

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF GODALMING UNITARIANS

For the period 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023

Overview

Looking through the monthly calendars, I am reminded how Godalming Unitarians continued to thrive over 2023 – doing the things we do best such as raising money for good causes. We managed to put on an active programme of Sunday services (thanks to Nicola Young) with great support from some new worship leaders from our congregation, as well as visiting preachers and interfaith ministers whilst we were looking for a new minister. A strong sense of community was maintained through regular events, walks, community art cafe and special services.

I am pleased to say we were able to fully open the chapel after Covid and were able to resume singing – old favourites as well as new hymns (with varying success!). We were delighted to have our new part-time minister Rev'd Martin Whitell, join us officially in April. He was known to us having taken services for us over the last 20 years, starting when he was minister with Portsmouth Unitarians, then as District Minister and he has been a wonderful fit with the congregation bringing us regular services full of hope, reflection and humour.

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

Godalming Unitarians continued to offer regular Sunday services that were inspiring, uplifting and also consoling through the good times and the bad. The trustees were pleased to be able to restore our services to every Sunday each month.

In November we were thankful to members Pam and Steve Williams who led our annual Remembrance Service and to Anne Marie Walsh who led the Social Action Sunday which raised £506 for Godalming and Villages Community Store.

Over Christmas 2022 the congregation again pulled together with a "congregation led" Christmas Carol service (coordinated by Christine and Bill Hayhurst) and a New Year "congregation led" service on 1st January (coordinated by Nicola Young). We are grateful for everyone's contributions.

As well as our visiting preachers, special thanks go to interfaith ministers, Edie Campbell, Lindsay Stevens and Anna Lubelska. Also to our lay preachers and service leaders including Shirley Wardell

and to Nicola Young, our preaching coordinator, who has ensured our preaching rota is complete.

We continued to offer a “quiet time” monthly session in chapel where anyone is welcome to attend on the last Wednesday of the month and spend 45 minutes in contemplative reflection in the chapel. Thanks to our chair, Christine Martin for organizing this activity.

Over this period, we had successful “Cafe Church” services (led by Pam Dalton Williams and Shirley Faraday) and since the end of March we have enjoyed regular services led by our new minister Rev’d Martin Whitell including a “Welcome Service” for Martin in May 2023. We continue to offer hybrid services allowing those who are unable to attend in person to be present via Zoom. Thanks go to Adam Baumberg and Paul Richards for continuing to provide the technical support for these services.

Religious education

We have not been able to offer engagement groups exploring faith issues but hope these may resume at some point. Martin has started a group for our local worship leaders – discussed in his report (below). We have not been able to provide a Children’s Programme but have enjoyed contributions from the younger members of our community in services.

In November, a remembrance service took place from the chapel. In January, Edie Campbell led a Sunday service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

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.

We were pleased to welcome four new members this year – Sarah, Anna, Amanda and Tony – taking our membership up to 36. We would also like to encourage others 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.

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

Wider Unitarian involvement

Godalming Unitarians continued to send delegates to the annual meeting of the General Assembly and we also maintained a presence at the annual FUSE event (the Festival of Unitarians in the South-East), and will continue to support other events.

Outreach

The monthly Community Art Café has been meeting regularly throughout the year. Thanks to Pam Dalton Williams for organising this along with Anne Marie Walsh

This year we were pleased to host our ‘Great Community Garden Party’ again. Despite the rain we had the Godalming Band (performing inside) and there was further entertainment from the “Kissing Frogs”. The event raised £355 for Godalming and Villages Community Store and the new Broadwater Youth Centre.

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. Many of these groups have been able to return to the hall and thanks go to Paul Richards for managing all the bookings.

In September 2023 we opened up the chapel for “European Heritage Open Days” and many thanks to the team (Roger Hurley, Amanda Clegg, Alan Day, Bill Hayhurst, Bob Weston and Martin Whitell, Dana Daniels, Jenny Janes, Christine Hayhurst and Laurie Kulcher) for all their hard work.

Helping others in need is a demonstration of our commitment to look beyond ourselves. We have continued to offer refreshments after the service, and have been collecting coffee-time donations for Parkinson’s UK, Oakleaf Enterprise, South West Surrey Citizens Advice and Godalming and Villages Community Store.

We adopted “Send a Child to Hucklow” (SACH) as our Charity for 2022 as it was their 60th Anniversary. SACH is a Unitarian charity that arranges and administers holidays at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire for groups of disadvantaged children. We raised over £1300 for SACH in total and about half of this fell within this accounting year.

Thanks also to Jill Durrant and Sarah Jones for keeping our social media fresh and updated.

Social activities

Our activities groups help to create community. The Sunday walking group has continued fairly regularly (depending on the weather) - generally a moderate walk with picnic lunch. Thanks to Pam Dalton Williams, Steve Williams, Paul Richards and Bill and Christine Hayhurst for leading the walks.

The book group continued to meet regularly and discussed a wide range of novels.

MINISTER’S REPORT

The last eight months have flown by for me since you gave me the great honour of joining you as your Minister at Meadow. The welcome I received back in April was wonderful and it has been good to get to know you as we have shared the work of being a congregation together. I am really grateful to you all – thank you.

As a congregation you were among the first in the country to adapt to on-line, interactive services during the pandemic. It was a ‘lifeline’ for most of you I know and all praise to your former Minister and those of you who made that happen. The task of ‘recovering’ from those long months of separation and distancing has left its mark on most faith communities and other groups. For some it meant a final closing of their doors, others have not regained their former strength. We seem to have done better than most. We now have the advantage of on-line involvement for those who cannot be physically present, and we have done well to restore our previous strength by meeting together physically in the Chapel. In fact, we have started to grow again, and I was delighted when four new members joined our congregation a few months ago. I hope we will be able to encourage others to do so in the New Year.

It takes time for a different minister to 'settle in' and the Trustees and Officers have been very supportive. I hope that you are settled too. It has been a privilege for me that a number of you have shared things with me in my spiritual and pastoral role in recent months. I see this as a sign of hope and trust.

Our congregation has people with an array of skills and gifts and let me say 'thank you' for all that happens seen and unseen. I am particularly encouraged that we have started a group for our local worship leaders. It is good to enjoy a variety of styles and approaches to our services but people who are 'trying us out' need some regularity and consistency if we are to keep them. All being well this local group will work together to offer Unitarian worship in its richness of depth and breadth.

Being a faith community in these times is not as easy as it once was. Churches and Chapels have been in decline for years. However, we seem to have risen above that and we are a caring, joyful, thinking and generous group seeking to enrich the lives of others as well as our own. The coming year will give us the opportunity to build on all the good that has gone before us and add our footprints and hallmarks to the journey and the work of our Chapel.

Your friend,

Martin

Rev'd Martin Whitell

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. Thanks to the premises team (Christine Hayhurst, Christine Martin and Paul Richards).

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

Governance

During the year, Christine Martin has continued as Chair of the trustees and we are very grateful for all her hard work and leadership. We currently have just seven trustees so are keen for new members to join us to help keep everything running smoothly. We are grateful to our treasurer Laurie Kulcher who has agreed to stand for one more year but will be stepping down at the end of 2024 after many years of service. So if anyone with a finance background (not a requirement) is interested, we will also be looking for a new treasurer.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2022-2023

In the year to September 2023 total receipts exceeded total payments resulting in an overall surplus of £16,989. The main reasons for the surplus (which exceeded the previous year's surplus of £11,475) were:

- Income from pledges and donations was significantly higher than in 2021-22

- Bank interest, although not a great contributor, was also up significantly, thanks to HMRC for kindly increasing interest rates
- Ministry costs were lower as we have only had our new, part-time minister since April 2023
- Hall and Chapel repair costs were also much lower than last year

I would like to add a word of caution here. Although we have achieved a favourable result this year i.e. a substantial surplus, next year is not likely to be quite so favourable. Ministry costs will increase, as they will extend over the whole year and there are essential maintenance jobs that need to be undertaken. But the good news is that we are in a good financial position at the start of the year and so shouldn't have any problems meeting our financial obligations and objectives in 2023-24.

Once again I wish to thank David Daniels, Jeff Teagle and my fellow trustees for all their help and support throughout the year.

[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 2023

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2022-23 £	Total 2021-22 £
Receipts					
Offertory, Pledges, Donations			19,577	19,577	15,302
Gift Aid			3,534	3,534	3,371
Special Services			-	-	470
Fund Raising Activities and other	1	2,545		2,545	3,461
Grants Received		220	252	472	574
Hall and Chapel Letting Income	2	(30)	7,526	7,496	8,252
Cottage Gross Rent			11,594	11,594	11,594
Bank Interest			1,184	1,184	317
Other receipts				-	937
Total Receipts		2,735	43,666	46,401	44,277
Payments					
Ministry		220	6,229	6,449	9,577
Visiting Preachers			922	922	862
Musicians			1,590	1,590	883
Subscriptions & donations			1,451	1,451	1,548
Charitable donations and other	1	2,085		2,085	3,185
Conferences & Courses			350	350	490
Post, Telephone & Stationery			62	62	215
Publicity, Publications & Periodicals			41	41	78
Insurance			1,750	1,750	1,536
Grounds Upkeep			1,870	1,870	1,650
Legal Fees/Licences			-	-	-
Professional fees			-	-	891
Chapel Utilities			617	617	592
Chapel Cleaning			983	983	968
Chapel Maintenance & Repairs			319	319	277
Hall Utilities			1,000	1,000	915
Hall Cleaning			1,500	1,500	1,270
Hall Maintenance & Repairs			272	272	1,590
Cottage Utilities			-	-	-
Cottage Letting Agent Fees			90	90	-
Cottage Maintenance & Repairs			7,516	7,516	5,981
Bank charges			67	67	142
Sundry & General Administration	2		476	476	153
Total Payments		2,305	27,107	29,412	32,802
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		430	16,559	16,989	11,475

Notes to Receipts and Payments Accounts:

1 The difference between *Fund Raising Activities...* and *Charitable donations...* is £460.

This represents funds not passed on to the following charities within the year:

Godalming & Villages Community Store	£207.50
Broadwater Youth	£177.50
CAB Waverley	£75.00

2 -£30 represents refund of key deposit

GODALMING UNITARIANS
Statement of Assets and Liabilities for the year ended 30 September 2023

Cash funds:	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2022-23 £	Total 2021-22 £
Cash in bank 1 October 2022	30	95,012	95,042	83,567
Surplus/(Deficit) this year end	430	16,559	16,989	11,475
Cash in bank 30 September 2023	460	111,571	112,031	95,042
Represented by:			£	
CAF Cash account	460	7,482	7,942	
CAF Gold account		66,033	66,033	
Charity Bank Deposit Account		30,000	30,000	
BOOM! Credit Union Corporate Account		8,056	8,056	
	460	111,571	112,031	

Notes:

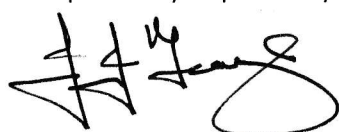
Assets retained for the charity's own use:

	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)
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Independently Inspected by J J Teagle



09/01/2024