

HASTINGS UNITARIAN CHURCH  
CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION  
REPORT TO CHARITY COMMISSION COVERING THE PERIOD 1  
OCTOBER 2024 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2025  
SUMMARY OF MAIN EVENTS

## Introduction

The Unitarian Church continues to offer a place to meet and worship in freedom of conscience. The Unitarian movement dates back to the mid-sixteenth century. It 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 hire the church for their meetings e.g. Narcotics Anonymous, the Interfaith Forum and the circle dancing group. Much of the church's work is undertaken voluntarily by trustees and members of the congregation who receive no remuneration except for legitimate expenses. The church strives 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.

## Events and achievements

As the church now has no permanent Minister, Sunday services are taken by members of the congregation and ministers or lay preachers from other Unitarian churches. Their services provide a wide range of experience, knowledge and insight. We are fortunate in being able to call upon them.

The church supports a number of registered charities including the Hastings Food Bank, Médecins Sans Frontières and 'Send a Child to Hucklow' (a Unitarian Charity offering holidays for disadvantaged children). The church has also 'adopted' the local charity 'Sussex Prisoners' Families' and has successfully raised funds for them to provide days out for the children of these families.

The church is trying to make itself more widely known in the Hastings & Rother area. A number of initiatives are being planned, including working collaboratively with other Kent & Sussex Unitarian churches and the LDPA (London District & Provincial Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches). Members of the congregation are involved in supporting community-based bodies, e.g. St Michael's Hospice, Police chaplaincy and the East Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

The church is a member of the Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum which promotes community cohesion through dialogue and co-operation between people of different faiths.

The church is fortunate in having among its congregation people who are willing to take on essential roles and duties, e.g., lettings and treasury, without remuneration, to further its aims.

Alison Forsyth, our paid Administrator and Clerk, has proved an invaluable asset not only in terms of internal organisation but also engaging with outside bodies in furtherance of the church and Trustees' aims. Michael Stewart continues to advise the church on investments and also acts as bookkeeper, giving his expertise and time without charge, and the church is very grateful to him.

Pete Sanders stepped down from his rôle as Chairman at the 2024 AGM, but continues to be a Trustee. The church would like to express our thanks to him for the many years he has carried out his duties with

calmness, efficiency and wit. He has been replaced by Dr. David Wood, who is also Secretary & Trustee at the Old Meeting House [Tenterden Unitarian Church].

The church would like to record its thanks to Pat Hitchman and Simon Edson for all their good work in maintaining the building in good condition.

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

## PULPIT REPORT 2024 / 2025

Since September 2024, we have been fortunate in welcoming a wide variety of service leaders to our church and have been able to offer a service every Sunday morning at 11.00 am. As we have no minister or lay pastor of our own, our service leaders are drawn from other Unitarian churches in the southeast of England, notably from Tenterden, Brighton, Lewes, and Horsham as well as London. We also invite the District Minister for the Southeast region to come and give a couple of services each year. In addition, we have been blessed in that many members of our own congregation have given excellent services. We have found that the congregation enjoys the variety of styles of delivery and content offered by a different service leader each week.

Occasionally, we have a congregational service during which everyone is invited to contribute a story, thoughts, a poem, a piece of music or even a work of art around a given theme.

We have continued to make our services available via Zoom and most weeks find that three or four people join the service online. However, following feedback from members of the congregation expressing a preference for live services, we have ceased inviting service leaders to give a service remotely via Zoom.

The congregation were kindly offered a piano of which we took delivery in June. We have an organist who plays the organ and / or the piano for the services on the second and fourth Sundays

of each month, and the live music is much appreciated by all. For all other services, we rely on playing the hymns from CDs recorded by the Unitarian Musical Society, and service leaders are requested to bring with them incidental music on CD or on their phones connected to a speaker.

Alison Forsyth

Administrator

#### HASTINGS UNITARIAN CHURCH LETTINGS REPORT OCT.24 TO SEPT 30TH.

This past church year has run relatively smoothly, and free from the impact of external events, such as local floods etc.

The general ambiance and exceptional acoustics of the church continue to be the preferred venue for four choirs at present :

Harmony One who met once a week on Monday evenings -

The Class choir who meet once a week on Wednesday evenings:

The Bach Choir who meet once a week on Friday evenings:

The Krishna Group meet twice a month on Thursday evenings:

The NFOP (National Federation of Post office Pensioners met once a month -

In the afternoons on the third Thursday, however we lost them before

December 2024 due to falling numbers and disabilities among the group.

Our Saturday Group (Narcotics Anonymous) meets every Saturday morning.

That completes the list of the groups and organisations who regularly hire our Premises, at a cost of £30 a session, (morning, afternoon or evening),

With the exception of the Saturday group who pay a discounted fee of £25.

In addition there are events run largely by congregation members, and supported By donation.

Circle Dancing is a social meeting open to all, they meet every Thursday morning to dance, and they pay a £3 donation.

Our more spiritual event Heart and Soul is held on the last Tuesday afternoon

In the month, also supported by donation.

In January 2025 a new group joined us, Bhagavad Gita, they met on the alternate Thursday evenings to the Krishna group, and followed a similar path.

They left us at the end of June 2025 due to falling attendance.

In addition to our regular hirings and events, we have also hosted one off events.

In March 2025 we held a charitable concert in aid of, Sussex Prisoners' Families,

Organised by the church, with our own organist, at no cost - all donations made

On entry going in full to the charity.

On Saturday the 6th of September our church was hired for a Wedding.

This concludes the report.

Frances Williamson, (lettings secretary).

Hastings Unitarian Church CIO  
Assets and Liabilities as at 30th September 2025

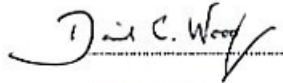
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total	2024
<b>Cash funds:</b>					
Bank Current account	14,273		-	14,273	11,698
Cash in Hand	129		-	129	250
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>14,402</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,402</b>	<b>11,948</b>
<b>Investment assets:</b>					
M&G general fund	137,889			137,889	129,091
TAM AH legacy fund (February 2020) for Ministerial Support		28,458		28,458	26,247
TAM MB legacy fund (March 2022)	60,937			60,937	57,541
<b>Total investment funds</b>	<b>198,826</b>	<b>28,458</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>227,284</b>	<b>212,879</b>
<b>Assets retained for the charity's own use:</b>					
Church building	1,638,336	-	-	1,638,336	1,545,600
Pipe organ	319,357	-	-	319,357	301,280
	<b>1,957,693</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,957,693</b>	<b>1,846,880</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>2,170,921</b>	<b>28,458</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,199,379</b>	<b>2,071,707</b>

**Notes:**

**Investment assets** are shown at valuations as at 30 September.

The Church building and Organ are shown at insurance valuations as at 29 September.  
The Church building was revalued in the 4th quarter 2024.

Approved by the Trustees on the 26 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by



Chair and Trustee



Trustee

**Hastings Unitarian Church CIO**  
**Receipts and Payments Account**  
for the year ended 30th September 2025

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds	2023-24
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Collections	6,004			6,004	5,909
Gift Aid	4,396			4,396	1,847
Grants and other (inc BFUA)	773			773	1,491
Use of Premises - Lettings	7,235			7,235	6,855
Investment Interest - M&G	7,905			7,905	7,352
Donations and collections for local charities	709			709	469
Insurance claim	0			-	0
<b>Sub total (gross income)</b>	<b>27,021</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,021</b>	<b>23,923</b>
<b>Asset and Investment Sales:</b>					
Withdrawals M&G - AH Legacy Fund		26,832		26,832	-
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>27,021</b>	<b>26,832</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53,853</b>	<b>23,923</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Lay Pastor and other Pulpit Fees	3,209			3,209	2,845
Organist's fees and Organ Repairs	995			995	1,651
Church administration	6,100			6,100	4,163
Caretaking and cleaning	1,909			1,909	1,451
Insurances	1,826			1,826	1,604
Lighting - Heating - Water	4,387			4,387	4,619
Repairs and Renewals	1,498			1,498	877
Presentation Equipment	576			576	-
Circle Dancing organiser's fee / music licence	60			60	10

Magazines and Newsletters	37			37	37
Legal Fees	175			0	660
Bank safe custody (& bank fees)	45			45	45
General Assembly Quota	420			420	420
Charitable donations	955			955	270
Donations to local charities	450			450	380
Church Internet	465			465	423
Music and marriage venue licences	200			200	319
Misc expenditure	1,093			1,093	544
<b>Sub-total payments</b>	<b>24,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,400</b>	<b>20,318</b>
<b>Asset and Investment Purchases:</b>					
Purchases TAM Ethical - AH Legacy Fund	168	26,832	-	27,000	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>24,568</b>	<b>26,832</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51,400</b>	<b>20,318</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>3,605</b>
<b>Bank balance last period end</b>	<b>11,698</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,698</b>	<b>8,093</b>
Add: petty cash expenditure not yet reimbursed	121	0	0	121	
<b>Bank balance this year end</b>	<b>14,273</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,273</b>	<b>11,698</b>

Julie C. Wood  
 Chair & Trustee  
 26 April, 2026

Peter Sanders  
 Trustee  
 26 April 2026



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Hastings Unitarian Church CIO

On accounts for the year  
ended

30<sup>th</sup> September 2025

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 30/09/2025 DD / MM / YYYY.

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.

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: 10/11/2025

Name: Alison Suggitt

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

AAT



**Address:** 25 Castleham Business Centre East

Stirling Rd St Leonards on Sea

East Sussex TN38 9NP

**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.