

The United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2020

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1137996).

1.2. The Purpose of the Charity

1.2.1. The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches

1.2.2. To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.
- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.3. Membership

1.3.1. Membership of the United Church Dorchester is open to anyone who formally accepts the Faith and Practices of the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church with regard to Baptism and Reception into Membership. Our current membership is 186. During the year, no new members were welcomed into the Church, 6 members died and 2 moved away. Another 78 people have chosen not to be members but are either regular worshippers or previous regular worshippers, who are no longer able to attend worship.

1.4. The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

1.4.1. The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected, from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible

for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio members of the Council. We are currently drafting policies for the induction and training of trustees. Our current procedure is to give every new trustee a bound folder containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation.

- 1.4.2. The Council of Stewards meets approximately every month. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Ministers in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester, which are owned by the United Reformed Church,.
- 1.4.3. The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to eight major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community Service, Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings and Outreach) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The sub-committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Ministers, Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.
- 1.4.4. Restrictions on meetings imposed as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic had an overwhelming effect on both the working of the church and on worship. As a result we were unable to hold an AGM in 2020 and the Stewards agreed, on behalf of the members, that, where people were willing to do so, officers elected at the AGM in 2019 would remain in post until the 2021 AGM. Plans are now being made to hold an AGM in 2021 via Zoom.
- 1.4.5. The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2020 comprised: (Years in brackets indicate the year of appointment.)

Our Ministers:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)
- Revd Peter Clark – joint post with Bridport United church.

Stewards who stood down at the time of the planned AGM in April 2020:

- Paul Smith (2018)
- Gillian Daniel (2017)

Stewards who resigned in 2020:

- Debs Brazier (2019) - July 2020

Stewards who served all year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets)

- John Parson (2018) – Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards
- Mary Martin (2017) – (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- John Hilton (2017) – Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)
- Colin Gannaway (2004) Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)
- Maria Jacobson (2018) (Youth & Family)
- Janice Young (2018) (Safeguarding Officer)
- Diana Leeming (2019) (Finance)

Stewards co-opted April 2020

- Brian Savage (2020)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)

1.5. Staff members

- Joint Minister: Revd John Yarrien; inducted in September 2020.
- Joint Minister: Revd Peter Clark, approximately 50% to August 2020; 30% from September 2020
- Pastoral Visitor: Mrs Angela Fisher 5 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit) Retired March 2020.
- Youth and Family Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit to September 2020)
- Outreach Worker: Mrs Debs Brazier 15 hrs per week (employed by the Circuit from June 2019 – resigned August 2020.)
- Clerical Co-ordinator: Mrs Di Lawrence 11 hrs per week (employed jointly by the Circuit and UCD from June 2019 to August 2020; employed by UCD from September 2020)

1.6. Senior Volunteer Managers:

1.6.1. Although we have paid members of staff, the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

- Senior Steward – John Parson
- Secretary – John Hilton
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings – John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Manager -Shirley Hood
- Church Shop Manager – Margaret Knighton
- Wednesday Morning coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Janice Young

1.7. Relationships with Related parties:

1.7.1. The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are both members of the Dorset South and West Methodist circuit and are combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. We were very thankful that members of Bridport United Church kindly allowed us a greater (50%) share of the Revd Peter Clark's time (our URC minister based in Bridport) from January to August 2020 as the retirement of Revd Stephanie Jenner had left us with no Methodist Minister. The Revd John Yarren was inducted as Circuit Superintendent based at United Church Dorchester in September 2020.

1.7.2. The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community. The Southampton Methodist District, of which the Circuit is a part, said farewell to its Chair, Revd Andrew Wood, in February 2020. He was succeeded by Revd Andrew De Ville.

1.8. Governance issues

1.8.1. We were able to hold Stewards Council and Church meetings until March 2020 when the Covid 19 induced lockdown began and dominated our lives for the rest of the year. The rapidly changing guidelines on group meetings meant that from mid-March most of the stewards' time was spent in, first of all, closing down the church then in trying to make sure that the church was Covid secure in time to open for services (see later) when it was allowed. In addition, it took some time for all stewards to become familiar with the new technology, in particular Zoom, so that Stewards Council meetings did not resume until

September, on line, via zoom. Since September much of the Stewards' time has been taken up initially with catching up with administration which had been pushed aside by Covid 19, then with maintaining church services, when allowed, and then closing down the church again in early January 2021.

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

2.1. Our Objective

2.1.1. When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion and our vision for the wider church. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith;
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
- g. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.2. The celebration of public worship

2.2.1. As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

2.2.2. Until March 2020, UCD provided a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week. These included: 10.30 Sunday morning worship; 6.30 Sunday evening worship; 9.00 am communion on the second Sunday of each month and a short twenty minute service on Wednesday morning (the town's market day).

2.2.3. On Sunday 15th March we worshipped together as usual and, during the after service coffee, celebrated a member's birthday with cake. By Wednesday we had cancelled the

Wednesday morning Market service and by the next day we were rushing to inform members what service arrangements had been made for lockdown and to highlight ways in which pastoral support would be offered. By the Saturday we were in lockdown and the church was closed. Since then Covid 19 has dominated church life.

- 2.2.4. By the following Sunday we had organised for a recorded service to be made available on "YouTube". A printed service sheet was also delivered to those without internet capability. Both these forms of worship have continued ever since under the auspices of the Dorset South & West Methodist Circuit and have been made available to all the churches in the circuit. Live morning worship on Zoom followed in the next weeks, led by our, then, acting Methodist Superintendent, Rev Gwyneth Owen. These 45 minute services were attended by worshippers from all our local Methodist and URC churches and typically, between 80 and 90 screens join the service each Sunday. Because of lockdown, no live Easter Services were possible.
- 2.2.5. In June, the Government allowed churches to open for "Private Prayer". Following a thorough risk assessment and the development of safe working practices, we opened the UCD for "Private Prayer" in early July. 11 members attended on the first Sunday. The church continued to open for "Private Prayer" on Sundays and Wednesdays until we were able to open for services. At the end of July the socially-distanced wedding of one of our members was held in church.
- 2.2.6. At the end of July we began to show the weekly "YouTube" service in church at 10.00am on Sunday mornings. The worship area can hold up to 45, socially-distanced individuals and seats had to be booked. This arrangement proved popular and numbers attending increased. After three weeks numbers had increased sufficiently that we were able to hold a live service again, led by Rev Peter Clark, albeit, with the congregation being unable to sing. One of our members volunteered to video the service, which was edited and uploaded to the church "YouTube" site for those who were unable to join us physically. The following week we had live music with our Musical director singing and playing for the service, although the congregation is still not allowed to sing. By the end of August we had to start a second service at 11.15am, which allowed 30 minutes to sanitise the seats in between services. Wednesday morning services became live in early August and in October we held our first communion service, but with only the bread being distributed under a strict, covid-safe protocol.
- 2.2.7. Lockdown returned for four weeks from the 5th of November but church services were still able to continue. However, the rising number of cases through December meant that we had to be even more careful about our preparations for Christmas services. As a result we were unable hold our annual "Journey to the Stable" presentations. The annual Dorchester "Christmas Cracker" night was cancelled. However, with careful preparation, we were able to hold a very successful Carol service, a well-attended build your own Christingle service, Midnight communion and Christmas day services. In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for a "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and reflect at various prayer stations based on the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

2.2.8. We welcomed our new Methodist minister, Rev John Yarrien in September in a Zoom induction service shared with the rest of the Dorset South and West Circuit.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

2.3.1. All opportunities for direct teaching of the Christian faith were put on hold by the pandemic. The difficulties in developing trust using virtual meetings has limited our efforts in this direction.

2.3.2. Work on our vision for the future is moving forward slowly under the guidance of Rev John Yarrien.

2.4. Mission and evangelism

2.4.1. The Covid pandemic meant that the County Show, Journey to the Stable and Forest Praise were unable to take place in 2020 but our Youth Worker was able to visit some schools to explain the message of Christmas. The South Street window became a regularly changing tableau showing the true meaning of Christmas.

2.4.2. The annual Christingle service, was held on Christmas Eve, led by the Junior Church leaders but the format was a little different. It was extremely well attended, requiring two sittings, and many of the congregation were not regular worshippers at UCD. People attending were each presented with a paper bag containing all the elements required to build a Christingle and the congregation were led through the process of building their own Christingle to take home. In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for a "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and reflect on various prayer stations based on the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

2.4.3. The 'Story-Tots' group, did manage to meet for a few weeks during the summer, much to the relief of the parents and carers who attend with their children but everything was, again, curtailed by Covid restrictions in November.

2.5. Pastoral work

2.5.1. Our Ministers offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs, Rev. Peter Clark (United Reformed Church Minister) from the Bridport Pastorate, offered 50% of his time for the year up to the end of August, when Rev John Yarrien was able to take a significant part of the load.

2.5.2. The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciate their concerns. The visitors themselves are grouped under a number of coordinators, who look after the visitors' pastoral welfare. Normally the pastoral visitors would meet a few times a year to discuss concerns and to get additional training, but this has not been possible this year owing to Covid 19.

- 2.5.3. Pastoral visitors have tried to keep in touch with their groups by email and by telephone calls and have been a vital link distributing information in the rapidly changing world of lockdown.
- 2.5.4. Email and the church website became even more important conduits to relay information to members during lockdowns. In order not to exclude people without computer access from many services, an effort was made to identify those with no access. 40 people were identified and a network was developed to deliver a printed service every week and a newsletter each month.
- 2.5.5. Our webmasters, Kevin & Susy Rogers, organised a three times weekly Zoom “coffee and chat” which has been well attended with up to 18 screens linked per session. By the end of the year 120 sessions had been held.
- 2.5.6. As part of the extra support to members throughout the period of Covid 19 restrictions, a shopping support service was developed; volunteers carried out shopping and collected prescriptions for any of our members who were unable to access shops themselves.
- 2.5.7. After the Sunday services members of the congregation had met, masked and socially distanced, in South Street to chat with friends they had been unable to see for months. The importance of this interaction was quickly recognised and a series of socially-distanced coffee mornings for members were arranged in the hall. After carrying out a risk assessment and developing safe working practices, 24 people at any one time were allowed to join together in socially-distanced conditions to chat with each other. It managed to run from August through September but was brought to a halt again by the second lockdown in November.
- 2.5.8. As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took nine funerals this year and provided support to the families, not all Church members.
- 2.5.9. Another component of our pastoral care is the “Prayer Chain” where those in need, are remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are housebound. The Tuesday prayer chain also keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested.
- 2.5.10. The Coffee Shop was closed from early March for the rest of the year. The Solos Group, which would normally offer friendship and activities has also been unable to meet since March due to Covid 19 restrictions.
- 2.5.11. In the weeks before Christmas UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. On the Two Saturdays before Christmas, the Action for Children group offered knitted angels, chocolate coins and Christmas activity packs to passers-by. The window onto South Street developed the Christmas story through a changing sequence of tableaux. URC Advent “Hope and Joy” packs were handed out in three schools (164 packs) and another 43 were given to families in Story Tots, Junior Church and other families with UCD links. From the feedback that we received, this was much appreciated by many people.

2.6. Serving the local community

- 2.6.1. With its central location in the town, the United Church is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. Among others, the Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. Our local Alcoholics Anonymous group meets here three times a week, finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit.
- 2.6.2. As with other aspects of church life, Covid has severely curtailed the use of our premises by third parties. Only the Blood donors have continued to hold collection sessions throughout the pandemic. AA groups ceased during the first lockdown but have subsequently resumed in the autumn, under Covid secure restrictions, and have continued through the December lockdown.
- 2.6.3. All other bookings, except those mentioned previously, ceased on the commencement of the first lockdown. By late August we had begun to have enquiries from regular room hirers about the possibility of returning. We carried out an assessment of the maximum numbers which could safely use each room under Covid restrictions and prepared a new set of safe working practices, compliant with Government regulations. Before returning, each group, including our own groups, had to provide a safe system of work for their own particular room use, based on advice given by a national body responsible for their activity. Several groups, including country dancing, Story Tots, badminton and a local amateur orchestra returned in September, only to have to stop again when new restrictions came into place in November.
- 2.6.4. The Church Shop normally opens six mornings a week from 10.00am to 12.30pm and is manned by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. Mrs Margaret Knighton is the shop manager and is assisted by a team of volunteers. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality. In July the shop re-opened for one morning per week, which had expanded to two days a week by September. Again, a new set of safe working practices had to be developed, particularly for handling cash, as the church has no credit card machine. The shop closed again during the November lockdown but maintained a "click and Collect" service. It reopened for a few weeks before Christmas.
- 2.6.5. UCD offers a once per month lunchtime meal for Homeless People in the Dorchester Area. All food costs are covered by church member donations. Numbers attending the lunches have varied between 12 and 18, with a number of "take-aways" being provided for those not wishing to come into the church premises. This service continued through both lockdown periods with Covid safe working practices being strictly applied.

2.7. Support of other charities in the UK and overseas

2.7.1. The United Church has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and by donations of goods and money.

2.7.2. Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:

- a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. At Christmas, six large boxes of Christmas food were donated by members to help fill 250 hampers for local families on free school meals.
- b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre, which provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a safe and controlled environment. This year the centre was only able to open until the middle of March. The church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members. UCD also donated £200 from church funds.
- c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciated the “dry” status of our buildings, receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.
- d) The church also made donations of between £100 and £600 to the following local charities: Dorset Race Equality, Quiet Space, Transition Towns, Volunteer Bureau, Dorset Mind, Durnovaria Silver Band, NHS Foundation Trust, URC Retired Housing, Citizens Advice, Dorset Nightstop, Dorford Holiday Lunch Club, Weldmar Hospice, Women’s Refuge, Home Start and Dorchester Poverty Action.

2.7.3. We continue to give financial assistance to the Dorchester Support Group for Action for Children (AfC) through a combination of personal giving via home collection boxes (£660), and donations (£200). The distribution of knitted angels and the presence of Father Christmas, outside the church front door for two days before Christmas raised £541. As a result we were able to raise £1401 for the charity in total during the year, which was about half the normal amount. A further £100 was sent directly to AfC from the donation of collections made at services over the Christmas period.

2.7.4. Internationally the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. Normally the main focus of fund raising was through Christian Aid Week, particularly the annual house-to-house collection and the Christian Aid Week market, an example of ecumenical cooperation, hosted by our Church. Unfortunately our traditional means of fund raising have been severely curtailed so that Christian Aid Week was restricted to a few one-off fund raising activities. Carol singing at Christmas was able to ahead and combined with the Church collection raised in excess of £250. The Committee was searching for alternative means of fund-raising and have come up with a Recipe Book to which members of all our churches were invited to contribute. A further £1057 was sent directly to Christian Aid from church funds.

2.7.5. Members of the Church have shown great generosity in their contributions both to regular charity collections and in other fund-raising activities. We have extended our support of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) for another year as the opportunities for fundraising have been limited by Covid. A socially distanced, one-way Christmas fair was held on a Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning in early December. The flow of

people and arrangement of stalls was organised so that everything was Covid safe. The sale of cakes, Christmas decorations and take-away refreshments raised £583 for MAF.

MAF works in many countries, flying small planes in terrain that is often barely accessible to other forms of transport. The aircraft come to the aid of medical emergencies, but also transport church personnel. This year we sent £884 to MAF from church funds.

- 2.7.6. The Church contributes to world mission through the Methodist Overseas Mission fund Church and Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church. This year the URC contributed £337 and £953 from general funds to OMF and CWM, respectively.
- 2.7.7. In November nineteen shoe boxes and a big bag of loose items were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected by the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.8. Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.8.1. Our Property Chair, Mr Paul Smith has been required to prepare a significant quantity of paperwork to get approval from the relevant bodies for the plans to improve access to the loft space of No 51 Charles Street. Approval has now been gained and work is now proceeding to obtain quotes from qualified companies for the work.
- 2.8.2. A local architect began to work with us on the specification of works required to replace a number of iron strengthening rings in the spire, The skills required to do this very specialised building work are quite rare and it took some time to find a company capable of carrying it out. A subsequent inspection by this company has shown that the rings are very corroded. The corrosion has lifted the spire by about a centimetre and has begun to cause significant spalling (breaking up) of the stonework. A final work specification is now being prepared by the architect with a view to letting the work in mid 2021.
- 2.8.3. Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church are progressing slowly. The plans are yet to be presented to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) of the URC Wessex Synod, whose approval is required before work can progress. In order to include a disabled toilet, it will be necessary to incorporate the access corridor into the available space. As a result, alternative arrangements have had to be made for emergency fire evacuation from the kitchen area. Approval has recently been given by the LBAC to proceed with the necessary changes to the kitchen. Building regulation and fire approval are currently being sought.
- 2.8.4. To add to the problems caused by Covid, on Thursday 27th August, while the Blood Donors were in residence, an extreme rainfall event occurred, which overwhelmed the drainage system on the flat roof of the corridor and kitchen and proceeded to discharge water into these areas. (Typically the gutters were due to be cleaned the next day!) The town sewers also backed up so that water came up through the drainage covers in the kitchen and the downstairs toilets and ran into the building at both the South Street and Charles Street entrances as the streets ran with water. Fortunately when everything had been dried out only slight damage remained. The Property Committee are now looking at how to protect the property in the future, since this size of event is predicted to increase in frequency owing to Global Warming.
- 2.8.5. Members of the Property committee contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance of the church premises. Ray Harris often assists in practical ways and

Margaret Knighton works tirelessly to maintain access to the building for church users and hiring groups, alike.

3. Ecumenical Relationships

3.1. Local Relationships

- 3.1.1. The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town. We are a member of Churches Together, which has continued to meet via Zoom but joint projects have been severely curtailed by Covid restrictions.

4. Staffing and Other Issues

4.1. Employed Staff

- 4.1.1. The congregation at Bridport United Church, with whom we form a joint URC pastorate, kindly allowed the Revd Peter Clark to increase the proportion of his time spent at UCD from 30% to 50%. This generosity helped significantly in seeing us through our reduced staff numbers until the Revd John Yarren joined us in September. During this time Revd Clark led worship more frequently, shared leadership of one of our Fellowship groups and served on the Council of Stewards. He also came regularly to our Coffee Shop and made himself available to church members and visitors alike. He has now returned to his previous (30%) share of time between Dorchester and Bridport.
- 4.1.2. The Reverend John Yarren joined us as circuit Superintendent and our minister in September 2020. We welcomed him and his wife, Cora, at a Zoom induction service; a first for all of us.
- 4.1.3. Mrs Debs Brazier, continued as outreach worker for 15 hrs per week. As well as carrying out her outreach role she has also supported the minister and leadership teams through active involvement in worship and planning meetings and has worked well beyond her contracted hours. She left the post in August 2020 when she and her husband moved to Leeds to lead a church there. We wish her every success.
- 4.1.4. Mrs Angela Fisher, our pastoral visitor, retired in March 2020. She remains a member of our congregation and we thank her for all her hard work during the time she has worked for us.
- 4.1.5. Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, around supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Journey to the Stable, Journey to the Empty Tomb and the County Show Outreach project, "Feed me, Love me, Change me". Peter also chairs both the Youth and Family Committee and the Outreach Committee. In September 2020 the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit, redrafted Peter's role and he took on additional responsibility in other churches across the circuit, whilst maintaining some of his work at UCD. During the Covid-Pandemic Peter has supported the pastoral team in making contact with some

of our most vulnerable and isolated members. In the year to come Peter will be working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at Families and young children.

- 4.1.6. Mrs Di Lawrence continued as Church Administrator helping the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and with managing the booking system for letting rooms in the church. She continued to work from home through the pandemic and has managed to catch up with many of the administrative changes that had been planned but had been postponed due to having no Administrator for over a year. In particular she has worked with our webmaster, Mr Kevin Rogers, to upgrade the website and create two pass-worded areas, one for members and a second for stewards. These areas contain useful information, such as rotas, church governance documents and meeting minutes. She has also worked with the Lettings Chair, John Hilton, to develop a computer booking administration system to improve efficiency and document storage.

4.2. Volunteers

- 4.2.1. The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop, the church shop or Contact centre. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.
- 4.2.2. We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.

5. Financial review

5.1. Reserves policy

- 5.1.1. The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need.
- 5.1.2. Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, currently £82k.

5.2. Restricted and Designated funds

- 5.2.1. Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves:

- a) The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment; only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work.
- b) An Outreach fund was created to ring-fence money from the Methodist Circuit to be spent on outreach at the United Church (now stands at £594).
- c) Finally a designated fund has been set aside by the Church Meeting to cover the costs of stabilising the church tower, which is in an unsafe condition. Work is progressing to fully specify the work before progressing to engage a qualified contractor who is prepared to take on the work.

5.3. **Investment Policy**

- 5.3.1. It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4. **Names and addresses of:**

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.

Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.5. **Risk Assessments**

- 5.5.1. Several Covid risk assessments were made throughout the year and used to develop safe systems of work which have been successfully applied during the pandemic.

6. **Safeguarding**

- 6.1. Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. A new member of the congregation was appointed to act as joint safeguarding officer during the year, and the church also takes the lead in the circuit for safeguarding.
- 6.2. The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children and young people, and adults at risk of abuse.
- 6.3. We ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.
- 6.4. A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers have two references taken up and those appointed to particular roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Statement of Financial Activities for Year Ended 31 December 2020

2019			2020
		<i>INCOME</i>	
67,351		Collections	61,358
	6971	<i>Cash</i>	2434
	24088	<i>Envelopes</i>	19984
	36292	<i>Standing Orders</i>	38940
3,237		Donations	20,579
18,153		Lettings	7,005
9,226		Wednesday Coffee & Stall	1,785
0		Bank Interest	35
1,656		Investment Interest/Dividends	1,553
13,977		Tax Refund on Gift Aid	14,424
10,857		Earmarked	3,934
810		Other	774
1,415		Youth and Family	1,093
8,000		Coffee Shop	1,500
4,500		Gallery	1,500
139,182		Total Income	115,540
		<i>EXPENDITURE</i>	
102,437		Church	72,090
	78,296	<i>Dorset South & West Circuit</i>	53,676
	4,762	<i>Insurance</i>	5,045
	10,522	<i>Cleaning and Waste Collection</i>	5,562
	3,682	<i>Gas</i>	2,358
	2,924	<i>Electricity</i>	4,145
	907	<i>Telephone and BB</i>	959
	79	<i>Water</i>	81
	1,265	<i>Business Rates and BID</i>	264
	0	<i>Other</i>	0
9,834		Minor Items	8,354
4,166		Property Maintenance - General	3,044
0		Property Maintenance - Emergencies	2,527
8,662		Church Decoration	0
7,952		Church Sound System	0
2,590		TV Powerpoint System	-1,553
0		Church Spire	216
1,080		Lift	0
15,316		Charitable Giving	10,980
1,029		Music in Worship	1,062
1,388		Youth and Family	398
154,454		Total Expenditure	97,118
-15,272		Net Surplus Income	18,422


BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

		ASSETS				
2019	Fixed Assets					2020
	Investments					
61,031		TMCP - Florence Fare Trust		60,178		
29,040		TMCP - Surplus Funds Trust		28,641		
2,565		TMCP - Elma Burge		2,581		
32,221		COIF - Investment Trust		34,290		
						125,690
	Current Assets					
16,002	Debtors					14,000
	Current Accounts					
12,533		HSBC Main Account		45,067		
1,728		HSBC No 2 Account		0		
0		Cash in hand		167		
						45,234
	Deposit Accounts					
126,485		COIF - General		126,818		
40,172		HSBC		40,207		
						167,025
	Liabilities					
-3,993	Creditors					-15,577
317,784	Net Assets (i.e. Total Funds)					336,372
		REPRESENTED BY FUNDS				
Last Year End		Fund Name	Net Income During Year	Transfer	Revaluation of Investment	This Year End
	Endowment					
61,031		Florence Fare			-853	60,178
	Restricted					
660		Youth and Family	695			1,355
678		Outreach Group	-84			594
	Designated					
60,000		Emergency Reserve	0			60,000
487		Lunches for Homeless	-162			325
150		Church Flowers	30			180
219		Oven in Kitchen	0			219
0		Lloyd Thomas Music	650			650
	Unrestricted					
194,778		General Funds	16,074		2,019	212,871
317,784	Total Funds		17,203	0	1,166	336,372

United Church Dorchester: Bookshop Income and expenditure account:
Year ended December 31 2019 **Year ended December 31 2020**

Sales:	Year ended December 31 2019	Year ended December 31 2020
Books	2,284.22	845.24
Cards	5,151.41	1,768.15
Stamps	1,853.36	912.15
Traidcraft	5,122.59	2,943.38
Music	724.95	279.73
TLM	492.02	364.63
Toybox	10.00	9.99
Sundries	475.22	291.14
Total sales	16,113.77	7,414.41
Purchases	12,140.51	1,974.55
Opening stock	6,450.00	7,617.00
Opening stock plus purchases	18,590.51	9,591.55
Closing stock	7,617.00	6,808.00
Stock consumed during year	10,973.51	2,783.55
Net profit in year	£5,140.26	£4,630.86
Cumulative Funds:		
At start of year	8,277.51	8,917.77
Net profit in year	5,140.26	4,630.86
	13,417.77	13,548.63
Transferred to United Church	4,500.00	4,500.00
Total funds at end of year	£8,917.77	£9,048.63
Represented by:		
Bank balance	4,244.48	2,339.44
Less unrepresented cheques	3,000.00	184.24
	1,244.48	2,155.20
Cash	56.29	85.40
Shop stocks	7,617.00	6,808.03
Total funds at end of year	£8,917.77	£9,048.63

I have examined the papers and documents supplied to me, and consider that the above accounts are an accurate representation of the financial position.


Denys Hood
BSc (Econ)
February 11 2021