

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF GODALMING UNITARIANS

For the period 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2021

Overview

This has been another challenging year for our community as the pandemic has ebbed and flowed around us. This report covers the period from autumn 2020, a difficult Christmas period and up to the end of summer 2021 when we were able to get back to a more normal situation.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Godalming Unitarians continued to rise to the challenge, meeting digitally online, in chapel and with hybrid services accommodating both online and in person worship. Under the leadership of our minister, the Rev Sheena Gabriel with support from the trustees, we have continued to offer a spiritual home for enquiring minds. Unfortunately, we have had to restrict some of our activities but hope there is still something for everyone to enjoy.

Although not strictly covered in this report, we are sad to say that Sheena felt the need to resign for health reasons in early October. We are incredibly grateful for the many years of service that she has put into the chapel and wish her well for all her future endeavours.

This year has been a difficult time for many organisations financially, but we have been able to claim back some of the shortfall due to Covid from the previous year from our insurance provider. We are also very grateful to the many people who, over the years, through generous giving, donation, bequests and financial management have made sure we have a strong foundation and we hope this will continue into the future. Full discussion of the financial year is included later at the end of this report.

About Godalming Unitarians CIO

Godalming Unitarians is a member-led democratic group. Our aims and purposes are to promote in Godalming and surrounding areas a free and inquiring religion in accordance with the principles of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches ("the GA"). We do this through 'the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition'.

Achievements and Performance

Worship, meditation, and prayer

Worship is at the heart of any religious community and Godalming Unitarians continued to offer regular Sunday services that are inspiring, uplifting and also consoling through the good times and the bad. The trustees made a decision to limit our provision to three or four Sunday services each month, keeping one Sunday free. This was due to the added complexity of offering Zoom and "hybrid" services.

Our half-time minister, Sheena has generally been able to conduct two services each month –

whether in the chapel or online or more recently, combining both. We appreciate the efforts required to provide hybrid worship in chapel whilst allowing remote participants to join via Zoom. Particular thanks to Sheena and also Rob Oulton for the in-chapel technical support. Also, thanks to the generosity of a chapel member, we have been able to benefit from a large monitor in the chapel for these services which has been invaluable.

At the start of May the trustees agreed to a cautious re-opening of the chapel for services. Since then, we have been tweaking the format of services in the chapel. Initially these were by invite only for those who may not be confident attending online. Later we have been able to open up chapel services to all who wish to attend with the option to attend virtually on Zoom. Hopefully we can continue to refine this approach as restrictions may come and go over the next year.

As before, we have benefited from a pool of talented members and visiting speakers, including interfaith ministers and lay preachers, to lead Sunday services. Special thanks go to interfaith ministers, Edie Campbell, Jenny Miller and Lindsay Stevens. Also thanks to our lay preachers and service leaders including Shirley Wardell and Nicola Young who have often stepped in at short notice. We value their contributions and also the work of Nicola Young, our preaching coordinator, who has ensured our preaching rota is complete.

Weekly meditation, now in its 14th year, continues to be led by Rob Oulton and Sheena and is much appreciated by those who attend in person and more recently via Zoom. We have continued to hold occasional services of a reflective/interfaith nature including music, meditation and readings. Sheena and Rob Oulton were unable to offer their usual Good Friday service and lunch - but instead led a service via Zoom and were joined by Unitarians from other congregations.

Our monthly Prayer Circle group concluded in October, offering fellowship and support in a contemplative environment. As has become our tradition, we offered two Christmas services this year: a candle-lit carol Zoom service led by Sheena and a more peaceful, contemplative service the following week also led by Sheena in the chapel by invite and on Zoom.

For those who do not wish to meet in person or online, we have made services available to read-through where possible, via email, and a few hard copies have been printed and hand-delivered to those not on email. Service recordings have also been made available for streaming online where possible.

Religious education

Due to Covid we have not been able to offer engagement groups exploring faith issues but hope these may resume at some point. We also have not been able to provide a Children's Programme but have enjoyed contributions from the younger members of our community via Zoom and also video clips they have produced.

In November, a remembrance service took place from the chapel (via Zoom due to the 2nd lockdown). In January, Edie Campbell led a Sunday service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. At the end of May, Shirley and David Faraday led a climate change themed service on Zoom with original music recorded at the hall.

Pastoral support and Rites of Passage

Our community is open to people of all faiths and none and it is worth reiterating that there is no dogma or set of beliefs required for those wishing to join or attend Godalming Unitarians.

During the year we have said goodbye to a few members or friends who have moved away from the area or left for health or personal reasons. Membership at the end of the period covered here remains stable at 33 members. We would also like to encourage those who may be interested to join as members. Those who prefer to remain as friends or simply commit to occasional groups or activities are, of course, always welcome.

During the year Sheena conducted one (same-sex) wedding. Another wedding couple chose to postpone their ceremony, and 2 child naming ceremonies were unable to go ahead due to Covid restrictions. Thankfully, Sheena was not required to conduct any funerals for Chapel members.

The congregation's informal pastoral support network, sensitively led by Dana Daniels, and supported by Christine Hayhurst continued its valuable work behind the scenes, enabling those unable to attend to keep in touch with chapel life.

Wider Unitarian involvement

Godalming Unitarians continues to send delegates to the annual meeting of the General Assembly, which again took place as an online event this year.

We also maintain a presence at the annual FUSE event (the Festival of Unitarians in the South-East), and will continue to support other events as they restart post-Covid or continue as online only events.

Interfaith and ecumenical relationships

Sheena has continued to represent Unitarians at the Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum (GGIFF). In November she chaired their annual Interfaith service (on Zoom), with contributions from different faiths exploring the theme of mental health and well-being during Covid times.

Sheena also participated in an ecumenical 'Rainbow' service and has supported a new 'Open Table' initiative locally (part of an ecumenical Christian network seeking to provide inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ within churches).

Outreach

The monthly Community Art/Cuppa group has taken a break this past year due to Covid restrictions. During the break Pam Cookney tried to keep in touch with participants, a small group met informally over the summer, and sessions resumed in September.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 interfered in our regular tea-party in memory of Jo Cox although we were able to have a family friendly service followed by a picnic outside in June. Surrey Pride this year was hosted in Godalming and we were able to support this event in person in late September with a stand in the park and a colourful turnout in the parade (thanks to Lizzie Baumberg for her placard making workshop and designing the flyers and T shirts).

In September the Chapel opened its doors for Heritage Open Day and welcomed a steady stream of visitors. Thanks to Christine and Bill Hayhurst for organising the displays and to all who helped with the set-up, welcoming of guests and serving refreshments.

Our premises have historically been a well-used resource within the community for meetings of U3A groups, healers, dowsers, yoga and tai chi enthusiasts, ukulele players and neighbourhood groups. Some of these groups have been able to return to the hall as restrictions have eased.

Helping others in need is a demonstration of our commitment to look beyond ourselves. For online special services we encourage participants to give directly to the charities concerned. From September we have been able to offer refreshments after the service, and have restarted collecting coffee-time donations.

Social activities

Our activities groups help to create community. The Sunday walking group was paused due to Covid restrictions during the period of this report, but we have since been able to restart regular walks again.

The book group continued to meet regularly in person or online and discussed an eclectic mix of novels. The Ukulele group set up by members Shirley Wardell and David Faraday is now independent of the chapel but still includes some of our members who enjoyed playing and performing music together and on Zoom.

The regular Tuesday afternoon Zoom “chat” continued up until the Summer, providing social interaction through the lockdown period. Thanks to Sheena for hosting and facilitating this. Connecting online has been very beneficial for keeping up our spirits – especially for those living alone who have limited opportunities for social interaction.

The Godalming Pride placard workshop was another social activity we were able to run in this period.

Volunteers

We thank all the volunteers who work hard behind the scenes to keep chapel life going – from meeting and greeting, to providing refreshments, flowers, gardening, DIY and many other tasks. Particular thanks go to Rob Oulton for managing the buildings along with the premises team (Christine Hayhurst, Christine Martin and Paul Richards). Rob has also stepped in as onsite tech operator for live broadcasts from the chapel.

Thanks also to the trustees for their dedication and contribution to the smooth running of Godalming Unitarians in all areas of activity.

Ministry

The trustees wish to thank Sheena again for yet another year of fine spiritual leadership and for all her hard work and commitment, especially given the recent challenging circumstances and her health issues.

Governance

During the year, Christine Martin has continued as Chair of the trustees. We currently have just seven trustees so are keen for new members to join us to help keep everything running smoothly. We are a friendly and cohesive bunch. The normal serving period for Trustees is three years according to our constitution, and being a trustee does not need to be a particularly onerous

responsibility.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2020-2021

In the year to 30 September 2021 total receipts exceeded total payments resulting in an overall surplus of £5,786. A deficit of £10,630 had been budgeted for but several factors combined to avoid this dire prediction.

The two main reasons that the expected deficit turned into a surplus were a) planned maintenance work, particularly on the chimney, was not undertaken and b) a hoped for, but uncertain insurance pay-out was received.

Repeated lock-downs, as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, meant that lettings *were sporadic for most of the year and even lower than last year. Fortunately, the* Supreme Court's decision in the "Business Interruption Insurance Test Case" was in favour of policyholders, and as a result we were able to claim on our insurance and received a substantial interim payment in August. Our claim will be finally and fully settled in the near future, though at this point it is not known if the final amount will exceed the interim payment already received.

As with last year, and again as a result of the pandemic, expenditure on conferences, utilities, musicians and visiting preachers were all lower than usual.

As always, we are very grateful to our members and friends for their generous support during another challenging year; also to the Trustees of the Highgate Hill Unitarian Church Fund and the Trustees of the General Baptist Assembly.

Finally, our particular thanks to the following individuals:

- David Daniels for his continuing assistance to the Treasurer.
- Adam Baumberg, Paul Richards and Christine Martin for their support with on-line and in-person banking.
- Rob Oulton for, amongst his many other duties, overseeing lettings of Hall, Chapel and Cottage.
- Jeff Teagle, for his ongoing guidance and support and for once again acting as our Independent Examiner.

Administrative information

Godalming Unitarians is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered by the Charity Commission with number 1166019.

GODALMING UNITARIANS
Receipts & Payments Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2021

| | Notes | Restricted Funds £ | Unrestricted Funds £ | Total 2020-21 £ | Total 2019-20 £ |
|---|-------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Receipts | | | | | |
| Offertory, Pledges, Donations | | | 18,131 | 18,131 | 18,732 |
| Gift Aid | | | 3,958 | 3,958 | 3,302 |
| Special Services | 1 | 165 | 165 | 330 | 200 |
| Fund Raising Activities and other restricted | 4 | 1,150 | | 1,150 | 1,829 |
| Grants Received | 3 | 901 | 251 | 1,152 | 3,713 |
| Hall and Chapel Letting Income | | | 3,701 | 3,701 | 7,183 |
| Cottage Gross Rent | | | 11,554 | 11,554 | 10,928 |
| Bank Interest | | | 31 | 31 | 1,452 |
| Other receipts | 5 | | 7,022 | 7,022 | 10 |
| Total Receipts | | 2,216 | 44,813 | 47,029 | 47,349 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Ministry | 1,2&3 | 570 | 25,988 | 26,558 | 27,826 |
| Visiting Preachers | | | 604 | 604 | 246 |
| Musicians | | | 385 | 385 | 970 |
| Subscriptions & donations (unrestricted) | | | 1,665 | 1,665 | 1,875 |
| Charitable donations and other restricted | 4 | 1,426 | | 1,426 | 1,829 |
| Conferences & Courses | | | - | - | - |
| Post, Telephone & Stationery | | | 357 | 357 | 178 |
| Publicity, Publications & Periodicals | | | - | - | 65 |
| Insurance | | | 1,424 | 1,424 | 1,344 |
| Grounds Upkeep | | | 1,172 | 1,172 | 1,812 |
| Legal Fees/Licences | | | - | - | - |
| Professional fees | | | 1,673 | 1,673 | 1,060 |
| Chapel Utilities | | | 574 | 574 | 1,094 |
| Chapel Cleaning | | | 590 | 590 | 632 |
| Chapel Maintenance & Repairs | 3 | 431 | 391 | 822 | 2,431 |
| Hall Utilities | | | 683 | 683 | 1,014 |
| Hall Cleaning | | | 807 | 807 | 826 |
| Hall Maintenance & Repairs | | | 1,149 | 1,149 | 912 |
| Cottage Utilities | | | - | - | 856 |
| Cottage Letting Agent Fees | | | - | - | - |
| Cottage Maintenance & Repairs | | | 647 | 647 | 12,797 |
| Sundry & General Administration (including bank chgs) | | | 678 | 678 | 763 |
| Total Payments | | 2,427 | 38,787 | 41,214 | 58,526 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for the year | | (211) | 6,026 | 5,815 | (11,177) |

Notes to Receipts and Payments Accounts:

- 1 Of the fees received for Special Services (weddings & namings) 50% is paid to the minister.
£165 was received in 2020-21 all of which will be paid in 2021-22.
- 2 Of the fees received for Special Services (weddings & namings) 50% is paid to the minister.
£100 was received in 2019-20 all of which was paid in 2020-21.
- 3 Of the £901 worth of restricted grants received, £470 related to ministry and £431 related to chapel maintenance work done in 2019-20
- 4 The difference between *Fund Raising Activities...* and *Charitable donations...* is £276.
This represents the gift aid on *Fund Raising Activities...* that will be received in 2021-22.
- 5 Includes £7,000 interim insurance settlement re Covid-19.
Covers loss of earnings from financial year 2019-20 & part of 2020-21.

GODALMING UNITARIANS
Statement of Assets and Liabilities for the year ended 30 September 2021

Cash funds:

| | Restricted Funds £ | Unrestricted Funds £ | Total 2020-21 £ | Total 2019-20 £ |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cash in bank 1 October 2020 | 100 | 77,651 | 77,751 | 88,929 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) this year end | (211) | 6,026 | 5,815 | (11,177) |
| Cash in bank 30 September 2021 | (111) | 83,677 | 83,566 | 77,751 |

Represented by:

| | | £ | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|
| CAF Cash account | (111) | 9,804 | 9,693 |
| CAF Gold account | | 15,195 | 15,195 |
| Charity Bank Deposit Account | | 50,680 | 50,680 |
| BOOM! Credit Union Corporate Account | | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| | (111) | 83,678 | 83,567 |

Notes:

Assets retained for the charity's own use:

| | Fund to which asset belongs | Cost (optional) | Current value (optional) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Land and buildings - not valued | Restricted | - | - |
| Furniture, fixtures and fittings - not valued | Unrestricted | - | - |

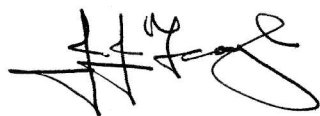
Liabilities:

| | Fund to which liability relates | Amount due (optional) | When due (optional) |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Special Services fee collected in August | Restricted | 165 | Nov-21 |

General:

The Covid 19 pandemic has, once again, had a negative impact upon the charity's finances, particularly affecting the lettings income for the Hall. However, some of this loss has been compensated by an interim insurance payment. Receipts from the Chapel Cottage letting and regular pledged income from the congregation have remained steady.

Independently Inspected by J J Teagle



01/01/2022