

WEST PARK CHURCH – ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

1 Details of Charity

Name: The Stable Trust (“the Church”)

Charity Registration No: 251378

Principal office: West Park Church, Connaught Road, Wolverhampton

Names of Trustees: S Doyle, R Gough, P Bradley, A Male, J Wilkes, A Sargent, C Smith, I Leadbeater

2 Governance

The Charity is a charitable trust established under a Deed of Trust dated 22 December 1967. The current practice is for office holders in the Church, namely Elders and Deacons, to be appointed as Trustees. The day to day operations of the Trust are conducted in the name of West Park Church.

The Elders of the Church meet formally at least twice per month, and meet with the Deacons once each month.

The Trustees have identified the only major risk to the achievement of their objectives as being the level of income received by the Church from donations made by its members, which has not changed significantly in the last 10 years.

3 Objectives

The objective of the Trust is to promote the Christian Faith.

The means of achieving this objective can be broadly summarised under three headings

- Teaching and training Christians (primarily but not exclusively members of West Park Church) to deepen their knowledge, understanding and experience of the Christian Faith;
- Communicating the Christian Faith to those who are not members of the Church and are not adherents of the Christian Faith; and
- Encouraging every Church member to be an ambassador for the gospel and to use their initiative and take opportunities to speak about their faith, and providing pastoral care for Church members.

4 Achievements and Performance

The year under review was marked by a continued emphasis on word and prayer, with consecutive Bible teaching every Sunday, and normally at the mid-week meeting too. The minister takes most Sunday services and contributes to many mid-week meetings also. However, the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has led to restrictions on public gatherings and face to face contact, which since March 2020 has prevented pastoral visiting and open-air evangelism. This is explained in a separate paragraph of the report. For the same reasons, in March 2020 the Church suspended all of the **regular activities** in pursuit of its objectives, with the exception of:

- Two weekly Sunday, and one midweek (Tuesday) services of worship, the central part of which is the preaching and teaching of the Christian gospel to build the faith and understanding of Christians and to challenge others who may be present. During extended periods of the year under review Government restrictions led to closure of the building for meetings and it was necessary to quickly develop ways of broadcasting services by other means. We were able to harness YouTube immediately, and fairly quickly introduced live streaming of services. Although a proportion of Church members were able to resume attending services when lockdown eased in July 2020, many felt unable to, and for these it was important to continue with online services (or, in a small number of cases, delivering CD recordings of services every week). The online arrangements proved invaluable during the second, briefer, closure of places of worship in November 2020, and look set to remain a feature of church life for many members well into 2021; and
- The limited activities of the Church this year have taken place in the Church building. The pandemic disrupted normal arrangements for stewarding, gardening, catering, and other practical matters, although a smaller than usual number have continued to attend to the gardens and grounds, and we have employed external cleaners to cleanse the building every week since the building re-opened for services in July 2020.

In 2020 the following **additional one-off activities** took place:

- online presentation by the Christian Institute when they outlined the work of their organisation and sought prayerful support;
- A meeting led by Creation Ministries International in October 2020; and
- -A presentation by SASRA.

On the two Saturdays leading up to Christmas we distributed leaflets around neighbouring properties advertising our online Christmas services.

The Church maintains a website which provides information about the Church and its activities (www.westparkchurch.co.uk). This year it has generated a higher than usual volume of enquiries about the Christian faith, as well as facilitating people to attend services and special meetings.

Many of the sermons preached in the Church are uploaded onto a website dedicated to preaching, and feedback has shown that these are heard by people in the UK and in other countries.

The suspension of activities has no doubt given most of us ample time to reflect, and the team who have faithfully run the monthly Friendship Circle meetings were no exception to this. After 26 years, the Team decided during 2020 to lay down this responsibility. The gratitude of the Church is hereby placed on record for the unstinting service given by the team over the years.

The Church also promotes the Christian Faith through the work of partners in other places, and does this primarily through financial support and praying for their work to succeed. The groups in question have the same or broadly similar objectives to the Church, and in 2020 included the following:

- Rool Lal Ram, India
- Denis and Edna Goodwin, Gibraltar
- Slavic Gospel Association (Timothy Korches, Romania) (SGA)
- Albanian Evangelical Mission (AEM)
- Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF)
- Pastors Training International (PTI)
- Missionary Aviation Fellowship

Most of these provide regular written reports thus demonstrating accountability to the Church.

During 2020, one of the founder members of the Church, John Dimbylow, died. John had been a true stalwart in the work, loyally attending every meeting, giving practical help, and seeking to encourage others in their faith. He always had a keen interest in foreign missions, and he played a part when the Church drew up its missionary support policy about 20 years ago, being one of a small team whose recommendations were approved by the Church at that time.

We rejoiced in December 2020 when Peter and Aretha Philpott announced the safe arrival of their son, Titus.

The following factors affect the ability of the Church to achieve its objectives:

- The availability of Church members to contribute their time, energy and financial resources to the life, work and witness of the Church. We recognise with pleasure that during this exceptionally challenging and difficult year, our members have taken it upon themselves to look out for one another, running errands, making phone calls and making sure that the most needy and vulnerable in particular are safe and well; and
- The willingness and ability of Church members to be individual ambassadors for the Christian Faith wherever they are.

Note: The Charity does not undertake material fundraising activities, and holds no material investments.

5 Financial Review

A Financial Position

The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 showed an operating loss of £2,166 with cash balances held of £72,551.

B Principal Financial Management Policies

The Trust operates two current accounts. Monthly bank reconciliations are carried out on these accounts. Two signatures (from a list of three authorised signatories) are required for each cheque regardless of the amount.

Monthly management accounts are operated on a cash flow basis showing income and expenditure on a cash received basis. The annual audited accounts include a profit and loss account and balance sheet using an accruals basis.

Property is valued in accordance with the last insurance valuation dated 16 November 2012.

Monthly management accounts are presented to the officers of the Church along with the presentation of quarterly cashflow statements to the Church. Annual accounts are presented at the Church AGM and audited accounts presented at a meeting of the Trustees of the Trust. These audited accounts are required to be submitted to the Charities Commission by 31 October each year.

C Reserves Policy

The officers of the Church have set up a designated 'building reserve account' to meet any large unexpected expenses. Any surplus funds after the day to day operating running costs are transferred to this reserve account. The Reserves Policy is reviewed annually by the officers of the Church in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines.

D There are no funds held in deficit. The Trust's policy is to never borrow any money from financial institutions.

E Principal funding sources

Funds come from the voluntary contributions from Church members and HMRC tax reclaims thereon. Additional income is derived from individual gifts and bank interest.

F Depreciation of Assets

The Trust does not hold any depreciating assets. It's only assets are property; the Church building and two houses in Park Road West, Nos.20 & No.21. The sale of 21 Park Road West is in process.

Investments: the Church does not currently have an investment policy. The relatively low value of the amount available to save/invest, is the main reason why the leadership have decided against having a formal policy at this time.

6 Plans for Future Periods

Additional efforts to promote the Christian Faith will be considered in the year ahead, including continuing open air preaching, distributing literature, continuing to train and equip Church members, and holding special meetings including ReachAcross and SGA.

It is also intended to begin a small group for men for training in aspects of church life and discipleship, as part of the drive to bring the brethren on, and if possible to widen the pool of leaders in various aspects of church life.

7 Public Benefit Statement

The promotion of the Christian faith leads to deep-rooted changes for the better in the lives of those who embrace it, and these changes are evident in the behaviour and attitude of Church members, for example in the way they conduct themselves as citizens, employees, parents, and neighbours. This is also borne out in the corporate life of the Church as it provides a place where people are befriended, encouraged and helped in various ways through the weekly activities and special events.

8 Coronavirus Pandemic 2020

As part of a general "lock down", the Government closed all places of worship in March 2020. Aware of the rapidly deteriorating situation we had already considered contingency arrangements and the purchase of equipment to facilitate live streaming of services. For the first few weeks, services were pre-recorded, or broadcast "live" on our public YouTube

channel, using iPhones. After a few weeks it became possible to broadcast live using the necessary camera and associated equipment. For those without internet access, CDs of services were (and continue to be) produced and delivered to their homes every week.

The Government partially relaxed the restrictions at the beginning of July 2020, and allowed places of worship to reopen provided they carried out a risk assessment and made premises as “Covid secure” as possible. Following the guidance, we quickly reconfigured the building, so as to allow the use of both floors simultaneously, with a one-way system, limited use of toilets and entrances, mandatory wearing of face coverings (except in very limited cases), and social distancing. Singing, breaking of bread, and close contact has not been possible. Weekly cleaning by an outside contractor since July 2020 has been arranged. This combination of measures has enabled members of the congregation, and visitors, to attend (by invitation) morning services in the building from mid-July 2020, and a much smaller number have been invited to the Sunday evening and mid-week services. It has been the clear position of the Church to comply in full with Government guidelines.

Unfortunately, the national and local infection rate rose during the autumn, and the Government imposed a further lock down, lasting for most of November 2020, during which the congregation relied, as before, on YouTube or CDs, supplemented by weekly emails containing details of every service, and news and information. We were allowed to reopen the building from the beginning of December 2020, and have continued to do so since then, despite a further general lockdown from early January 2021.

Throughout this time, no cases of Covid 19 have been traced back to any activity taking place in our building, although several members have unfortunately caught the virus from other sources. At the time of writing, infection rates are beginning to fall and the most vulnerable groups are being vaccinated. It is hoped that the Annual Report for 2021 will be able to record that during the year the life work and witness of the Church returned to closer alignment to Scriptural norms.

February 2021



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

Charity Name

The Stable Trust

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2020

Charity no
(if any)

251378

Set out on 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

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 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: R J Bourike

Date: 11th June 2021

Name: Ronald James Bourike

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

ACIB (retired)