

Gillingham

Baptist

Church

Annual Report 2020

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ELDERS' REVIEW

[on behalf of the Management Trustees]

Introduction

The single most significant influence on church life in 2020 'under the sun' was the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole of the world. Apart from the first twelve weeks of the year, this novel coronavirus has – along with government direction – severely limited the church's ability to function.

Nevertheless, we recognise that even such things are under the wisdom and purpose of God. Jesus told his disciples that during the course of history after his ascension and until his second coming 'there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences.' (Luke 21:11) In 2020 we had a pestilence. But God's Word has not been bound.

Though two lockdowns prevented us from gathering, we used the internet, telephone and Royal Mail to maintain ministry and fellowship. The Lord has kept us safe, and the bond of unity in Christ has remained strong. God has been good to us and we give thanks for his care and blessing.

This annual report is shorter than would otherwise have been the case as there is less to describe. Our active life and witness has been circumscribed by circumstance, but we have continued, and our salvation now is nearer than when we first began 2020. For this, the Lord should have all the glory.

Membership matters

The number of members declined to 22 by the end of the year due to four deaths. Muriel Bolt, Joyce Boughton, Eileen Sparks and Patrick Underwood went home to glory. None succumbed to Covid-19 but rather they reached the end of their days and are now with their Saviour, which is far better.

Quarterly Members' Business Meetings were suspended for most of the year, but we had one in January and were able to hold one further meeting, including the Annual General Meeting, in October.

The Elders and Deacons held one formal meeting, but continued to lead and support church life through continual communication in various ways.

Outreach

Our opportunities to proclaim the gospel through organised activities has been very limited. However, when the church has been able to meet, we have been pleased to be able to welcome visitors. In addition, we have prayed for those we know and for our country during this trying time, asking the Lord to show grace and mercy to many. Even personal witness has been reduced by the need for social distancing, but the Lord has his ways of bringing people to himself. When circumstances allow, we shall consider how to return to a more active witness.

Missionary matters

We are also concerned to spread the gospel to other parts of this country and overseas. We were glad to have visits from Chris Menzfeld of Slavic Gospel Association, and Andrew Alsop, who presented the work of Covenant College in Zambia. Later in the year the church agreed to provide prayer and financial support to this ministry, which equips pastors in a very rural part of Africa.

The church was pleased to be able to agree lump sums to a number of societies and families involved in gospel work in various parts of the world.

REGULATORY INFORMATION

1. History

Christians identifying themselves as Baptists have been gathering for worship in Gillingham since the 1830s. After a while land was given in trust and a chapel was erected. This stipulated that worship should be according to the principles of the Particular Baptists. A church has existed continuously since then and, in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission, was registered as a charity on 19 October 2016.

2. Details

Charity Name: Gillingham Baptist Church, Dorset

Registration Number: 1169769

Address: Gillingham Baptist Church, Newbury, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4HZ

Current Trustees: John Blake, Simon Chase, Peter Gray, Gilbert Muspratt, David Poolman, Peter Wick. These trustees have served for the whole of the calendar year 2020.

3. Structure and Governance

The church has a Constitution and Rules & Regulations which were formally revised and adopted in 2016, pursuant to Charity Commission registration.

The functional operation of the church is intended to reflect the teachings and principles revealed in the Bible. Therefore, the leadership is by elders supported by deacons. All these church officers are trustees and each is appointed by the church meeting of all members, at which approval by a substantial majority is required. Only those persons meeting the Scriptural criteria should be considered and appointed.

Whilst persons in whom the appropriate gifts are seen can be encouraged and developed, we believe these persons are gifted by God and cannot be manufactured. Thus, formal appointment to serve the church is more an act of recognition than of creation.

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	John Blake	Elder	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church
2	Simon Chase	Elder & Pastor	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church
3	Peter Gray	Deacon & Treasurer	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church
4	Gilbert Muspratt	Deacon	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church
5	David Poolman	Deacon	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church
6	Peter Wick	Deacon & Secretary	Members of Gillingham Baptist Church

4. Financial Review

The church believes God will provide and that the chief instrument he will use is the free and voluntary giving of his people. No fund raising is undertaken and no contribution levels are set for members. As an independent church there is no overarching body to provide support, but we believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the direct head of each true church and provides as he pleases. We are grateful to God for providing our needs over 2020, the details of which are in the annual accounts in Appendix 1.

It is not the church's policy to create reserves, however some amount will be retained in order to meet the inevitable demands of buildings that are over a century old. The church officers agreed that £10,000 is the appropriate amount to hold as an operating reserve. Apart from that it is the church's practise to use funds that have been given to further its objects.

5. Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit has been carefully considered and helps to frame the context for all trustee meetings.

As a Christian church we are devoted to the 'advancement of religion', one of the original purposes of a charity and dating back to 1601. In the original sense 'religion' meant Christianity, although subsequent centuries have significantly changed this meaning. Christianity proclaims the Gospel – 'good news' – to all. Once the good news is believed, it must be lived out through love to God and love to our neighbour – Jesus' own summary of the Bible's message. Such an approach in itself is aimed at all the public. And such a message, as a living reality in people's lives, changes both them and their relationships for the better, both personally and for the community. It is the testimony of countless Christians living today that their conversion changed their lives for the better – in ways their families, friends, colleagues and neighbours could observe and benefit from. It is also demonstrable historically and from other parts of the world that where Christian values permeate a society, that society values human life more highly, cares for the vulnerable and marginalised more generously and displays higher levels of honesty and integrity in community and public life. The Christian faith, lived out in the world, measurably benefits all aspects of society.

2020's pandemic has been a challenging time to reach out to the local community. Our web site has information and contact details for the church. When meetings in person have been

possible these have been open to visitors as well as regular attenders. We have been pleased to welcome new faces and will continue to provide an open but Covid secure environment within the constraints of our times.

6. Objectives, Activities, Achievement and Performance

For the first part of 2020 the church held its usual pattern of services, meetings and activities. Lockdown very nearly meant shutdown, but use of the internet enabled twice-weekly Zoom meetings. Whilst our technical prowess fell short of implementing live streaming, Zoom allowed virtual gatherings for the majority of the congregation. Such a context is superior to streaming in that it allows interaction between participants and that helped sustain Christian fellowship.

Whilst government guidance could only conceive of private prayer or public worship, the Bible speaks eloquently of the fellowship of mutual love in Christ. That was the aspect of church life that was most difficult to replicate during lockdowns. By the end of the year, the church was able to hold an in person service on a Sunday and a midweek Bible study, but the governmental direction was still that individuals outside their 'bubbles' ought not to 'interact'. So one of the distinctive marks of Christian life was inhibited by the virus and prohibited by the government.

Jesus said "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) How can a church be a church without such mutual 'interacting'? We long for the day when we may freely express this once more.

Financially the church has paid its way and also made gifts to missionary activity.

In summary, the trustees are thankful to the members and principally to God for the ability to function as a Christian church throughout 2020 despite the difficulties.

RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020

The major challenge the church faced during 2020 was to digest and implement safely the Covid secure environment that was required in order to restart in person meetings. With the invaluable support of officers and particular church members this was achieved and regular Sunday morning and Wednesday evening meetings on the church's premises have been possible at times during the year.

The advantage of a large Victorian chapel is that there is plenty of space for distancing, and plenty of capacity for good ventilation. This meant that we did not have to place restrictions on numbers. The congregation is not large, but the building is, so there was even scope for the occasional visitor.

Other risk management issues of a more routine order have still been overseen by the church officers and the fellowship has benefited from a safe environment during the year.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

For the first part of the year the usual activities of the church continued as normal, but in mid March all the following meetings had to cease. They remain in suspension at year end. During 2021 there may be opportunity to restart some or all these activities.

As circumstances improve and opportunity to recommence meetings is possible, each activity will be reviewed by the leaders and elders in fellowship, and a way forward agreed.

The list of regular meetings is set out below as a reminder of better times;

Bible Roots

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

Ladies' Fellowship

Parent & Toddlers

Two Ys' Club

Coffee Morning

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Gillingham Baptist Church Annual Accounts 2020

Accounts for the year to December 31st 2020	
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GENERAL FUND	
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RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS		TOTAL
Balance brought forward from 2019		£ 5,114.83		
Offerings	£ 7,786.54	NI Payments	£ 1,016.56	
Gift Aid	£ 14,420.00	Building services	£ 1,783.16	
Gift Aid Tax Refund	£ 3,651.25	Coronavirus safety items	£ 202.74	
Gift Aid - Small Donation Scheme	£ 675.00	Buildings & equipment maintenance	£ 1,628.18	
Bank Account Interest Liquidity/Reserve	£ 21.33	Buildings insurance (Chapel) + employer's liability	£ 1,813.76	
Gift from Ladies fellowship	£ 235.00	New Toner cartridge	£ 92.39	
Funeral expenses P Underwood paid	£ 200.00	Sunday Ministry	£ 240.00	
		Pastors Salary	£ 13,476.20	
		Bourne-Romsey Fire certificate	£ 48.00	
		Payroll Services	£ 310.00	
		New communion sets	£ 49.94	
		Copyright Licence	£ 80.00	
		Kitchen items/Cleaning materials	£ 38.00	
		Charity payment re Audit	£ 50.00	
		SGA meeting	£ 75.00	
		Evangelical Times advert	£ 156.29	
		Andrew Allsop	£ 100.00	
	<u>£ 26,989.12</u>			
				<u>£ 21,160.22</u>
		Balance 31st December 2020		£ 10,943.73
	<u>£ 32,103.95</u>			<u>£ 32,103.95</u>

CONTINGENCY FUND

RECEIPTS	TOTAL	PAYMENTS	TOTAL
Balance brought forward from 2019	£ 7,999.30	Total Energy	£ 5,826.00
			£ 5,826.00
		Balance 31st December 2020	£ 2,173.30
	£ 7,999.30		£ 7,999.30

MANSE MAINTENANCE FUND

RECEIPTS	TOTAL	PAYMENTS	TOTAL
Balance brought forward from 2019	£ 15,463.07	Baptist Insurance(Manse)	£ 520.50
Manse rent (nett)	£ 6,423.55		
	£ 6,423.55		
			£ 520.50
		Balance 31st December 2019	£ 21,366.12
	£ 21,886.62		£ 21,886.62

SUMMARY

General Fund	£ 10,943.73	<i>Represented by</i>	
Contingency Fund	£ 2,173.30	Current Account	£ 17,803.12
Manse Maintenance Fund	£ 21,366.12	Reserve Account	£ 3,203.79
		Liquidity manager Account	£ 13,476.24
TOTAL	£ 34,483.15	Total monies held	£ 34,483.15

NOTE

Statement of Assets and Liabilities of the Gillingham Baptist Church membership

Other than the above account balances the assets comprise kitchen equipment, 2 pianos, a laser printer, stack away tables and chairs, games and play equipment, a display stand, sound recording computer, hymn books etc. The value of these is unknown.

ADDRESS OF CHURCH'S BANKERS

Nat West Bank The Commons, Shaftesbury SP7 8JY



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

GILLINGHAM BAPTIST CHURCH (DORSET)

On accounts for the year
ended

31st DECEMBER 2020

Charity no
(if any)

1169769

Set out on 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 **31st December 2020**

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:

Thomas Oaks

Date:

12th March 2021

Name:

THOMAS OAKS

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

N/A

(if any):

Address:

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.

Appendix 2 Gillingham Baptist Church Ladies' Fellowship

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2019

[illegible]

These figures were independently examined by Mrs M Challen and found correct according to records provided, 28 January 2021.

Appendix 3 Gillingham Baptist Church Parent & Toddler Group

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR 2020

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
Balance brought forward 1 January 2020	137.73	Purchase of Play-Doh	4.99
Donations received to 16 March 2020	36.87		
		Balance as at 31 December 2020	169.61
			174.60
	174.60		

I have undertaken an independent examination of the books of account of Gillingham Baptist Church Parent & Toddler Group, and I am satisfied that the above figures represent a true record of the transactions throughout the year ended 31 December 2020.

The transactions relate to the period 1 January 2020 to 16 March 2020 when, owing to Covid-19 government directions, activity ceased for the rest of the year.

Peter J Wick January 2021

Appendix 4 Holding Trustees of Gillingham Baptist Chapel

The governing document of the Trust is the Trust Deed of 1838. Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Trust Deed and the Constitution of Gillingham Baptist Church.

The following persons were the Holding Trustees at 31 December 2020

Mr J A C Blake, 'Sundown', Cucklington, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9PT

Mr R E Burge, 5 Banstead Road, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 9BB

Pastor S V Chase, 27 Bayfields, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4AE

Mr P C Gray, 21 Thrift Close, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 2LE

Mr G Muspratt, 11 Birdbush, Ludwell, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0PR

Mr B Thomason, The Old Malt House, Bridge Street, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1BZ Mr P

J Wick, Oak Cottage, 10 Olde Fairfield, Bourton, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5YG

The Trust properties and assets consist of the Chapel Building and Hall with the Pipe Organ, Fixtures and Fittings, together with the Baptist Manse, situated at Newbury, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5HZ.

The Holding Trustees have no financial administration responsibilities, as there are no trust funds and management of the Manse tenancy has been delegated to the Management Trustees.