

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF GODALMING UNITARIANS

For the period 1st October 2023 to 30th September 2024

Overview

Godalming Unitarians continued to thrive over the year under the continued leadership of our chair, Christine Martin and our minister Revd Martin Whitell.

We put on an active programme of Sunday services with great support from worship leaders from our congregation, as well as visiting preachers and interfaith ministers and our new minister. A strong sense of community was maintained through regular events, walks, community art cafe and special services.

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 maintain a full programme of services every Sunday each month.

At the start of October 2023 we had our annual harvest service led by our minister with a collection of food and household goods for Godalming & Villages Community Store. Continuing this theme we had our annual "Social Action" Sunday in November and thanks to generous donations, were able to stock, pack and deliver 75 Christmas Hampers to Godalming & Villages Community Store.

Over Christmas 2023, Martin was able to lead our annual candle-lit carol service as well as a service on Christmas Eve and an informal service with contributions from the congregation on New Year's Eve. As usual Martin's services were uplifting, thoughtful and thought-provoking and delivered with great humour and sensitivity.

In March, Martin led our Easter service and we were pleased to have our former minister, Revd Sheena Gabriel, lead a service for us in July. The year rounded off neatly with the harvest service at the end of September.

As well as our visiting preachers (including Bert Clough, Revd Jim Corrigall and Val Worthington) special thanks go to interfaith ministers, Edie Campbell, Lindsay Stevens and Anna Lubelska. Also to our lay preachers and service leaders including Anne-Marie Walsh, Shirley Wardell, Steve Williams,

Rob Oulton and Paul Richards, and to Nicola Young, our preaching coordinator, who has ensured our preaching rota is complete.

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

We have maintained 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 provide a Children’s Programme but have enjoyed contributions from the younger members of our community in services. Martin has also continued to provide support to newer service leaders from the congregation.

In November, Martin led a moving Remembrance Service and 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 two new members this year. 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 maintained a presence at the annual meeting of the General Assembly (although we didn’t send an official delegate this year). We also supported 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. We had the Godalming Band as usual and there was further entertainment from the “Kissing Frogs”. The event raised £437 for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice. Thanks to Pam Dalton Williams for organising and for everyone who contributed their baking and time.

Our premises have historically been a well-used resource within the community for meetings of U3A groups, healers, dowzers, yoga and Tai chi enthusiasts, ukulele players and neighbourhood groups.

Many of these groups meet in the hall and thanks go to Paul Richards for managing all the bookings.

In September, Anna and Sarah Jones led our team at the Pride in Surrey event (celebrating Surrey's LGBTQ+ community) at Guildford. We took part in the parade and staffed a stall in Stoke Park to raise our visibility and promote our commitment to equality.

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 Conquest Art, Woking LGBTQ+ Hub, Step by Step (supporting young people) and Mane Chance Sanctuary.

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 but due to illness and injuries was not able to continue throughout the year - instead we have looked into community excursions including a visit to a local animal refuge "Mane Chance" in the summer, which was well attended.

Thanks to Pam Dalton Williams, Steve Williams, Adam Baumberg and Paul Richards for leading the walks and to Rosie Fargus for organising the trip to Mane Chance.

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

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 continue on in the role.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023-2024

In the year to September 2024 total receipts exceeded total payments resulting in an overall surplus of £5,555.

Income:

Overall income was almost exactly the same as in 2022-23, but with some dramatic swings.

- Ignoring a generous bequest received in 2022-23, income from pledges and donations was actually slightly higher than in 2022-23.
- Similarly, Hall & Chapel rentals were higher as was Cottage rental (which was increased from November 2023).
- Bank interest was, once again, up significantly, even compared to last year. This was mainly due to a surge in interest rates in 2023.
- Due to unavoidable delay in submitting numbers to HMRC, our 2022-23 Gift Aid of £4,850 was not received in 2023-24. However, this money has now been received, and will be supplemented by the 2023-24 Gift Aid which will also be received this year.

Expenditure:

Most costs were higher in 2023-24 than in the previous financial year.

- Ministry costs were higher due to having a part-time minister for the entire year.
- Musician's fees were higher due to a fee increase implemented in October 2023.
- Hall and Chapel repair costs were higher, the main expenditure being on electrical upgrades/improvements in the Hall.
- Grounds upkeep costs were higher due to necessary tree pruning work.
- The only cost that was significantly lower this year was Cottage maintenance; however, extensive work will need to be done in 2024-25.

Once again, 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 2024-25.

We wish to thank David Daniels, Jeff Teagle and the 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 2024

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023-24 £	Total 2022-23 £
Receipts					
Offertory, Pledges, Donations	1	75	15,665	15,740	19,577
Gift Aid	2		-	-	3,534
Special Services			-	-	-
Fund Raising Activities and other	3	2,375		2,375	2,545
Grants Received	4	270	283	553	472
Hall and Chapel Letting Income			11,634	11,634	7,496
Cottage Gross Rent			13,066	13,066	11,594
Bank Interest			3,077	3,077	1,184
Other receipts			-	-	-
Total Receipts		2,720	43,725	46,445	46,401
Payments					
Ministry	4	270	15,697	15,967	6,449
Visiting Preachers			766	766	922
Musicians	1	75	2,350	2,425	1,590
Subscriptions & donations			1,561	1,561	1,451
Charitable donations and other	3	2,616		2,616	2,085
Conferences & Courses			530	530	350
Post, Telephone & Stationery			23	23	62
Publicity, Publications & Periodicals			63	63	41
Insurance			1,966	1,966	1,750
Grounds Upkeep			3,748	3,748	1,870
Legal Fees/Licences				-	-
Professional fees				-	-
Chapel Utilities			964	964	617
Chapel Cleaning			1,091	1,091	983
Chapel Maintenance & Repairs			1,020	1,020	319
Hall Utilities			1,897	1,897	1,000
Hall Cleaning			1,954	1,954	1,500
Hall Maintenance & Repairs			2,922	2,922	272
Cottage Utilities			-	-	-
Cottage Letting Agent Fees				-	90
Cottage Maintenance & Repairs			553	553	7,516
Bank charges			68	68	67
Sundry & General Administration			755	755	476
Total Payments		2,961	37,930	40,890	29,412
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(241)	5,796	5,555	16,989

Notes to Receipts and Payments Accounts:

- 1 £75 donation (restricted) to cover musician's fee at April 2024 coffee morning.
- 2 Gift aid of £4,854.02 was not received until after year end, due to the claim having been submitted late.
- 3 The difference between Fund Raising Activities... and Charitable donations... is -£240.63.
This represents funds not passed on to the following charities within the year:

Conquest Art	219.37
Less funds raised in the previous year and passed on this year:	
Godalming & Villages Community Store	(207.50)
Broadwater Youth	(177.50)
CAB Waverley	(75.00)
- 4 The £270 restricted grants received relate to ministry,

GODALMING UNITARIANS

Statement of Assets and Liabilities for the year ended 30 September 2024

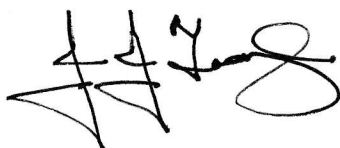
Cash funds:	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023-24 £	Total 2022-23 £
Cash in bank 1 October 2023	460	111,571	112,031	95,042
Surplus/(Deficit) this year end	(241)	5,796	5,555	16,989
Uncleared cheques		232	232	
Cash in bank 30 September 2024	219	117,599	117,818	112,031

Represented by:		£
CAF Cash account	10,673	10,673
CAF Gold account	67,704	67,704
Charity Bank Deposit Account	31,369	31,369
BOOM! Credit Union Corporate Account	8,072	8,072
	-	117,818

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 JJ Teagle

 13/12/2024