

The Oak Community Church

Annual Report: April 2023 - March 2024

The Oak Community Church continues to serve both its congregation and the wider community with dedication and purpose. This report highlights the activities and financial standing of the church over the past year, as part of our submission to the Charity Commission. We remain steadfast in our mission to share God's love to our community through acts of service, spiritual nourishment, and outreach.

Our Ministry and Community Engagement

Sunday Services and Livestreaming

Our Sunday services remain a cornerstone of our ministry. Livestreaming these services has enabled us to reach individuals who are unable to attend in person due to ill health, work commitments, or travel. This initiative ensures that everyone can stay connected to the church, no matter their circumstances. The feedback we have received highlights how meaningful this connection has been for many, particularly during challenging times. For those attending in person, the junior church has remained flexible and dedicated to providing something for our younger ones no matter their age or how many we have each week.

Midweek Prayer Meetings

Our midweek prayer meetings on Zoom have continued to provide a flexible and accessible way for members to gather in prayer and fellowship without the need to leave their homes. This platform has been especially beneficial for those with mobility challenges or tight schedules. The virtual format has also allowed us to engage with members who might otherwise struggle to attend in-person meetings, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. We continue to see many answers to prayer.

Small Group Gatherings

In addition to our larger gatherings, we held some small meetings in homes for Bible study, prayer, and discipleship. These intimate settings have fostered deeper relationships and spiritual growth among participants. These gatherings have also provided a space for members to share their personal faith journeys, encouraging mutual support and understanding within our church family.

Three Days of Prayer

This year, we held three dedicated days of prayer, which have become an essential part of the life of the church. These focused times of collective prayer allowed the congregation to seek God's guidance, intercede for the community, and deepen their spiritual connection. While attendance was relatively low for these times, they still provided spiritual refreshment and prophetic guidance for those who participated.

Collaboration with Local Churches

The Oak Community Church remains an active participant in the "Churches Together in the Crays" initiative. A highlight of this collaboration was the open-air Good Friday service, which brought together believers from various congregations in a shared expression of faith. Events like these reinforce our commitment to unity within the broader Christian community and provide an opportunity to demonstrate our shared values to the wider public.

Community Support Initiatives

Warm Space Initiative

Building on the success of last year, we continued to provide a "warm space" for the local community once a week. This initiative offered a welcoming environment with tea, coffee, and, on occasion, a cooked hot meal. Our dedicated volunteers ensured that everyone who came felt valued and cared for. The warm space has become a vital refuge for many, offering not just physical warmth but also a sense of belonging and support.

Partnership with Bromley Borough Foodbank

We have also continued our partnership with Bromley Borough Foodbank, offering our building as one of their community access points. This partnership has enabled individuals and families in need to access essential food supplies and support in a convenient and welcoming environment. By working together, we have been able to extend our reach and impact in addressing food insecurity in our community.

Santa's Grotto Event

In December, we hosted a Santa's grotto event, offering free access for children to visit Santa and experience a festive atmosphere without the financial burden such events often carry. The event was a resounding success, bringing joy to many families in our community. Volunteers worked tirelessly to create a magical and welcoming environment, and the positive feedback from attendees has been overwhelming.

Planning for the Bi-Annual Church Holiday

Looking ahead, the church has begun preparations for its bi-annual church holiday, scheduled to take place in August 2024. This much-anticipated event offers a time of fellowship, teaching, and relaxation for our congregation. Based on current projections, we anticipate sufficient participation to break even financially, and we are excited about the opportunity it provides to strengthen our church community.

Governance and Financial Update

Safeguarding Measures

The Oak Community Church has increased its focus on safeguarding measures this year to ensure a safe environment for all. Training has been provided to all members and volunteers, emphasizing best practices and responsibilities. In addition, volunteer job descriptions and codes of conduct have been developed and distributed for key roles, reinforcing our commitment to accountability and safety. These steps demonstrate our proactive approach to creating a secure and welcoming space for everyone involved in church activities.

Annual Family Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting, known as the Annual Family Meeting, provided an opportunity to update the congregation on key decisions and the church's financial status. Transparency and open communication remain a priority for the leadership. We used this meeting as a forum to celebrate our achievements, share our challenges, and outline plans for the future, ensuring that every member feels involved in our journey.

Financial Overview

This year presented financial challenges, with a reduction of approximately £6,700 in our overall bank balance. Contributing factors included increased costs, a decline in regular giving, higher expenditure on community ministries, and delays in claiming gift aid returns.

The trustees are taking proactive measures to address these challenges, including tightening expenditure and developing strategies to stabilize the church's financial position. In addition, we are exploring new ways to encourage giving and maximize the impact of our resources. Despite these difficulties, we remain confident in God's provision and are committed to prudent stewardship of the resources entrusted to us.

Conclusion

Despite the financial difficulties faced this year, The Oak Community Church remains committed to serving its members and the community with faith and determination.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported the church this year through their time, talents, and financial contributions. Together, we look forward to continuing our ministry in the year ahead. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to adapting and growing in response to the needs of our congregation and community.

THE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH
SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

Bank Account View*

| | Community Account (General Account) 70856258 | Building Fund Account (Savings Account) 50094870 |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Opening Balance | £6,540.45 | £15,033.66 |
| Income | | |
| Gifts to the church | £29,428.85 | |
| Hall Hire Income | £2,753.00 | |
| Interest and Refunds | | £178.98 |
| Transer between accounts | £3,000.00 | |
| Expenditure | | |
| Employment Costs | £22,280.62 | |
| Running Costs | £9,160.02 | |
| Building Upkeep | £2,983.08 | |
| Charitable Giving | £3,145.00 | |
| Church Ministries | £1,039.04 | |
| Hall Hire Purchases | £439.20 | |
| Transer between accounts | | £3,000.00 |
| Closing Balance | £2,675.34 | £12,212.64 |

* The Oak Community Church operates separate bank accounts. These have previously been used to separate budgets for different purposes. With accounting systems in place these are no longer used for this purpose. The Virtual Fund view provides a breakdown of the different budget funds operated within the charity.

Note: An incorrect credit of £435.77 was shown in the General Account for 2022/23. This has been corrected and reflected in the opening balance of this years accounts.

THE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH
SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

Bank Account Balances

The Oak Community Church Trustees Community Account 70856258

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Balance as at 1 st April 2023 | £6,540.45 |
|--|-----------|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Balance as at 31 st March 2024 | £2,675.34 |
|---|-----------|

The Oak Community Church (Building Fund) Business Reserve Account 50094870

| | |
|--|------------|
| Balance as at 1 st April 2023 | £15,033.66 |
|--|------------|

| | |
|---|------------|
| Balance as at 31 st March 2024 | £12,212.64 |
|---|------------|

THE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH
SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024
 Virtual Fund View*

| | General Fund | Building Project | John 3:16 | Fellowship Fund | Reserves |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Opening Balance | £8,631.70 | £7,484.14 | £1,040.27 | £418.00 | £4,000.00 |
| Income | | | | | |
| Gifts to the church | £29,258.85 | | £40.00 | £130.00 | |
| Hall Hire Income | £2,753.00 | | | | |
| Interest and Refunds | £178.98 | | | | |
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Employment Costs | £22,280.62 | | | | |
| Running Costs | £9,160.02 | | | | |
| Charitable Giving | £2,730.00 | | | £415.00 | |
| Building Upkeep | £2,983.08 | | | | |
| Church Ministries | £1,039.04 | | | | |
| Hall Hire Purchases | £439.20 | | | | |
| Closing Balance | £2,190.57 | £7,484.14 | £1,080.27 | £133.00 | £4,000.00 |

* The Oak Community Church operates a number of virtual funds to separate budgets for different purposes. With accounting systems in place these can be tracked across whichever bank account the finances physically held within.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH**

I report on the accounts of the Oak Community Church for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43 (2) of the Charities Act (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts (under section 43 (3) (a) of the 1993 Act);
- To follow procedure laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43 (7) (b) of the 1993 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 
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Date: 9th August 2024