

HASTINGS UNITARIAN CHURCH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

**For the period 1 October 2020 - to 30
September 2021**

Reference and Administrative Detail

Charity name: Hastings Unitarian Church
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered charity number: 1166588

Charity's address: Hastings Unitarian Church
South Terrace
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1SA

Names of Charity's Trustees:

1. Peter Sanders (Chairman)
2. Daniel Costley
3. Alan Larcombe
4. Joanna Lemon
5. Ida Ward
6. Frances Williamson
7. Norman Williamson
8. Safar Wisby

The Trustees were appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

Names and addresses of advisers

1. The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, Essex Hall, 1 – 6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY
2. London District & South Eastern Provincial Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, Essex Hall, 1 – 6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of the Charity's Trusts

Governing document: Constitution (Revised addition adopted 3 June 2018).

The Charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Trustees are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for a term of office of three years. By staggering the dates of office three trustees will resign each year but are eligible for re-election.

Following the formation of the CIO in April 2016 the first financial year was extended from April 2016 to

September 2017 to fit with the Church's normal financial year of

1 October to 30 September. The first AGM was then held in the following June (2018) however since then all further AGMs have taken place in March with the exception of the AGM in 2021 which was held in May of that year due to Covid restrictions.

Objectives and Activities

The object of the CIO is the promotion of religion in accordance with the principles of the General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Summary of the main activities for the public benefit

The Unitarian Church offers a place to meet and worship in an atmosphere of freedom. Our Unitarian movement has a long and proud history dating back to the mid-sixteenth century, however there are no dogmas or creeds to adhere to and freedom of thought and spiritual inquiry is encouraged with complete tolerance and respect for other faiths or none.

Membership is free and open to all who wish to join. Services are held every Sunday morning and subsidiary meetings may be held during the week for meditation, prayer and discussion. Other community groups and societies also hire the church eg, circle dancing and Narcotics Anonymous, for their meetings.

Except for the Lay Pastor, who is currently training for the Ministry, all trustees and officers of the Church are volunteers and receive no remuneration except for legitimate expenses.

SUMMARY OF MAIN EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE YEAR

Given the challenges arising from the Covid 19 pandemic and its variants the church has weathered the storm very well. The church, of necessity, had to lock-down following Government guidance and strictures and, when allowed to open its doors again observed social distancing and other safeguarding measures. The church is fortunate in having an immunologist as a member (and past chairman) who was able to offer advice regarding Government guidelines.

The introduction of new technology and on-line software packages meant that even when we were in lock-down we could share our services to church members via zoom.

The purchase of additional equipment, ie, professional camera, large flat screen TV, sound system, etc. enabled our services to be broadcast more widely. This technology also means that service leaders were able to take services remotely. Ways to improve the service by, eg, additional training for volunteers or getting outside help is being considered.

A generous bequest from a former member of the congregation enabled the church to purchase and

install the kit after careful deliberation by the Trustees and Congregational Committee.

Following the resignation of the Church's lay pastor, Stephen Crowther, in September 2020, we were fortunate in securing the services of Jennifer Sanders as our new Lay Pastor. She has made a significant contribution to the Church and we are pleased that she is now training for the ministry.

Regrettably, Norman Williamson, who has been chair of the Church since it became a CIO, felt that it was time to step down as Chairman but continues as a Trustee. The Church owes a debt of gratitude to him especially in leading the Church to its status as a CIO. His contribution to the church has been immense.

Peter Sanders has replaced him as Chairman. The church wishes him luck.

Church attendance remains steady and we have been pleased that some existing and new members have joined us through zoom.

Due to the sad loss of Tom McLelland-Young last year the church has been without a regular organist and has relied on prepared CDs and streamed music. The church has now engaged a professional organist, Stephen Page, once a month. We are grateful to him.

Thanks to a generous bequest the Church's is in a good financial position. Following a motion from the

General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches regarding fossil fuels together with a requirement to periodically review church investments a decision has been taken to transfer some funds to an ethically based fund manager which is expected to give the church a higher yield. The Church is very grateful to Michael Stewart who advises the church on investments and also acts as the Church's bookkeeper. He gives his expertise and time without charge.

The Church is very fortunate in having among its congregation people who are willing to take on roles and duties without remuneration requiring much time and who work together in furtherance of the aims of the Church.

The Church would like to record its thanks to Pat Hitchman and Simon Edson for their good offices in maintaining the church.

The following documents, which form part of this report, are attached as annexes:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Lay Pastor's Report | Annex 1 |
| Congregational Chairman's Report | |
| Annex 2 | |
| Lettings Report | Annex 3 |
| Receipts and Payment Account | |
| Independent examiner's report on | Filed |
| as | |
| the accounts | PDF |
| docs. | |
| Trustees' Declaration | |

ANNEX 1 LAY PASTOR'S REPORT

It seems almost incomprehensible that two years have passed since Covid touched our shores and the way that we worship changed forever. A year ago my report was written with only 5 months of leadership at Hastings and during a further lockdown. Since that time we have returned to live services with the addition of hybrid Zoom services for those not able to return or prefer to worship from home. This has proved invaluable as we traversed the unstable landscape of Omicron where more of the congregation chose to attend via the tech link

We didn't waste our time in Lockdown in the early part of last year - far from it. We provided weekly online services to all those who could connect from care homes to overseas visitors as well as telephone connection or written services for those not connected to the internet.

Although not perhaps our first choice of how to be together it brought a sense of community and many remarked on the intimacy that zoom offered giving way to a deeper level of sharing.

Four of the congregation attended the leading change in the congregation course online. This provided an invaluable starting point to review, discuss and plan changes in the church

We felt that Hastings needed a metaphorical facelift in terms of its welcome and thanks to the LDPA who have gifted a new website which although slow to construct is well on its way and we hope to have this up and running in the next few months. We hope that this will improve our visibility in Hastings and give virtual visitors a taste of what we do, who we are and what we can offer.

Seeking Exploring Sharing **A welcoming spiritual community**

The above is Hastings Unitarian Church's new, welcoming statement something that took time in our meeting together to agree but simply reflects what we do as a community.

We have a mix of live services, led by our Lay pastor and now student minister, congregational members - some of whom have taken the leap for the first time and visiting leaders from the district and beyond. Approx every 6 weeks we have been able to offer an online projected service linking us up to service leaders further afield which has brought a rich and eclectic mix to the congregation.

Services have evolved into a more relaxed approach with a semi circular set up. We noted that zoom had provided us with the opportunity to look at each other during worship and this now continues live and creates a greater intimacy.

Other changes to the church have included a decorative facelift in the kitchen and lavatories. The upstairs is undergoing new flooring and dismantling of a disused room to make way for a new light open space for informal meetings and pastoral care.

Much of this work has been made possible by a legacy from a former long standing member of the church. We are very grateful to Mary Burbage for her generous donation and a new stained glass oval window depicting her is in progress .We look forward to displaying this in due course..

The committee took the decision to upgrade and install equipment to assist in the changing way we deliver our services. This took place recently and we are slowly finding our way with new technology. It's important to put out a consistent and high quality service via zoom and to that end we have simplified our services whilst some congregational members get used to the technology

Along with the loss of Tom McClelland Young, our beloved organist, we also said good bye to Phil, who although hadn't been in touch during the pandemic had been a regular to the church with his late wife. A memorial will take place for him later this year

We were contacted last year by a local family asking for support for their brother in Thailand who had been a life long Unitarian and was terminally ill . Through zoom he joined the congregation for several months last year.

His memorial service was held at the church a few months ago linking those in the church with family members in this country and in Thailand . Technology for all its shortcomings has played such an important part of the church this past year.

Some groups have returned to using the church again and we are exploring ways in which the space can be used in connection with local food banks under the umbrella of the Trussell Trust.

There is always so much to do and so little time and as for many with small congregations we have found it difficult to fill certain roles and are looking at other ways we can find administrative support. However all of the congregation are involved in someway in the upkeep of the church giving generously of their time and skills, love, prayers and connection and we are grateful to all of them for keeping this precious sacred space alive and welcoming in the heart of Hastings .

It has been a busy year and one in which we are back together worshiping together supporting each other and of course having that all important cup of tea and a biscuit together !

With recent atrocities in Ukraine we are grateful for all that we have.

Jennifer Sanders - Lay Pastor, Hastings Unitarian Church

March 2022

**ANNEX 2
REPORT**

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE'S CHAIRMAN'S

Hopefully, this new year will see an end to the uncertainty of the past two years, and we can now return to the “new normal” whatever that is. We have managed to soldier on despite the difficulties more or less intact. Our congregation has held up fairly well, ably guided by our lay preacher Jennifer, to whom we are grateful.

The fabric of the church is fairly sound, but we still have not had some of the essential work done and are struggling to find a company that wish to undertake the work. An elderly building such as ours will always need maintaining and we have to make provision in our budget to keep the building up to standard.

The new tech has proved tiresome, but as far as the equipment is concerned, we are almost there; using the equipment to best advantage is on-going and we could seek additional advice in that direction.

We hope to involve all of the congregation in how the Unitarian Church can play a more important part in the well being of the Hastings community and open our doors, not just for a short time on Sundays, but offer our facilities for those organizations that could benefit from its use.

My thanks to all officers, helpers, leaders, and our congregation for their moral and financial contribution.

Alan Larcombe

March 2022

ANNEX 3 LETTINGS' SECRETARY REPORT

In my report to the AGM in May 2021 I described the year as completely unprecedented, and pointed out the lack of activity in the church as a result of the pandemic lockdown, something we all endured as a nation and not just as a community.

Since then it's very gratifying to see how we are moving forward despite initial hesitations and concerns regarding Covid, though I know that for many of us those concerns still linger on in the back of our minds, especially when reports of high numbers of infection stubbornly persist.

It would appear that this virus is just another challenge we will have to learn to live with, and it is rewarding to see how we have come together, embraced new technology and adapted. Conscious that our church is first and foremost a place of worship, we started with hybrid Sunday services, both in person and on Zoom, and complemented that worship with our Heart and Soul meetings.

Members of the congregation were also very pleased that our friends in the wider community were able to join us when we began Circle Dancing again.

Our Unitarian church is still a member of the Interfaith Forum for Hastings and Rother; before Covid they held at least four meetings a year in our church, however they still prefer to make use of technology and keep their monthly Tuesday evening meetings on Zoom; it's hoped that some day soon they will also feel able to return and join together in person.

It has been very encouraging to see how many of our loyal clients are determined to adapt to the 'new normal' and continue with the social activities that they have previously enjoyed.

The Saturday group from Narcotics Anonymous were the first to return in June of 2021.

The Krishna's returned in August and they meet twice a month on Thursday evenings.

The Townswomen's Guild Returned in September and they meet monthly on Friday afternoons.

The NFOP (post office pensioners) returned in January 2022; they meet monthly on Thursday afternoons, and this year they will hold a total of eleven meetings with us.

The Class Choir also returned in January meeting every Wednesday evening.

The most important thing is that our clients are all very happy to be back with us.

Frances Williamson

March 2022

DECLARATION*

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signatures: Peter Sanders Norman Williamson

Full name: PETER SANDERS NORMAN WILLIAMSON

Position held: CHAIRMAN, TRUSTEE

Date: 24 JULY 2022 24 JULY 2022

* Original document held with Hastings CIO.

Hastings Unitarian Church CIO
Receipts and Payments Account
for the year ended 30th September 2021

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Endowment Funds | Total Funds | 2020 |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Receipts | | | | | |
| Collections | 5,556 | | | 5,556 | 6,065 |
| Gift Aid | - | | | - | 394 |
| Grants and other | 1,445 | | | 1,445 | 20,698 |
| Use of Premises - Lettings | 25 | | | 25 | 2,551 |
| Donations at events | - | | | - | 4 |
| Investment Interest - Unit Trusts | 5,780 | | | 5,780 | 4,207 |
| Bank Interest | - | | | - | - |
| Building Fund | | 53 | | 53 | 85 |
| Legacy | | 66,477 | | 66,477 | - |
| Coffee donations for local charities | | 85 | | 85 | 191 |
| Insurance claim | - | | | - | - |
| Books and magazines | - | | | - | - |
| Reserves | - | | | - | - |
| Sub total (gross income) | 12,805 | 66,614 | - | 79,420 | 34,195 |
| Asset and Investment Sales: | | | | | |
| Unit Trusts | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Receipts | 12,805 | 66,614 | - | 79,420 | 34,195 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Lay Pastor and other Pulpit Fees | 8,177 | | | 8,177 | 6,960 |
| Organist's fees and Organ Repairs | 146 | | | 146 | 1,005 |
| Caretaking and cleaning | 753 | | | 753 | 1,615 |
| Covid protection | 0 | | | - | 94 |
| Insurances | 1,091 | | | 1,091 | 1,093 |
| Lighting - Heating - Water | 2,105 | | | 2,105 | 2,293 |
| Repairs and Renewals | 174 | | | 174 | 2,202 |
| Audio Equipment | 0 | | | - | - |
| Circle Dancing organiser's fee | 0 | | | - | 260 |
| Postage, Stationery and Refreshments | 0 | | | - | - |
| Magazines and Newsletters | 60 | | | 60 | 70 |
| Legal Fees | 0 | | | - | - |
| Accountancy fees - Book Keeping | 0 | | | - | 90 |
| Bank safe custody | 45 | | | 45 | 45 |
| Architecture fees | 0 | | | - | - |
| General Assembly Quota | 420 | | | 420 | 420 |
| Charitable donations | 0 | | | - | 50 |
| Coffee donations for local charities | | 182 | | 182 | - |
| Church Internet | 286 | | | 286 | - |
| Subscriptions | 0 | | | - | 120 |
| Music licences | 165 | | | 165 | 161 |
| Misc expenditure | 139 | | | 139 | 175 |
| History Book | 0 | | | - | 432 |
| LDPA refund re Northiam Church | 0 | | | - | 1399 |
| Sub-total payments | 13,561 | 182 | - | 13,743 | 18,484 |
| Asset and Investment Purchases: | | | | | |
| Unit Trusts | 0 | | - | - | 62,000 |
| Total payments | 13,561 | 182 | - | 13,743 | 80,484 |
| Net of receipts/(payments) | (756) | 66,432 | 0 | 65,676 | (46,289) |
| Cash funds last period end | 10,743 | 97 | 0 | 10,840 | 57,129 |
| Cash funds this year end | 9,987 | 66,529 | 0 | 76,516 | 10,840 |

Hastings Unitarian Church CIO
Assets and Liabilities as at 30th September 2021

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Endowment Funds | Total | 2020 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Cash funds: | | | | | |
| Bank Current account | 9,987 | 66,529 | - | 76,516 | 10,840 |
| Cash in Hand | 210 | - | - | 210 | - |
| Total cash funds | 10,197 | 66,529 | - | 76,726 | 10,840 |
| Investment assets: | | | | | |
| Unit Trusts | 130,684 | 22,444 | | 153,128 | 119,058 |
| Assets retained for the charity's own use: | | | | | |
| Church building | 845,488 | - | - | 845,488 | 845,488 |
| Pipe organ | 319,216 | - | - | 319,216 | 319,216 |
| | 1,295,388 | 22,444 | - | 1,317,832 | 1,283,762 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 1,305,585 | 88,973 | - | 1,394,558 | 1,294,602 |

Notes:

Organ and Church building are shown at insurance valuation.

Approved by the Trustees on the 27 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by



Chair and Trustee



Trustee



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Hastings Unitarian Church

On accounts for the year
ended

September 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1166588

Set out on pages

2 Pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **£D / MM / YYYY**.

As the charity'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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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.

Independent
examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

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 gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

AA Suggitt

Date:

05/05/22

Name:

Alison Suggitt

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

AAT

(if any):

Address:

33 Cambridge Gardens

Hastings

East Sussex

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

McMath Accountancy Services
33 Cambridge Road
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1EN
01424 458077



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Hastings Unitarian Church

**On accounts for the year
ended**

September 2021

**Charity no
(if any)** 1166588

Set out on pages

2 Pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended ~~DD / MM / YYYY~~.

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basis of report**

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examiner's statement**

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- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

AAT Suggitt

Date:

05/05/22.

Name:

Alison Suggitt

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body**

AAT

(if any):

Address:

33 Cambridge Gardens

Hastings

East Sussex

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

McMath Accountancy Services
33 Cambridge Road
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1EN
01424 458077