



Hearsall Baptist Church
Churches Together in Earlsdon
and Chapelfields

Contact:

MINISTER

Vacant

TREASURER

Mrs Julia LePoidevin

SECRETARY

Mrs Anne Thompson

www.hearsallbaptist.org

Queensland Avenue, Coventry. CV5 8FE.

2024 Trustee Report for Hearsall Baptist Church Charity No. 1188555

Administrative Information:-

Queensland Avenue, Chapelfields, Coventry, CV5 8FE. Registered with the Charity Commission on the 16th March 2020. We adopted the Governing Document provided to the Baptist Union by their solicitors, on the 2nd of October 2019 at a church member's meeting.

Minister:- Reverend David Sutcliffe, (only paid member of staff), left in September 2023.

Elected Trustees:- Martin Prue, Nick Leonard and Eric Bremner.

Ex-Officio members Anne Thompson (secretary) and Julia LePoidevin (treasurer)

Aim and Purposes

Hearsall Baptist Church Trustees, have the responsibility of promoting worship, the mission of the church, the practical aspects of managing the buildings and activities taking place on our premises, and as such have six main duties:-

A Ensuring our charity is carrying out its purpose for public benefit.

B Complying with the charity's governing documents and the law.

C Acting in our charity's best interests.

D Managing the charity's resources responsibly.

E Acting with reasonable care and skill.

F Ensuring our charity is accountable.

The Trustees are nominated by the church members and voted for at church meetings, by all members who have at least six months standing. Church members can only stand for election after they have been members for at least 12 months. The trustees serve for a minimum of three years, then can be re-elected for another three year period, but after that must stand down for at least a year.



Registered Charity 1188555 operating as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

There are various specialisms within the group at present, and one of the trustees is also the safeguarding trustee.

At present we have forty-four members. Our congregation is more on the upper age group side, with one or two young families. There was a Sunday school (except during the Covid lockdown), although the facility continued online. However it has been difficult to get this started again regularly and we have had an all-age service once a month and with Parade Services and occasional different services, this seems to be all we can manage with the volunteer leaders we have.

The trustees meet monthly except for Easter and Christmas. The average level of attendance is 80%. The trustees discuss actions and take recommendations to the church members to vote on the outcomes. The meetings of the church members are held nine times a year. Our AGM is held in July and includes all the organisations using our rooms and our own groups and post holders are invited to submit a written report to be included in a booklet, which is available in print and online before the AGM. The Baptist Union offer resources and advice for all the various facets of the functions we are responsible for and issue guidelines to us and have solicitors which are recommended by them.

The Baptist Union hold the deeds for the church property and the Heart of England Baptist Association hold the deeds for the Manse, which is a separate property a few streets from the church. We have invested in redecorating the manse in preparation for renting it out to provide some income for the church as we are not calling a new Minister at this time. All certificates and checks were done in preparation for this and we are awaiting some tenants, with the proviso that if we need the manse for a Minister we can get them to vacate it. The trustees are also responsible for the upkeep of this terraced property. At the church we are having to replace the main heating boiler in the church at a cost of around £7,000.

Ecumenical Relationships

Hearsall Baptist Church is a member of Churches together in Earlsdon and Chapelfields (CTEC). There are five churches in this group, two Anglican, one Methodist and one Roman Catholic and ourselves.

The Ministers of these churches meet together regularly to discuss joint activities and to offer each other support. They also have joint meetings with the CTEC committee. There are joint initiatives which have been undertaken, such as providing finance for a Christians against Poverty worker who provides finance and debt advice to people. Another one is the Good Neighbours Project, which started with CTEC and is now under the auspices of Hope Coventry, who pay the wages of the workers and provide legal help and support. This has spread to other areas and Coventry City Council have financed the workers in some of the areas. The churches provide premises for certain events such as afternoon teas and socials. Volunteers visit elderly and lonely housebound folk for company.

There are also joint services run with all the churches taking turns and also Lent Lunches and a joint meal for fellowship during the week of prayer for Christian Unity in January. The proceeds from the Lent lunches are split between Cafod and Christian Aid. Most months there is also a prayer breakfast, hosted by each church in

turn. The Charity supported by CTEC this year is called Coventry Haven, a charity which supports women who suffer from domestic abuse and violence. Last year it was Wildtracks, which is an environmental charity saving areas of rainforest and rehabilitating monkeys and other wildlife into the wild in Belize.

Public Benefit

The community rooms adjoining to the church are used by many community groups, these include, Al Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, Youth Organisations such as Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Beavers and Scouts. There is also a dance group, a stamp and coin club, local Morris Men, a choir and a School reunion group. We now also have a children's art group once a month on a Saturday morning. Various other community events may be held here throughout the year. There is also a branch of Sureway Assembly of God Church meeting in our hall on Sundays. We have lost a couple of groups since the pandemic.

Other groups which are considered as part of the church outreach are a Song and Storytime Group for pre-school children, a lunch club for the elderly and a conversation group called Talking English, for people whose first language is not English. During the Covid restrictions this Conversation group has kept in touch by WhatsApp. This group has now however finished meeting in person.

Mission and Evangelism

Helping those in need demonstrates our faith. We collect items for the food bank on the first Sunday of the month. At Christmas we managed to support Coventry City Mission in their gift giving appeal, by either collecting money for them to buy presents or people ordering them to go direct using an Amazon Wish List Facility. During Christian Aid Week we had a monetary collection, and people in the church took envelopes just to their own neighbours and then had them dropped back.

At Christmas the members vote for a few charities to support as part of our giving. Also there are collections at various times, when there is a particular need, such as floods in Bangladesh or similar. Some members have also volunteered at foodbanks or other Charity initiatives. We managed to obtain our silver environmental award with A Rocha after great efforts by our eco-trustee. Having services about the environment and being involved in the River Sherbourne Project with other churches and organisations such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust had managed to gain us this. Now that the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust have gained their grant to open up our local river, the River Sherbourne, there are practical projects people can also be involved in and community activities held in some of the areas.

Church Services

All are welcome to attend our services and we like to think we are very inclusive and welcoming. Our average weekly attendance is about 40-50 normally. This number increases at festivals and often numbers are swelled by visiting family and grandchildren. At Christmas we like to try and include them in our nativity service. We normally have four parade services in the year when the youth organisations are encouraged to join us and join in. A very popular event is our harvest festival service, followed by coffee and cake and an auction of the fresh fruit and vegetables, with the

funds going to an aid charity, such as Operation Agri or similar. In 2023 the proceeds went to the Coventry Food Bank.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate the events of life. There were three Baptisms planned for last year, but these had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus lockdown. We have since been able to conduct these and gained new church members.

Our energy costs are still very high. We started new contracts in February this year, after having horrendous quotes from several utility bidders. Our electricity bills for each of the winter months were over £1,000 and gas about £250.00 per month.

We were able to have a Nativity Service and a Carol service at Christmas and serve refreshments, as we would have done before Covid, so that was wonderful.

Our congregation is mostly elderly, and only two of them have not returned after Covid, but throughout the time the services have been available as an audio format online through our website or latterly as a podcast. For those not able to access that we have provided printed and CD copies. We found this to be a good way of doing things with a high quality. We were producing a podcast titled "Knowing You Jesus", with a more shortened format now with a message and readings and some music. There are far less people who access it now, but it is still valuable to those who are not able to attend. After our Minister left at the end of September we were not able to offer these podcasts and have had to find preachers to fill the pulpit.

One of our Bible Study home groups has continued to meet on Zoom and the other has finished for a while.

Hearsall is famous for a five-pointed star, which is lined with LED lights and placed at the top of the church tower every Christmas, and can be seen from quite a long distance away. With energy prices spiralling, we put this on a timer so it only comes on when it is dark.

Financial Review

We ended our financial year year with a deficit of £7773.00. The balance sheet reserve has closed at £54,609.00. The figure for the pension fund deficit was £6,000 but has now been revalued. Our monthly payment to this is now only £1 from August, after an agreement made with an insurance group. As our Minister has left and the pension schemes have changed, we have now opted out of the scheme and paid a discharge fee of £1,000 to do this. This does not affect the pensions of our previous Ministers in any way. Our principal source of income is voluntary giving. We re-negotiated our property insurances to reduce payments.

Vision for the Future

We have been trying to find a way of replacing our buildings. Our vision for the future is to try and reduce the footprint of our buildings, which are not economical or environmentally friendly to heat. This is to future-proof our existence in the community for another fifty years or so. The Community rooms are ninety years old and the church itself was built in the 1960's. We have been trying to find a way to do

this for several years and were waiting to go forward with a local developer, who is trying to make this financially possible for us, by having a profit from a project of their own on half of our site.

Last year we found out that we may not be able to do this as the latest plan involved two GP surgeries having a joint building on the site. There is not enough parking to make this viable, so there is no point going to pre-planning with this. It could only work if they had the whole site. We have now suspended talks with this developer.

We acknowledge that our energy bills are having an impact on our finances and that we have an ageing congregation who are not able to fulfil roles within the church and are also finding it difficult to find people to take on the responsibility of becoming trustees in this more legal world. The age of our buildings and the cost of repairs is also a worry

Our Regional Minister came to talk to the trustees in January to see if he could help us find a way forward and he had been talking to our Minister before he left. They had thought about forming a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) as a way to avoid closing our church altogether and splitting up the church family. We have also been approached by the local United Reformed Church that, we had some links with in the past, about whether we could form a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), with them and we talked to our Regional Minister about this and had a meeting with the elders from this church. We have had four shared services at both churches over the last few months and both congregations were informed of the idea in March last year and the church members of each church voted to explore this option.

The Minister of the URC Church also had responsibilities for two other churches so the idea was that as Hearsall's Minister wanted to cut down his hours before retiring, he would be able to fill in the other hours. In the event he found a part-time post elsewhere and left at the end of September 2023.

We have had a questionnaire consultation over the hopes, concerns and questions about this and have fed back the answers we could give so far. We had a vision day last July to see what ideas both congregations had for the future. The next step was to form a group from both churches to explore further. We also had an anonymous straw poll to see how many people would be willing to attend this church as part of an LEP, before we proceeded further to take a formal vote.

The plan was for us to use their premises and sell ours. To that end we have had to consult the Baptist Union Solicitors to find out about our Ultimate Trusts and who would receive the proceeds if we sold up and what the terms of any limitations would be. We were advised by them that the best way forward would be to declare Baptist Model Trusts over the older schoolroom part of the building, which would widen the purposes that any proceeds from the land or building could be used for. We did this in November 2023.

At the September 2023 Church meeting the members voted to explore in principle joining with Holyhead Road United Reformed Church to become a local ecumenical partnership (LEP) and to put the buildings up for sale on the open market.

On 6th March at Hearsall Member's meeting the vote was carried 19 to 2 to formally form an LEP with Holyhead Road United Church. The name of the new Church will be Sherbourne Community Church.

The Church was put up for sale with Holt Commercial in January 2024 and on the 6th March the Church resolved to authorise the Deacons to sell Hearsall Baptist Church for no less than £750,000 at their discretion, having regard to advice from Ross Bendall at Holt Commercial in relation to section 117-121 of the Charities Act 2011.

We had a number of Faith Groups view the building and one developer. We experienced quite a lot of resistance from some people in the church and some members of the community as they had strong ties to the building and the community have got used to having the star lit up at Christmas. This led to a lot of publicity in the local community magazine and the Coventry Evening Telegraph and BBC CWR. However it is the members of the church who are legally responsible for making decisions about the building.

Unfortunately a local Labour Councillor decided to raise a petition to locally list the building, probably as part of an election campaign. This has affected a few of the groups who might have wanted to buy the building. The Conservation officer has visited and put together a report and the Council will meet to decide whether to go forward to the Consultation stage.

We had a deadline for interested parties to submit unconditional offers and after this three were at the head of the list. One stood out over the others and offered slightly more so that this satisfied conditions under section 119 of the Charities Act. They are a Christian Group and are happy to continue some of the traditions that we had, such as putting up the star at Christmas. We are therefore hopeful that the community and the protest group are happy with this solution. We know that keeping the building was their aim and although developers may have knocked it down and rebuilt had they succeeded in making a reasonable offer, it seems in today's climate, that would be a very expensive option, unless a larger area of land was available to build enough to make a profit.

On the 15th April the Deacons met to sign a resolution to accept the Valuation Report for the Charities Act. A sharing agreement is being drawn up to address the financial implications of forming the LEP. On the 25th April the incoming church and Hearsall Trustees signed the contract and contracts were exchanged on the 30th April. The Faith Group who bought the building are Genesis International Church who work under the name MARPE. They are decorating the building and doing repairs and hope to be worshipping there from the 7th July and then will invite people from Hearsall to attend one of their services and have a look at the work they have done on the building.

Although only obliged to give one months notice, our room users had been given six months to vacate the building by 31st March 2024. Many of them have been accommodated at the new Church. This has been a difficult transition period. Our last service was on 31st March, Easter Sunday, followed by a buffet lunch. Many of our past congregation attended this. We deregistered Hearsall as a place of worship by signing a form 77, at Coventry Register Office on Friday 5th April. We think about half

our congregation will attend the new church. Two of our Trustees have become part of the leadership team of the new Church.

It has been a difficult time and a sad one, but the decision had to be made. Many of our members had been involved in the church from when they were children attending the Sunday School and one of them is 100 this July. The schoolroom buildings themselves will be 100 years old in 2028.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Hearsall Baptist Church

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out on pages 1 and 2

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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed:



M D Spafford FCA FCCA

Luckmans Duckett Parker Limited

1110 Elliott Court

Herald Avenue

Coventry

CV5 6UB

11th July 2024

HEARSALL BAPTIST CHURCH
RECEIPTS & PAYMENT ACCOUNT for Year ended 31st March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023/24	Total 2022/23
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary giving		28,212			34,363
Collections		485			2,342
All other voluntary receipts		19,089			17,225
Gift Aid recovered		5,519			5,289
Investment income		1,304			455
Total Receipts		54,609		0	59,674
PAYMENTS					
Clergy and staffing costs		19,102		19,102	33,924
Preparation Manse Rental		7,225		0	0
Hall and Church running costs combined		20,658		20,658	25,054
Church running costs		0		0	0
Hall running costs		0		0	0
Mission giving and donations		5,538		5,538	7,280
Legal/accountancy /other one off fees		2,452		2,452	405
Licences		0		0	0
Subscriptions		617		617	946
Administration and Printing		1,268		1,268	1,384
Miscellaneous		4,544		4,544	568
IT/Telephone		978		978	1,070
Catering		0		0	0
Cancelled cheques previous year		0		0	100
		62,382		55,157	70,731
Excess of receipts over payments		-7,773		55,157	-11,057
Transfers between funds					
Cash at bank and in hand at 31st March 2024		54,259			

HEARSALL BAPTIST CHURCH
STATEMENT OF BALANCES as at 31st March 2024

	2023/2024			2022/2023		
	Opening balance	Deficit for year	Closing balance	Opening balance	Deficit for year	Closing balance
Reserves B/fwd	61,934	7,775	54,259	72,991	11,057	61,934
Previous year adjustment	61,934	7,775	54,259	72,991	11,057	61,934
			<u>54,259</u>			
Represented by:						
Unrestricted funds						
General fund			54,259			58,922
Social committee			-			2,810
Star			-			302
			<u>54,259</u>			<u>62,034</u>
Current Assets						
Debtors and prepayments			600			
HMRC Gift Aid Claim Due			4,770			1,214
Current liabilities						3,301
Balance carried forward			<u>54,259</u>			<u>62,034</u>
Bank & Investment						
Current Account	24,259			24,047		
Bonds	30,000			40,075		
	<u>54,259</u>			<u>64,122</u>		

Out minister left in September 2023 and has not been replaced.
We have had additional costs in preparing the manse for rental of £7225.00,
We have paid out sale of church costs of £1986.00.
Auditors fee 600.00
Total receipts this year were £54609.00 with £5519.00 of this Gift Aid claimed.
We currently have £30000.00 invested in bonds.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on the

Anne Thompson

Anne Thompson
Secretary/Trustee

Julia Lepoidevin

Julia Lepoidevin
Treasurer/Trustee

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