

HASTINGS UNITARIAN CHURCH
SUMMARY OF MAIN EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
OVER THE YEAR (1 OCT. 2022 - 30 SEPT. 2023)

Introduction

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. The church has 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 e.g. circle dancing and Narcotics Anonymous, for their meetings.

Much of the work of the church is undertaken on a voluntary basis by trustees and members of the congregation who receive no remuneration except for legitimate expenses.

The church continues to develop and deepen a spiritual path in community with each other; sharing our experiences and drawing inspiration from nature, art, literature, science, and other faith traditions from around the world.

Events and achievements

Regrettably, our Lay Pastor, Jennifer Sanders, left the church in February 2023 to become Lay Pastor at Brighton Unitarian Church. She was committed to the Unitarian principles of inclusivity, free religious inquiry, and social justice. Her

kindness and humour are much missed. She saw the need for the church to have a dedicated paid administrator who would take on the role of Clerk to the Church and its Secretary covering such things as pulpit rota, taking forward actions arising from Trustees' and Church Committee meetings. Currently the church has no dedicated Pastor or Minister and relies on guest Ministers, and speakers from

other Unitarian churches and members of its own congregation to lead services.

In January (2023) the church together with all property – both residential and business along South Terrace, Hastings, and the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre – was very badly affected by flooding due to heavy rainfall, an overflowing manhole and a partially-blocked sewer. It was some months before the church was dry enough for the carpets to be replaced and other damage repaired. The church is

Very conscious that as disruptive and costly the flood was to us in many parts of the world loss of life and livelihood are often the result.

The Church is most fortunate in having among its congregation people who are willing to take on essential roles and duties, eg, lettings and treasury, without remuneration, requiring much time and who work together in furtherance of the aims of the Church. 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 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:

Lettings Report

Pulpit Secretary Report

Receipts & Payments

Assets & Liabilities

Independent Examiner's report

Peter Sanders

Chair

Lettings Secretary's Report

Having looked at the report from February 2023, in considering what to write for this year, I have to say that not much has changed. We did have a second flood but fortunately the impact was considerably less, and we now have our own flood defence barrier.

So, to recap – **The Saturday Group** still meets every Saturday morning without fail, and they still receive a weekly discount paying £25 rather than £30. They have a new treasurer, Alan Lambourne.

The Krishna Group – who confirm their dates for the entire year, by the start of the year still meets twice a month on Thursday evenings, usually every other week.

The Class Choir still meets once a week on Wednesday evenings, excluding half terms and seasonal breaks throughout the year, and the occasional ill health of their musical director John Cornford.

The NFOP (Post Office Pensioners) meet once a month every third Thursday in the afternoon. In previous years, they would divide their meetings between us and Bexhill, but since the pandemic they have held almost all their meetings in Hastings with us.

One of our new regular groups is **The Bach Choir** who meet once a week on Friday evenings. Although they have missed a few sessions lately, also due to illness with their musical director, John Langridge, and an issue with their main keyboard, although I haven't heard any more about that. They also asked if they could hold a small concert in aid of the Rotary Club charity, to be held in either April or May. I said that anything involving the public would need to be considered by the trustees so I would pass that on. As yet, I haven't heard any more or received a definite date.

Karen who held **Gong Bath** sessions meeting every Friday morning is still with us, however she will be booking single sessions in future, with a possible afternoon and evening workshop, looking at an April date yet to be booked.

Harmony One were meeting every Monday evening, however their musical director Debbie Warren has also been unwell, so until I hear more, I'm not sure what is happening with them.

Everyone uses the bank transfer method, except The Class and NFOP who pay by cheque.

This year our main booking system has become considerably more efficient, thanks to a new 'online calendar' set up by our Administrator, Alison Forsyth.

A couple of our groups have mentioned that the church has been rather chilly at times, but I think they basically accept that large spaces like churches are costly to heat.

Frances Williamson

Lettings Secretary

Pulpit Report

Since September 2022, we have been fortunate in welcoming a wide selection of service leaders to our church. Initially, these 'visiting' service leaders complemented our resident lay pastor, Jennifer Sanders. When she left in February 2023, to take up a position as minister elect at Brighton Unitarian Church, we did not seek to replace her. Instead, we have continued with a mix of services led by visiting ministers and service leaders from other Unitarian churches in the southeast, notably Tenterden, Brighton, Maidstone, and London. In addition, we have been fortunate in that many members of our own congregation have given excellent services. We have found that the congregation enjoys the variety of styles and content offered by a different service leader each week.

Occasionally, we have a congregational service during which members of the congregation are invited to contribute a story, thoughts, a poem and so forth around a given theme.

We have continued to make our services available via Zoom, and most weeks we find that at least one person joins the service online. We have also had some very good services led by ministers remotely via Zoom notably from Wales. However, we have sometimes experienced problems with the technology, and for this reason, we have moved towards holding 'live' services wherever possible as the consensus among the congregation is that they prefer live services.

Alison Forsyth

Administrator

Hastings Unitar
Receipts and Pa
for the year ended 3

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds
	£	£
Receipts		
Collections	6,107	
Gift Aid	-	
Grants and other (inc BFUA)	1,620	
Use of Premises - Lettings	6,282	
Investment Distributions M&G	7,182	
Building Fund	-	
Legacy	-	
Donations for local charities	271	
Insurance claim	6,435	
<i>Sub total (gross income)</i>	27,897	-
 Asset and Investment Sales:		
Withdrawals	3,000	
 Total Receipts	30,897	-
 Payments		
Lay Pastor and other Pulpit Fees	6,357	
Organist's fees and Organ Repairs	730	
Church administration	2,001	
Caretaking and cleaning	1,864	
Insurances	1,370	
Lighting - Heating - Water	6,506	
Repairs and Renewals inc flood repairs	6,891	
Presentation Equipment	-	
Circle Dancing organiser's fee	60	
Magazines and Newsletters	74	
Legal Fees	-	
Bank safe custody (& bank fees)	45	
General Assembly Quota	420	
Charitable donations	155	
Donations for local charities	205	
Church Internet	539	
Music licences	185	
Misc expenditure	1,495	
Increase Petty Cash fund	-	
Sub-total payments	28,898	-
 Assets and Investments		
Purchases	-	
 Total payments	28,898	-

Net of receipts/(payments)	1,999	0
Cash funds last period end	6,094	0
Cash funds this year end	<u>8,093</u>	<u>0</u>

Hastings Unitarian Church
Assets and Liabilities as at 30th Sep

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>
Cash funds:		
Bank Current account	8,093	-
Cash in Hand	250	-
Total cash funds	<u>8,343</u>	<u>-</u>
Investment assets:		
M&G general fund	121,635	
M&G AH legacy fund (February 2020) for Ministerial Support		23,294
TAM MB legacy fund (March 2020)	53,593	
Total investment funds	<u>175,228</u>	<u>23,294</u>
Assets retained for the charity's own use:		
Church building	1,380,000	-
Pipe organ	269,000	-
Total assets retained	<u>1,999,456</u>	<u>46,588</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>2,007,799</u></u>	<u><u>46,588</u></u>

Notes:

The Church building and Organ are shown at insurance valuations; the Investment assets are shown at valuations as at 30 September.

ian Church CIO
 yments Account
 0th September 2023

Endowment Funds	Total Funds	2022
£	£	£
	6,107	7,030
	-	-
	1,620	1,308
	6,282	3,986
	7,182	6,715
	-	-
	-	-
	271	-
	6,435	-
-	27,897	19,038
	3,000	-
-	30,897	19,038
	6,357	9,991
	730	598
	2,001	-
	1,864	1,379
	1,370	-
	6,506	2,120
	6,891	7,827
	-	5,241
	60	-
	74	66
	-	105
	45	66
	420	420
	155	110
	205	-
	539	317
	185	172
	1,495	1,010
	-	40
-	28,898	29,461
-	-	60,000
-	28,898	89,461

0	1,999	(70,423)
0	6,094	76,517
<u>0</u>	<u>8,093</u>	<u>6,094</u>

1 CIO

September 2023

Endowment Funds	Total	2022
-	8,093	6,094
-	250	250
<u>-</u>	<u>8,343</u>	<u>6,344</u>
	121,635	116,610
	23,294	21,075
	53,593	55,308
<u>-</u>	<u>198,522</u>	<u>192,993</u>
-	1,380,000	845,488
-	269,000	319,216
<u>-</u>	<u>1,649,000</u>	<u>1,164,704</u>
<u>-</u>	<u>1,855,865</u>	<u>1,364,041</u>

y have been revalued in the 4th quarter 2023.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
Hasings Unitarian Church CIO

On accounts for the year
ended

30th September 2023

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 30th September 2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

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:

A A Suggitt

Date:

23/03/2024

Name:

Alison Suggitt

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

AAT

(if any):

Address:

Section B	Disclosure
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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.