The ability to connect with those unable to travel to church or

living at a distance from Brighton and Hove has been a revelation. The real question is how each church uses its experiences during lockdown positively to inform its future focus, a question that will be explored over the coming months through prayer and consultation.

The impact of the restrictions on the Circuit Finances has been severe, with both income and reserves reduced by approximately 25% across the Circuit. The Church Treasurers have met together to produce a financial recovery plan using the Circuit Reserves to provide stability and support for the individual churches through to August 2022. As a Circuit we are very fortunate to be in this position. Our ability to weather this storm is thanks to the generosity of our membership and the prudence of those charged with managing our resources.

From 2022 the shape of ministry across all the churches will change as Andy, Deborah and the Circuit consider future plans. The generosity of Eva King and the thoughtfulness of Dorset Gardens has enabled us to proceed with our plan to appoint a Circuit Operations Manager. We are indeed looking forward to exciting times ahead.

*Stella Goddard, Circuit Steward*

## ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The intended deposit last year had to be deferred. I am contacted by people doing historical research, including family and local, several times during the year, and people also kindly give me material to deposit.

Mr Martin Robbins was left over 60 years of sermons preached by his old Headmaster Mr M. J. Cammish, a Methodist Local Preacher. Mr Cammish had been President of the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT). When the NAHT held their Conference in Brighton in 1979 he preached at the Dome (18 March 1979). Mr Robbins has kindly sent us the text of this sermon.

In the space of a few days, I had two different requests from the USA regarding the Revd Frank Thewlis, Superintendent of the Brighton

(Dome Mission) circuit, 1967-1975. There is now a biographical entry on the Revd Frank Thewlis on Wikipedia.

Cynthia Tudor has given me for deposit a number of items connected with the Revd Dr John Tudor's ministry here (1975-1981). Amongst these items is a manuscript report from a Class Leader on the members of their class. When this is deposited it will be placed under the usual 30-year closure. The Revd Deborah Cornish has given me for deposit orders of service for funerals.

The obituary of the Revd John Horner appears in the Minutes of Conference, 2020. He was the oldest surviving minister to have served in Brighton and Hove and was in the Dome Mission circuit, 1954-1955.

*Mick Hickman, Church Archival Officer*



## SECTION 3: SERVICE

*The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.*

## ACTION FOR CHILDREN

A year of lockdown has much reduced the income of our Methodist Children's Charity at the same time as increasing the need for their services. It is unclear at the time of writing if we will be able to meet on 11<sup>th</sup> July, official Action for Children Sunday, but hopefully there will be an effort to donate a monetary gift either in person to myself or via the church.

We are hopeful of reinstating the circuit concert with the Brighton Male Voice Choir in September or October 2021 at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church. This concert was cancelled in May 2020. More information will be circulated as soon as it is known.

*Jean Morley*

## TWELVE STEP GROUPS

The church continues to provide a safe space for specific twelve-step self-help groups based on a set of guiding principles for recovery from



addictive, compulsive, or other behavioural problems and originally developed by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). In addition to AA, we also host Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Co-Dependents Anonymous meetings at Dorset Gardens, which reflect the growing needs within our local community. All have worked within Government COVID guidelines resulting in online alternatives or socially distanced onsite meetings where possible.

*Steve Preston*

### **BRIGHTON'S PASSION**

Dorset Gardens started its involvement with 'Brighton's Passion' in 2010, and last year I was able to report that matters were still 'very much in hand'.

In February this year we had a report from Poppy Szkiler that both Tony Jordan, who is writing the script, and his wife have had COVID-19. I am pleased to be able to say that both have recovered. Taking this news into account, together with further inevitable delays and changes, the Church Council decided to withdraw from the Project and to ask for the return of our investment of £15,000.

Poppy fully understands and accepts our position. She has already made the first repayment, which are from her own funds. The last repayment will be made in August 2022. The Church Council has written to Tony and his wife to wish them well in their recovery, and also to Poppy with our very best wishes for the eventual success of this Project. We look forward to seeing it come to fruition.

I have also written to the Revd Cynthia Park and the Revd Robin Selmes, the ministers who have also been involved, to explain what has happened. They have each replied with full understanding and support.

*Mick Hickman, Church Council Officer for Brighton's Passion*

### **THE CLARE PROJECT**

The Clare Project (TCP) offers support and social activities for transgender, non-binary, intersex and gender-variant adults. Having

been meeting at Dorset Gardens for fifteen years, they set up an office in the basement community room at Dorset Gardens at the beginning of last year. Since April 2020 the key officers have been working from their homes, however they have continued to offer amazing support via various online platforms, with occasional one to one meet-ups when absolutely necessary. This support has included 1-2-1 psychosexual therapy sessions to ten of their members, alongside continuing weekly drop-ins and monthly workshops.

Further to this they have also taken on three additional contracted team members, to encourage their sustainable growth as demand for their services continues to increase. Despite the challenges the last year has brought to TCP, their overall engagement has continued to grow and diversify, and they look forward to re-engaging with the community as opportunities arise.

*Revd Deborah Cornish*

### **COUNSELLING: DORSET GARDENS ADULT COUNSELLING PROJECT**



It is incredible to think that it was seven years ago when Revd Robin Selmes first approached us to run a counselling project at Dorset Gardens.

At the time we were part of Dolphin House Charity and working in an outreach project at seven city centre primary schools. We met with Robin via our mutual work at Carlton Hill School to discuss a service that could provide much needed therapeutic support to parents and carers. We all recognised the considerable strains experienced by some adults in the course of their parenting, particularly when they themselves had struggles. We also all recognised the knock-on positive impact that support of the adults could have for their children.

In the Summer term of 2014, we began to see our first clients. Since that time the generous funding from Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

has enabled over 84 adults to access 12 weeks of free therapy. This in turn has influenced the lives of over 140 children.

The feedback from adults accessing the service has been wonderful and provided strong evidence of the benefits and support that has been provided. Over 74% of the cases seen reported significant improvements in their well-being after just 12 sessions.

Here are a few of the feedback comments we have received:-

- *I really appreciate the help I have received; it has helped me to become stronger and more able to move forward in my life with more positivity*
- *I am hugely grateful for this service. My life with my children is improved, I am happier, they are happier – thank you, thank you.*
- *Thank you so much. I will be eternally grateful for this counselling – it has been so very helpful in terms of me living a better life.*

We are indebted to the Dorset Gardens Community and the Methodist Church for supporting this project over the last seven years.

Much has changed during our time working together, not least of which occurring from the challenges of the last 12 months during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The location at Dorset Gardens has provided us with an excellent confidential and comfortable place in which to carry out the therapy, and the warmth and safety of the building and its community has significantly contributed to its success.

We would wish to pay particular thanks to Robin Selmes and Deborah Cornish for their unwavering support of the work and to Angela and all the team at Dorset Gardens in making us feel so welcome.

On behalf of all our clients thank you to everyone who has financially supported this project. It has offered life-changing support to many and positively contributed to the mental well-being of the families in our city.

*Alison Lucas & Ruth Lazarus*

## **LUNCH POSITIVE**

The year started with the pausing of the HIV lunch club and supper group to comply with Covid-19 measures. The team at Lunch Positive immediately adapted and scaled up their services to provide weekly deliveries of cooked food and groceries to people at home who were unable to afford food, to cook or shop for themselves, self-isolating or shielding. This support reached existing service users and many new people, particularly those with complex health issues. Still continuing at this time, the food outreach service has so far provided over 30,000 meals to over 260 people in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. Alongside this the charity introduced and has continued to develop regular 'companion phone calls' to people who are socially isolated or lonely. This is now a permanent service and has also led Lunch Positive to form a new community HIV befriending service in partnership with loneliness charity Together Co. As opening opportunities have allowed, Lunch Positive has provided a much-needed drop-in community food stall and takeaway food to people, and occasional shared meal sessions, including a Christmas lunch.

This year the volunteer team has given over 11,000 hours of time, all directed towards improving the health and wellbeing of people with HIV, especially those for whom Covid has exacerbated loneliness, anxiety and poor health. Lunch Positive has appeared as a case study in the Sussex-wide report on the impact of the voluntary sector in supporting people's health during the Covid-19 pandemic. They want to thank everyone at DGMC for their support in enabling these important frontline activities over the last year.

*Gary Pargeter*

## **OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS**

During the course of this past twelve months, we have kept in touch with the various groups that use the premises. Some of those groups have written a report and you can read for yourself what they have been doing. Other groups have used the premises when COVID-restrictions

have permitted, this includes the two performing art groups: Young Actors and Freckle Productions. Others, such as Dance for Parkinsons and Art & Friends are looking forward to returning. Sadly, Slimming World and Gentle Exercise have ceased meeting and will not be returning to the premises.

Members of the Finance and Property Group have assisted many of these groups with their Covid-secure risk assessments in order to facilitate their return to the premises.

*Revd Deborah Cornish*

## **STUDENT WORK**

*Our aim is to connect with and express to students and staff the love of God through our actions and interactions with them.*

I work with the Revd Cynthia Park (Lead Faith & Spirituality Adviser) at University of Brighton (UoB) and the Revd Dan Woodhouse at University of Sussex (US) alongside teams from other traditions and faiths.

Our regular activities include:

- Online Crafty Drop-in (UoB) weekly on a Thursday for students and staff [New]
- Regular Chaplaincy/F&S team meetings (US and UoB) via Teams and Zoom.
- Regular Race and Faith team meetings (UoB) via Zoom
- The 'foodbank' at US continues via Meeting House Administrator, Janine, going in to receive food and distribute to students, I continue to support her and check in with her regularly.
- Regular Facebook postings, Tweets and posts to Instagram (less so)

In addition to the above are these regular but less frequent events, all held online over the past year. These included a Carol Service (joint UoB/US), Holocaust Memorial Day (joint UoB/US), FairTrade Fortnight, One World Week & Mental Health Awareness week, Graduate Show & prize-giving (UoB) and Remembrance Day (joint UoB/US). A Mindfulness course was offered by the Buddhist Faith & Spirituality adviser (UoB).

New initiatives this last year included:

- In association with the Race & Faith Team, we put out a series of blog posts through Holy Week which were then shared to Twitter and Facebook. We are continuing this for Muslims during Ramadan.
- We hope to help with food distribution (delivery socially distanced) for meals to break the fast to Muslim students during Ramadan.
- As the Crafty Drop-in is proving popular, it is being extended to US on Fridays.
- When we are permitted back on campus both drop-ins will become in person meetings.

Our funding to extend the Arts prize has been reallocated; it proved too difficult to put together a structure for the prize to be extended across the whole University (UoB). In the meantime, we have been contacted by SSGTs (Student Support and Guidance Tutors) and a student support manager, asking if we can help students in need who fall outside University emergency funding criteria, but who are in immediate short-term need. We have therefore created our 'Crisis Fund' from the prize money and have already helped two students. It is something like a benevolent fund and we make it clear it is coming from the Methodist Church and not the University. We also offer advice on where else to get further help e.g., food banks. We feel this is, in many ways, a better use of the money and sits comfortably with our Methodist commitment to social responsibility.

We are really looking forward to getting back on campus, although this may be a little while yet.

We hope to have a dedicated space allocated to us (UoB) soon which will allow us to extend our offering (kitchenette, private meeting space etc). Also, we plan to offer a day in the countryside "Green Wellbeing" at Saddlescombe Farm which will be open to students and staff, but because of current restrictions will probably have to be in October. There is indoor space available if the weather is bad and if we are permitted.

Thank you, as ever, for all your help and support.

*Sue Harrington, Circuit Student Development Worker  
(N.B. A Circuit appointment)*

### **SUSSEX HIV CHAPLAINCY**

This year's Chaplaincy activities have inevitably been more limited, mainly because of the reduction in community gatherings. The World Aids Day Vigil was held online, with the reading of names and speeches recorded in advance and edited and broadcast on behalf of the Brighton and Hove World Aids Day Community Partnership by David Fray from 'More to me than HIV'. Do check out their online exhibition at <http://moretomethanhiv.life/>

I remain a Trustee of the Martin Fisher Foundation and of Lunch Positive, and continue to provide pastoral and spiritual care to people living with, or affected by, HIV.

*Revd Heather Leake Date*

### **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: 14<sup>TH</sup> BRIGHTON SCOUT GROUP**

The restrictions regarding the Covid pandemic have meant that all sections were rarely able to meet face-to-face this year. When restrictions were eased, we were able to hold some outdoor meetings at the District Camp Site at Parkwood near Poynings in September/October which were very successful.

The Scout Troop have held regular Zoom meetings via the internet on Monday evenings throughout that have been well attended. The Cub Pack did hold some Zoom meetings but as attendances were poor, they did not continue. The Beaver Colony were invited to join the Cub Zoom meetings but no one joined in. It is difficult to assess numbers in each of the sections. We believe that the Scout numbers have probably stayed stable, but think we may have lost around 30% of the children in Cubs and Beavers.

In our Leadership Team Sophie Stamoulis has now left for University and Ava Donnelly completed her three months Service for D of E. Teresa

Russell has also stood down due to starting a new job. This leaves us a bit thin on the ground for leaders particularly in Beavers. Peter Mooring has stood down as Chair of our Executive Committee and is no longer a member. Euan Freeman, a Scout parent, has now taken over as Chair and Nick Cochrane, a Beaver parent, has joined the committee.

The Group's big fund raising refreshment stop on Ditchling Beacon for the London to Brighton Bike Ride in June has again been cancelled due to Covid so we have no fund raising in the pipeline. Fortunately, we did receive a grant from the Scout Association which has alleviated our financial deficits. The Group's AGM was eventually held via Zoom.



*Ian Lamb, Group Scout Leader*

### **PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

#### **Living with Lockdown: (How Long, O Lord, How Long?)**

Not long after the pandemic really started to bite in March 2020, I received a text from my GP's surgery followed by a letter from the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Because of my age and a pre-existing medical condition, I was classified by the NHS as very vulnerable to the virus. The letter informed me that, should I contract Covid 19, I was likely to become extremely ill and would probably be hospitalised. I was advised to remain at home, to avoid mixing socially and to maintain a scrupulously strict regime of personal hygiene, hand washing, etc. Although pleased that the NHS was monitoring my personal health so assiduously, it wasn't exactly good news.

My next series of contacts cheered me up greatly. The first was a note through the door from a young woman in our street, whom we did not know, informing us that she was starting a residents' Covid-19 support group. She gave her email address and phone number and asked us to contact her with any needs we may have, such as shopping, phone calls for company, etc, during lockdown. Her note was followed by three others from our immediate neighbours, giving their contact details and



also offering to shop for us or meet any other needs we may have. All of these neighbours are much younger than us with families and responsibilities of their own.

Our own children then engaged in role reversal, becoming parents to us, telling us to keep safe by staying at home and that they would care for us. We had to email them with a weekly shopping list which they then delivered, ringing the doorbell, placing the shopping in the porch and retreating several metres so we could hold a distanced conversation. It was so frustrating not being able to thank them with a hug and a kiss as we normally would.

Fortunately, we have a garden, so were not confined to the house itself, which made us think of those trapped in the upper stories of blocks of flats without even a balcony. The telephone and laptop became real lifelines; we spoke to our children every other day and called and emailed other family members and friends regularly. As the weather improved, we started to take regular walks for fresh air and exercise, at first just around the streets near us, then to the open spaces of Coney Wood, Windmill Ridge, Green Ridge and Withdean Park. Following the seasons in those green spaces was so rewarding; watching buds bursting forth into leaf, blossom arriving, the new fruit growing in its place and finally everything changing colour, dying and dropping. Birdsong was a special treat as it was so prolific and unusually audible because of the reduction in traffic noise. We did the same walk only last week and it was just as if we had returned to last March; bare branches with only the slightest hint of new buds arriving. It felt like a re-run of Groundhog Day.

Ten years ago, I started to write my life story for our children and grandchildren but never got far with it, so I began again and this time brought it right up to date. It took me almost nine months and has now been published under the title "From Chapel to Chief Constable; Principles, Politics and Public Service" and is available via Amazon and in Kindle version. The process itself caused me to think carefully about what really is important in life. The pandemic seems to have brought out

both the best and the worst in humankind. Thankfully our personal experience has been of the best, with the worst restricted to the TV news. One incredibly good piece of news was the rapid regulatory approval of a series of new vaccines and the successful roll-out of an inoculation programme for the most vulnerable members of the population. Fortunately for us our GP's surgery was one of the first in Brighton to offer the vaccine and we received our first dose before Christmas with the second three weeks later at the beginning of January.

In normal times I'm a member of a variety of social groups, none of which can now meet face to face. Some have discovered the merits of Zoom, although it's hard to imagine an online replacement for ballroom dancing. I used to get through a couple of books a week from the local library but that's no longer available and E-books, although better than nothing, are not a satisfactory alternative for me. I enjoy having a real book in my hands, turning the pages back and forth. I would be lost without my daily newspaper and BBC Radio 4. Regrettably, time with other people has had to be replaced by solitary pursuits such as crosswords, Sudoku, 1000-piece jigsaws and watching Netflix.

Kathleen and I are grateful for the regular Methodist Church worship sheet and join the weekly Circuit service via Google, but do miss worshipping at DG each week as part of a physical congregation. Social distancing for worship in church seems to be a contradiction in terms and what is 'born in song' Methodism without Charles Wesley hymns? An old 'Wayside Pulpit' poster I remember from many years ago read, "You may worship God in solitude, but you can only serve Him in the multitude." That may or may not be true, but I sorely miss communal worship.

Given so much time to think, I am more than ever convinced that faith centred on belief alone is both insufficient and inadequate. That is my stance and I don't expect everyone to agree with me. My faith does not depend on dogma, doctrine or belief. I do not need a creed. What I do with my life is the important thing, not what I claim to believe. It's how

I relate to my fellow human beings; how I try to live my life as a follower of Jesus. He didn't call us to worship him, he called us to follow him. I take inspiration from John Wesley's instruction to his followers all those years ago, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

*Dr Tony Leonard, March 2021*

### **A Different Perspective on Lockdown**

**Worship:** As my daughter provided me with a tablet programmed to receive YouTube, I have been able to access a variety of worship experiences as well as the Circuit one. They have been remarkably uplifting and encouraging either as live broadcasts or pre-videoed ones and connected me with some of my previous churches including the one where I grew up and received my initial note to preach! These have made Sunday very special and compensated in part for the absence of live worship at DG.

**Bible Conversations:** We have attempted to keep these going throughout by circulating some suggestions for study and reflection at home or when it was possible for two or three to gather together and the weather was suitable to meet for this in the park. These included "Problems in the early church according to 1 Corinthians" and some of the shorter books of the bible, e.g. Jonah, Ruth and Esther. There is a post-Easter series entitled "The Return from Exile".

**Pastoral Care:** Having time on my hands has been one of the benefits of lockdown as it has meant having plenty of opportunities to keep in touch with my pastoral care group as well as other members and friends, either by phone or email. This has made up in part for not seeing them at church or visiting them in their homes and in many cases given the opportunity for longer conversations rather than fleeting greetings we offer each other when we meet at church. At Christmas and Easter, thanks to those who organized it, I was also able to take gifts to some of our more vulnerable friends.

**Fellowship:** Not being able to gather for worship, prayer or just social events is the feature of church life that we have missed most in this last year perhaps despite all the other ways we have created of keeping in touch.

As a journalist wrote the other day in a different context, "Nothing can replicate the warmth of being together in silence". This is just what I feel we experience in corporate worship and our Thursday prayer and praise service as well as our after-worship chatter or fellowship group. It will be good to be able to be there again and feel that warmth of being together.

Another gap in our togetherness has been not sharing in communion. When last Easter the Archbishop broadcast a communion service from his kitchen, I provided myself with some bread and juice and shared in it following the liturgy and all the responses and felt perfectly connected only later discovering that this sadly was not allowed! However, I have to admit that whenever the opportunity has arisen, I have done so again. Sharing in the love feast has been good but it isn't the same so it will be a blessing indeed when that live communion service can be resumed.

*Cynthia Tudor*



## THE METHODIST CHURCH STANDARD FORM OF ACCOUNTS

Dorset Gardens Brighton

Church

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**31 August 2020**

Brighton and Hove	Circuit	Circuit no	36/12
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**Registered Charity - Charity Registration number**

1160211

**If not a registered charity Her Majesty's Revenue and  
Customs Gift Aid number**

(The HMRC number is equivalent to a registered charity number in terms of evidence of charitable status and may be used to give to donors or grant funders wishing to see evidence of the organisation's charitable status. Methodist charities in England and Wales that are not registered charities are excepted from registration under Statutory Instrument 2014 No.242)

**Minister:**

Rev Deborah Cornish

**Church Stewards:**

Mrs Susan Harrington	Miss Elizabeth Whittaker
Mr Brandford Osei	Ms Mikala Benson
Mr Ian Lamb	Mr Derek Clark
Mr Steven Preston	

**Treasurer:**

Mrs Vikki Kennedy



## SECTION A

Unrestricted  
FundsRestricted  
FundsTotals this  
yearTotals last  
year

		£	£	£	£
a1	<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>Note</b>			
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	36,528	56	<b>36,584</b>	44,972
a3	Bank and CFB interest and Investment income	1,116	662	<b>1,778</b>	3,175
a4	Lettings	25,342		<b>25,342</b>	37,075
a5	Other receipts	19,959	76	<b>20,035</b>	25,883
a6	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>82,945</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>83,739 (a7)</b>	<b>111,105</b>

## SECTION B

b1	<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
b2	Circuit Assessment or Share	47,253	10,518	<b>57,771</b>	65,751
b3	Donations	2,960		<b>2,960</b>	3,357
b4	Repairs and Maintenance	14,226		<b>14,226</b>	93,525
b5	Utilities (Insurances, water charges, heating & lighting)	15,155		<b>15,155</b>	14,372
b6	Cleaning	2,615		<b>2,615</b>	7,108
b7	Other payments	16,943	13,858	<b>30,801</b>	30,467
b8	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>99,152</b>	<b>24,376</b>	<b>123,528 (b9)</b>	<b>214,580</b>

## SECTION C

c1	<b>NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(a6-b8)</b>	<b>(16,207)</b>	<b>(23,582)</b>	<b>(39,789)</b>	<b>(103,475)</b>
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		127,751	167,120	<b>294,871 (c6)</b>	398,346
c3	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(c1+c2)</b>	<b>111,544</b>	<b>143,538</b>	<b>255,082</b>	<b>294,871</b>
c4	Transfers and adjustments		655	(655)		
c5	<b>TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>(c3+c4)</b>	<b>112,199</b>	<b>142,883</b>	<b>255,082 (c8)</b>	<b>294,871 (c6)</b>

## SECTION D

## FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures above)	£	£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year	1,202	851
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations	2,159	1,260
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations	3,193	909
d4	<b>BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>1,202</b>



**SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL****SECTION E** Please follow the Guidance Notes to complete this page

Summary of the Church accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020 and Internal Organisations reporting to the Church Council/Church Meeting. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any Methodist purpose. This section must be completed to arrive at the gross income and expenditure totals of the Church. If gross income exceeds the Accruals threshold, then the Accruals method of accounting AND A DIFFERENT FORM must be used to report the accounts (see Methodist website). Please refer to the guidance notes regarding transfers between the District and connected District Organisations.

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts/ Payments	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1						
e2						
e3						
e4						
e5						
e6						
e7						
Sub total of Internal Organisations funds					(e11)	(e12)
Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	83,739 (a7)	123,528 (b9)	(39,789)	(c7)	294,871 (c6)	255,082 (c8)
<b>TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH</b>	<b>83,739</b>	<b>123,528</b>	<b>(39,789)</b>		<b>294,871 (x)</b>	<b>255,082 (y)</b>
Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>				

**SECTION F****STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES****CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 August 2020**

	OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1 Cash in hand	45,559	28,964
f2 Bank Current Account		
f3 Bank Deposit Account		
f4 Central Finance Board	69,150	61,056
f5 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	152,569	128,447
f6 Other funds	27,593	36,615
f7 <b>SUB TOTAL - Church accounts</b>	<b>294,871 (c6)</b>	<b>255,082 (c8)</b>
Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	(e11)	(e12)
<b>f9 TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH</b>	<b>294,871 (x)</b>	<b>255,082 (y)</b>

**SECTION G****OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES**

	At 1 September 2019	At 31 August 2020
g1 Investments (include Endowments)		
g2 Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)		4,710,817
g3 Other Assets		
g4 Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end		
g5 Other Liabilities		

f4 Include only Funds held at the Central Finance Board

f5 Include only Funds held at Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

g1 Include any other investments (not the cash element of TMCP trusts accounts this is included in line f5)



## Declarations and Scrutiny

I confirm i have recorded all the income and expenditure from the records of the Church and passed them to the external examiner who has prepared the accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020 and that they include all the funds under the control of the Church Council

Signature of treasurer NW Kennedy ..... Date 2/3/2021

Name and address of treasurer ..... Mrs V Kennedy 13 the e Van Alen 24-30 Marine Parade Brighton BN2 1WP

### Presentation to the Church trustees

I confirm that the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020 were/will be\* presented to the meeting of the Church trustees held on .18th September 2020

Signature of the Chair of the meeting  .....

Name of the Chair of the meeting .... Rev Deborah Cornish

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

Charity Number . 1160211

### Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Dorset Gardens Methodist ..... Church for the year ended 31 August 2020 set out on pages ... to .... As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Name of Church .. Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

### 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 (other than that disclosed below\*) which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

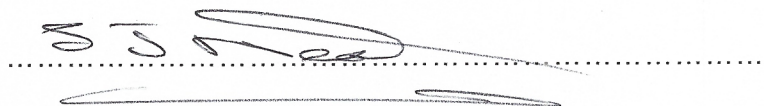
- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

[the [the

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.

I have/have not\* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner .....



Name of independent examiner ..... Stuart Neate

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner ..... FMAAT retired

Name of firm (where appropriate) .... N/A

Address 23 Surrenden Lodge Surrenden Road Brighton

..... Post Code .... BN1 7QB

Date .... 29-Oct-20

Sep-20



Name of Church .. Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

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Dorset Gardens Brighton

Church

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**31 August 2020**

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Name of the Chair of the meeting .... Rev Deborah Cornish

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

Charity Number . 1160211

### Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Dorset Gardens Methodist ..... Church for the year ended 31 August 2020 set out on pages ... to .... As the Church's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Name of Church .. Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

### 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 (other than that disclosed below\*) which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

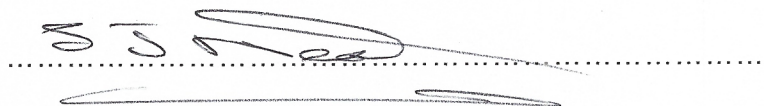
- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

[the [the

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.

I have/have not\* obtained independent verification of all investments with the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes or held in other trusts, bank balances and funds at the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church which are individually in excess of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) at the balance sheet date.

Signature of independent examiner .....



Name of independent examiner ..... Stuart Neate

Relevant professional qualification of independent examiner ..... FMAAT retired

Name of firm (where appropriate) .... N/A

Address 23 Surrenden Lodge Surrenden Road Brighton

..... Post Code .... BN1 7QB

Date .... 29-Oct-20

Sep-20



Name of Church .. Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

### Independent Examiner's Statement

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