

Diverse Church

Report of the Trustees

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their report, which covers the period from 1 January 2023 to the year end 31 December 2023, together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis as the total income of the charity is less than the SORP threshold for the year, in line with Charity Commission guidance, CC15d November 2016.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1179441

Correspondence Address

6 St. Martin's Place
London
WC2N 4JH

Trustees

Revd Dr S.M. Wells (Chair)
R. C. Kehoe
A. J. Irwin
P.S. Counsell
V. Taylor-Blackford
K. J. Allen
A. H. Tooms
S. H. Brooke
N. C. J. Dawson (appointed 30th May 2023)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, the Constitution, and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO - Foundation) and was registered with the Charities Commission on 3 August 2018.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The trustees of the charity are responsible for the leadership and management of the charity to fulfil the objects of the charity in line with Christian principles and legal requirements. Appointment of additional trustees is the responsibility of the existing trustees.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Diverse Church was founded in 2014 by Revd Sally Hitchiner, who over the next several years established and developed the organisation, and served as our first National Director. Diverse Church was established and exists to foster Christian communities across the United Kingdom and Ireland that enable young LGBTQIA+ people to celebrate their identity and flourish in faith. These

communities provide a safe space for LGBTQIA+ Christians to share their experience of their sexuality and gender identity, to discuss the interrelation of their sexuality or gender identity and theology, and to support each other. Diverse Church also supports young LGBTQIA+ people for whom faith has been a particularly challenging part of their lives and experiences, who may no longer identify with faith as a result.

The objects of the Church are for the benefit of the public, and are

The advancement of the Christian faith, in particular, but not exclusively, amongst lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) Christians, and human rights, through 1. The promotion of religious harmony; 2. The promotion of a public sentiment that will put an end to discriminatory treatment of LGBTQIA+ Christians; 3. The provision of pastoral support; 4. The provision of theological discussion; 5. And other related activities as the trustees from time to time think fit.

In accordance with its aims, Diverse Church has planned and delivered a range of support and activities throughout the year. This support and the activities were planned with due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

Diverse Church participants become part of online cohorts using a closed Facebook group, and create communities of 50-100 members. Given the situations many of the young LGBTQIA+ people who join Diverse Church have experienced, the welcome into the group is especially important. The beauty and importance of this welcoming process where people, who have often been very isolated, are able to talk to somebody supportive who will listen, potentially even for the first time, cannot be underestimated. It is easy to forget just how powerful and important this is, but a beautiful quote from one of the members sums it up perfectly:

So I'm sure most, if not all, of us have struggled with the idea that we had to choose either our sexual identity or our faith/religion. But being here, it's so comforting and reassuring to have a place/group where both (y)our faith and sexuality can coexist without having to choose one, or be more one way than the other.

There are regular online meetups and discussions for encouragement and support, with communication and support from Diverse Church facilitators and local and national physical meet ups arranged, as an additional layer of development. These online meetups and discussions and physical meetups include training, thematic workshops, encouragement, wellbeing activities and collective acts of worship or reflection.

Aims and purposes

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that Diverse Church fulfils its charitable aims, which are to advance the Christian faith, in particular, but not exclusively, amongst LGBTQIA+ Christians, and human rights, through the promotion of religious harmony, the promotion of a public sentiment that will put an end to discriminatory treatment of LGBTQIA+ Christians, the provision of pastoral support, the provision of theological discussion and other related activities.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities and review of the year

Diverse Church is open to all LGBTQIA+ young adults, with a faith or of no faith, to provide support, and encouragement at what can be very difficult parts of the individual's journey.

During 2023, Diverse Church supported members, parents and carers, friends and wider communities such as schools, youth organisations, community groups and faith-based groups in a range of ways, including peer support groups, training, workshops, mentoring, reflections and social

events. A total of 265 LGBTQ+ young adults, 202 parents and carers, 55 young people (under 18 years old), 22 staff from other organisations, 59 faith leaders and 123 community participants have been supported by DC throughout 2023. Moreover we have a wide public reach, with 4.8K followers on X, 790 Facebook page followers and 2.5K members on our Diverse Church Friends Facebook group. Content and input from the Diverse Church charity is shared with all of these followers.

Many young people continue to join DC, finding community which helps them breathe, think, feel, connect and be themselves. With many LGBTQIA+ people already experiencing oppression and discrimination in their family units, workplaces, hometowns and faith groups, inequalities (e.g. health and education inequalities) can be disproportionately painful for many people involved in DC communities. The need for such safe, brave and inclusive spaces continues. DC takes a blended approach to provision of support and services, with a mixture of online and in person programmes, always prioritising the needs and wellbeing of the communities. In the words of a DC member, *"To have this group, with all of you, is a chance to breathe. I can just be, and I don't have to defend my right to exist. Sometimes I get really tired, but I find I can rest with you."* - DC member during a zoom call

As well as facilitated workshops and sessions lead primarily by the DC Director, DC members themselves have taken opportunities to contribute both within the DC communities and more publicly through DC's platforms. Members have generously shared their stories, offered activities for the wider groups using their skill sets, provided advice and information, mentored, written poems or songs, prayed, campaigned, networked and collaborated. Special events were held throughout the year, often linking with significant calendar dates such as Pride month, Lent and Advent. The willingness of DC members to open their minds, hearts and lives has sustained communities that truly feel connected, as well as resourcing the public and wider society to become more mindful and inclusive in their own communities and lives.

Suggestions and feedback from DC members have been formative in shaping the purpose and work of the charity, and how the communities function. It is important to us in DC to be needs-led, solution-focused, trauma-informed and inclusive in all that we do. The voices, ideas and lived-experience expertise of members are very significant parts of the journey towards truly achieving this.

The final words go to DC members themselves, who summarise the impact of being part of these communities:

"I feel so loved and supported by everyone here."

"Thank you all so much for the wonderful time together. It has been – as always with DC – great to get to know each person. We hear so many negative and hurtful things in life, so to have these countered by all the support and encouragement we share is amazing."

Staff and Volunteers

All areas of Diverse Church are staffed by volunteers who freely give their time and skills, and without whom the charity could not function. The volunteer National Director leads the direction and pastoral care of Diverse Church.

During the year all policies and procedures are reviewed (and updated where appropriate). The Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and kept current in line with expert advice.

Connections

Diverse Church has connections with other charities and organisations, particularly those with a faith connection and / or those with an LGBTQIA+ support or advocacy focus. During the year the National Director and other Diverse Church members were invited to deliver training and facilitate workshops to other organisations on behalf of Diverse Church. These have included other charities, faith-based organisations, youth groups and educative organisations. As an organisation, we

recognise the important work and support that a wide range of organisations are doing, and we take a collaborative, partnership approach.

Diverse Church has been able to provide pastoral, emotional and practical support to young LGBTQIA+ people throughout the year. In all these areas the Trustees are grateful to God for direction and provision, and wish to record their thanks to all the volunteers and participants who have sacrificially given of their time and finance to support and to equip both the Diverse Church cohorts and groups, together with the wider community. As these connections and opportunities to support young LGBTQIA+ people continue to increase, it has been very encouraging to that Diverse Church secured grant funding from Benefact Trust for two years. This has significantly supported the essential, life-giving work of DC and continues to do so.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Finances

As all activities of Diverse Church have generally been carried out by volunteers, fundraising was not previously considered necessary. However, as Diverse Church has grown in both numbers and opportunity, it has become clear that to continue to support the community well, to increase the effectiveness and the reach of Diverse Church and to fulfil the charitable aims, it would be advantageous to be able to fund the release of specialist resources, ultimately leading to the National Director role becoming a full-time remunerated post.


Benefact Trust (Previously All Churches Trust) awarding Diverse Church a total of £20,000 per year for 2022 and 2023. The first payment was received in early 2022 and the final payment in January 2023.

Ongoing fundraising and funding opportunities continue to be a priority for DC to build upon the vital support we provide, and to grow towards sustainability for the future.

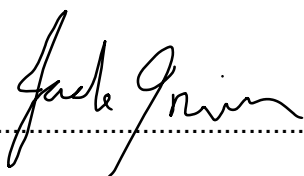
Reserves policy

The Charity has a Reserves Policy that identifies a prudent level of reserves, based on holding an amount equal to circa six months operating costs. This is always under regular review and will be updated as fundraising activities allow the implementation of the strategy for establishing remunerated key posts within Diverse Church.


Approved by order of the board of Trustees on 13 June 2024, and signed on its behalf by



..... Rachel Kehoe - Chair of Trustees (appointed 15th January 2024)



..... Jade Irwin – Trustee and National Director

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Charity Name DIVERSE CHURCH		No (if any) 1179441		CC16a
	Receipts and payments accounts				
	For the period from 01/01/2023	Period start date 01/01/2023	To 31/12/2023	Period end date 31/12/2023	

Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Voluntary Receipts	3,411	-	-	3,411	3,022
Grant Funding	20,000	-	-	20,000	20,000
Charitable Activities	630	-	-	630	545
Gift Aid	1,859	-	-	1,859	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	25,900	-	-	25,900	23,567
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total receipts	25,900	- 0	- 0	25,900	23,567
A3 Payments					
Cost of Charitable Activities	15,503	-	-	15,503	15,787
Governance Costs	806	-	-	806	787
Fundraising Costs	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total	16,309	-	-	16,309	16,574
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total payments	16,309	- 0	- 0	16,309	16,574
Net of receipts/(payments)	9,591	-	-	9,591	6,993
A5 Transfers between funds	- 0	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	20,801	-	-	20,801	13,808
Cash funds this year end	30,392	-	-	30,392	20,801

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Current Account	30,392	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Total cash funds	30,392	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
	Details	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name		Date of approval
	<i>R. Kehoe</i>	Rachel Kehoe		24-09-2024
	<i>Jade Irwin</i>	Jade Irwin		26-09-24

Independent Review – Accounts Year ending 31/12/23

Company: Diverse Church

Address: 6 St. Martin's Place
London
WC2N 4JH

We have carried out an independent review of the accounts provided by Rachel Kehoe on behalf of the above business.

During the review, the following checks were carried out:

- Check of each transaction on the bank statements provided including balances brought forward/carried forward and who to/from against the spreadsheet provided.
- Check receipts and income/expenditure against the information provided.

I can confirm that whilst conducting our review we found a minor discrepancy in the way that two items were allocated, these totalled £163.11 and were made up of the following two items:

£143.88 – Zoom
£19.23 – Amazon

The above items were expenses refunded but coded to income. Ultimately though, reallocating them to the correct place doesn't impact the figures given on the CC16a as they offset each other and are of an immaterial amount. Therefore, I'm happy the figures given on the CC16a are correct and ok to be submitted.

Should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards



Date: 03/09/24

aat AAT Licensed
Accountant