



Annual Report April 2022 to March 2023

This year saw Riverside activities and general life return to 'normal' at Burton Renewal Fellowship – known as 'Riverside Church' - a church with charitable status.

The objectives of the charity continued to remain as they have been since its inception:

- the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the doctrines outlined in the Trust Deed,
- the relief of those in conditions of need, hardship, distress or aged.
- The advancement of education on the basis of Christian principles, without prejudice as explained by the terms outlined in the Trust Deed.

The Chair of the Trustees resigned unexpectedly in May 2022 for personal reasons and Leum Harris agreed to take on the role initially on a temporary basis and then later in the year, on a permanent basis. This meant that the team of five senior leaders, who were all trustees, reduced to four - all of whom continued to have equal and joint leadership of the church.

It became apparent that the planned staffing structure consisting of a full time Community & Partnerships Manager, part time Children's Worker & Administrative Assistant, part time Youth & Community Worker and part time cleaner was not tenable in the long-term. Whilst the charity's trustees agreed that a focus on the community was right, the day-to-day running of the church, particularly during a time when it was difficult to recruit volunteers and when the number of trustees had reduced by 20%, needed to be addressed. Following the appropriate processes, a full time Operational Manager was appointed.

During the year, the Operational Manager undertook actions to ensure the building remained safe and viable long term. This included measures such as having the church's gas meter moved out of the cellar (which contained asbestos), arranging for an EICR of the electrics, purchasing a new commercial cooker and extractor, and commissioning a structural survey of the buildings - with the latter in itself creating a new list of actions which will start to be addressed during the next year.

In line with Christian beliefs that we are stewards of this planet, as well as the wider global movement to reduce our impact on the environment, a number of staff and volunteers undertook various training on this matter. In addition, funds were secured to install loft insulation, as well as to replace inefficient boilers and lights. After a very long lead time owing to global supply and demand issues, a new sound system was installed towards the end of the financial year. It is anticipated that this will improve the audio experience of

those in attendance at meetings in the main church room, as well as for those who tune in digitally.

Riverside Church continued to hold weekly Sunday services - some of which were also live streamed earlier in the year - until technical difficulties prevented this from taking place again until the last few weeks of the year. As well as the typical Sunday Services, a number of special ones took place:

- 17th April 2022: 'Escape Room style Easter Service
- 31st October: Hope & Light Messy Church
- 11th December 2021: Christmas Magic Show
- 18th December 2021: Christmas Carol Service

Along with their volunteer teams, the Children's Worker and Youth & Community Worker were both encouraged to see the numbers of children and youth attending their sessions continue to grow. It has not been unusual for in excess of 30 children and youth to attend on Sunday morning. As reflective practitioners, the Children's and Youth Workers made minor tweaks to the practical arrangements for the children and youth in order to meet the diverse needs of those attending.

Some small groups for adults experienced changes in leadership and membership but the focus of these groups remained the same: prayer and pastoral support. Some also used the time to study the Bible and delve deeper into the themes explored on Sundays.

Emerging from the pandemic also impacted on the community-based activities at Riverside. Some of the more long-standing activities had returned during the previous year and started to grow substantially again during this year. Meanwhile, the challenges that had arisen as a consequence of the pandemic, as well as those caused by the cost of living crisis exacerbated the need for different types of activities and support.

Essential funds were secured from a range of sources and these provided:

- access to free warm, safe spaces for people
- new, quality resources for groups,
- new activities for the community
- a greater variety of warm drinks and snacks for clients
- the sharing of cost-cutting tips

Throughout the year, appropriate representatives of the church also continued to support children at local schools. Two staff members led Collective Worship (in person for the first time since March 2020) at a local primary school on alternate weeks and a total of seven young people received one-to-one support for an hour on a weekly basis – two at a local

high school and five at a primary school. One-to-one support at the primary school was and continues to be delivered in partnership with TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) – a national charity in receipt of a number of awards.

The playgroup, Jelly Tots, which is for parents/carers and children from new-born up to pre-school, continued to be extremely popular, making the most of the safe outdoor space, as well as the large indoor warehouse. The group celebrated its 10th birthday by purchasing £500 worth of new toys thanks to some funding from the Community Foundation's Covid Recovery Fund. In order for this group to support parents/carers as effectively as possible, a separate Childminders' Support Group was established on a different morning, so that Childminders with large groups of children could have their own bespoke group, in which best practice could be exchanged. The establishment of this separate group benefited both sets of clients.

Meetings were held with staff and volunteers from Burton Mind, to see whether there would be demand for a Wellbeing Hub. The lag between being referred for counselling and an appointment becoming available can be considerable - particularly coming out of the pandemic. Burton Mind kindly agreed to share details of the weekly Wellbeing Hub drop-in with anyone who was waiting for an appointment. Even when the Wellbeing Hub doubled as Warm Space for five months, numbers at this particular session were not as predicted, so reluctantly, having been open since mid-September 2022, the Wellbeing Hub closed at the end of March. However, following the temporary closure of Burton Library, the Place of Welcome which is usually hosted there moved into our building temporarily the following week.

The Warehouse Wednesdays youth club and indoor skate park for youth aged 10 to 16 years returned to normal, running from 5.45-7.15 pm every Wednesday during term time. This provided somewhere safe and warm for youth to hang out and funding from National Grid Electricity Distribution meant that a greater variety of warm snacks and drinks could be offered at no additional charge to the youth who attended this activity. Visits from other professionals such as the local PCSO and a worker from SARAC (Sexual Abuse and Rape Advice Centre), meant that youth got to know other relevant organisations. Some holiday provision for this age was also made available and these included two sessions at Easter and four sessions in the Summer. A total of another five special additional sessions for primary school aged children took place during the Easter and Summer holidays.



The English Class continued to provide essential support to those for whom English is a second language. The Department for Work and Pensions regularly referred people to the class via the local Job Centre and an influx of refugees and asylum seekers to the area meant that numbers regularly exceeded 30. This was a real contrast to the previous year.

The popularity of the monthly Craft Club grew during the year with numbers reaching around 15 per session and this group was also grateful for the funding received to purchase materials for 5 months. Knowing the benefits of being creative, a former student from the English Class offered to run some Art Classes - five of which were funded from a grant. These classes were so popular that she decided to add extra dates to meet demand.

Similarly, the monthly Lunch Club for those over 60 continued and the clients continue to be incredibly grateful for an affordable, tasty and nutritious meal with the company of others. Special events such as the Queen's Jubilee were celebrated and one couple chose to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Lunch Club because this group is where their friends are. Numbers have been consistent, at around 40, which is manageable for the size of the room and the cooks.

The church continued to partner with a number of local organisations by working together with them and making financial donations where appropriate. Riverside contributed funds and foods to Burton YMCA in acknowledgement of the amazing contribution they make to the town, as well as the ever-growing need for food parcels. Likewise, financial gifts were also made to the local Salvation Army for its distribution of food parcels.

Our local Teams4U volunteers were kind enough to provide 115 Christmas shoeboxes for local children in need. These were distributed by Winhill's Bee Blessed Charity Shop and two local primary schools - all of whom were incredibly grateful for the gifts. Riverside also donated funds to the local branch of the Teams4U to support their invaluable work moving forward.

The cost of living crisis exacerbated the need for the already stretched local Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre. In recognition of this, the church made a gift to support the work of this charity and we hope to look at other ways to support the staff there - by promoting voluntary roles there, for example.

The young people of the church ran a couple of events to raise funds. The first was a quiz, raffle and light lunch. The second was a bake sale in aid of those affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. Money raised by the former, along with donations from individuals within the church and the church itself totalled £1,500. As a group, the youth continued to sponsor a



child through 'Compassion' as did other individuals, couples and families within the church.

Support for people further afield also continued with regular giving to Restoration of Hope in Burundi which supports over 70 children and young people who have been living on the streets and are behind with their education. Likewise, the church continued to highlight and support the work of 'Open Doors.'

Church premises continued to be made available for regular use by third party groups and local charities, many of whom work with the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community as can be seen below.

The growing numbers and needs of those attending Narcotics Anonymous (which is for those who are recovering from drug and alcohol addiction) meant that we were asked if another group could be started at the church, so that there would be groups meeting on Sunday and Monday evenings. Numbers are such that in excess of 40 people have been known to gather in a single meeting.

The U3A, or 'The University of the Third Age' movement is a collection of groups (u3as) that run local and online member-led learning for those no longer in full time work across the UK. The Burton-wide 'tea and talk' sessions took place as usual at Riverside during the year, while the History Group resumed meeting once a month.

As indicated earlier, Burton YMCA is one of our key partners and the organisation used our facilities for staff training during the year. In order to offer the best support available to those in need in the town, professional connections between the staff of both organisations are continuing to grow. The same can be said of Burton Youth for Christ who partner with us in the Warehouse Wednesday project and who organised an impactful weekend away for 42 youth from the town - 15 of which were from Riverside.

Working with young people aged 11-18 years who are struggling to remain in mainstream education, Eagle's Nest continued to use our venue once a week during the year. Sadly for us, this is likely to be the last time we mention this organisation as a building user as they have now secured their own premises.

An unexpected but delightful connection was made with Burton Parish Council this year and we are very grateful for the opportunity to partner with them in a variety of ways. One of these was the clearing of the overgrown land between Wetmore Road and Hawkins Lane. We look forward to strengthening this relationship in the future.



We are extremely grateful to the following organisations who have supported us financially:

- Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
- Community Foundation for Staffordshire
- National Grid Electricity Distribution's Community Matters Fund
- Staffordshire County Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- Burton Parish Council

In line with the recommendations of the Charity Commission, we continue to keep reserves of six months in order to make sure that we can meet all our financial commitments, should the need arise. An independent check of accounts and other records has been completed again this year by a Accountants.



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Burton Renewal Fellowship

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2023

**Charity no
(if any)**

515335

Set out on pages

1 TO 4

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**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 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act,
- to follow the procedures 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.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, 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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

10th May 2023

Name:

David R Munro

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Member of the Association of Accounting Technicians

Address:

Lifestyle Accounting Ltd

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

