

United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2025

Charity registration number:1137996

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

The Charity's Constitution, Organisational Structure and Governance.

Overview

The United Church Dorchester (UCD) 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 because 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).

The Purpose of the Charity

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. 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):

- Celebration of public worship.
- Teaching of the Christian faith.
- Mission and evangelism.
- Pastoral care, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.
- Serving the local community with a Christian ethos
- Supporting charities in the UK and overseas.
- Maintenance of the fabric of the United Church

Membership

Our current membership is 158 members, 45 adherents and three retired Methodist ministers. The latter all have full membership rights under a local arrangement at UCD. During the year, 3 new members were welcomed into the Church and 3 former members died.

The Council of Stewards and Organisational Structure

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 Minister is an ex-officio member of the Council of Stewards. All Stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have had Advanced Safeguarding training. Copies of our current governance documents, including the constitution, our management structures, and Policies and Procedures and the role of a trustee, are available to all members in a restricted section of the church website.

The Council of Stewards met 10 times during the year. The chair is the Minister, although previously this has been the Senior Steward, who is normally elected from within the Council of

Stewards. The position of Senior Steward has been vacant since 2024 with the duties of that position shared across the Council of Stewards.

The Council of Stewards also includes the Treasurer. 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 Minister 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 of Stewards 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.

The Church Meeting meets at least 4 times a year and can advise the Council of Stewards. The management structure, for the day-to-day management of the church has been re-vamped this year. Management is delegated to five committees (Worship; Pastoral; Youth and Family; Finance; Property) and their constituent subgroups. These report regularly to the Council of Stewards, and to Church Meetings. The committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and some have authority to spend a budget allocation. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the delegated authority of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the Church Meeting. Our AGM was held on the church premises on 1st May 2025. The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2025 comprised (Year of appointment shown in brackets.)

2025 Council Of Stewards

Our Minister:

- Revd John Yarrien (inducted September 2020)

Stewards who served all year. (Committee/Subgroup membership/ Responsibility)

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Colin Gannaway (2004) | • Treasurer (Finance Committee) |
| • Michael Humphrey (2022) | • Church Secretary |
| • Norma Leigh (2025) | • (Worship Committee) |
| • Nigel Hewish (2025) | • (Health and Safety) |
| • Linda Scott (2023) | • (Youth and Family Committee) |
| • Gill Robinson (2023) | • (Pastoral Committee and World Church) |
| • Frank Wells (2024) | • (Property Committee) |
| • John Parson (2024) | • (Communications and Charities) |

Stewards elected at the 2025 AGM

- Nigel Hewish
Norma Leigh

Observers

Chris Smith (representing the Dorset S & W Methodist Circuit; from Aug 2023)

Minute Takers

- Ellie Minns - (UCD Administrator)
- Pauline Humphrey

Staff Members

- Minister: Revd John Yarrien
- Pastoral Support Assistant: Ruth Magee
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Peter Jenner (DSW Circuit employee)
- UCD Administrator: Ellie Minns
- Shop and Coffee Lounge Finance Administrator: Di Lawrence

Senior Volunteer Managers

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

- Church Secretary – Michael Humphrey
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance chair – Rev John Yarrien
- Pastoral chair– Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family chair – Peter Jenner
- Property chair - Paul Smith
- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings chair– Peter Robinson
- Coffee Lounge Managers – Elizabeth Haynes, Sue Gannaway and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Managers – Pat Smith, Pat Brown and Peter Jenner
- Wednesday Morning Coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officers – Linda Scott and Diana Leeming
- World Mission – Gill Robinson
- Eco Church and Health & Safety – Nigel Huish

Relationships with Related parties

The United Church Dorchester is a member of the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit and the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The United Church Dorchester and Bridport United Church (also a member of DS&W Methodist Circuit) constitute a joint pastorate within the URC. 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.

GDPR

Wendy and John Hilton manage our other data securely to meet our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations. United Church has its own website at <https://www.unitedchurchdorchester.org.uk> which is maintained internally by Susy and Kevin

Rogers. Secure areas allow minutes and other records to be stored and accessed by Members and Stewards.

Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

After a major revisioning exercise in 2024 our new Vision statement is now become the focus for activities.

Our Vision

“We are a Christian Community seeking to be a Beacon of God’s Light and Love for All”

When planning our activities for the year, the Minister and Council of Stewards 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 enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our Church community.

The Celebration of Public Worship

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 Council of Stewards is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Council of Stewards 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. The Musical Director at UCD is Heather Reed who ensures that the choir and music groups’ contributions to worship is of an appropriate standard.

Currently, UCD provides a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week:

- The 10.30am Sunday service - our main act of worship. Services are led by our Circuit ministers, retired ministers, or lay preachers from both the Methodist tradition and the United Reformed Churches. Numbers attending the 10.30am service are usually between 95 and 120. The 10.30 am service at UCD is regularly recorded and edited by Peter Robinson and available on the UCD YouTube channel.
- Sunday Evening services at 6.30pm are held, usually twice a month, with attendance between 9 and 20. Different types of worship, such as Taizé, Tenebrae and modern worship songs are intentionally included in some services.
- On the second Sunday afternoon each month, instead of an evening service we now have Afternoon Tea and Favourite Hymns, known simply as Tea-Pot. People arrive from 3.30pm for a formal start at 4pm. We serve sandwiches and cake with cups of tea. At about 4.45pm we give out hymn books and have an informal time of hymn singing, with the hymns chosen by those present. We finish at about 5.30pm. All are welcome. There is no charge or collection, but we welcome donations towards the cost of the tea. The numbers have gradually built up, and we now usually have between 20 and 30 attending.

- A short (20 min) Market Day service on Wednesday morning regularly attracts 20-30 people.
- Printed services for use at home are made available weekly by the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit, for those unable to attend worship at UCD, but without modern computer technology.

We hold a series of special services throughout the year.

- Around 20 people attended our Quiet Christmas; a gentle Christmas service for those who want to celebrate Christmas joyfully, but due to bereavement or disability need a short service. Several members of UCD's congregation brought friends because they had enjoyed the service last year.
- On Christmas Eve the Church was busy for our Christingle service. Led by the junior church staff, it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying a relaxed service that enabled them to make their own Christingles, as well as hear the Christmas Story, told very simply.
- On Sunday 21st December we held our annual carol service, which was well attended. Along with a mix of traditional and newer carols, the choir sang several festive pieces to accompany the story of the nativity as described in the Gospels.
- Special services were held during the year, focusing on our World Mission, particularly the URC and Methodist World Church charities and our Church charity for the year, The Leprosy Mission.

Teaching of the Christian faith

Our Junior Church has 3 teachers with 1 assistant and a local family who come regularly with 3 or 4 children. We occasionally have 2 more children from the town and sometimes children visiting grandparents arrive along with baptism parties. When children come their parents usually come upstairs with them. This year we had book giving day/celebration when each child was presented with a book appropriate to their age, to commemorate another year. The children's artwork is regularly displayed on the board in the Cerne Abbas room and on the shared board in the hall. But more often they like to take their creations home

Mission and Evangelism

Mission and Evangelism United Church undertake a range of outreach activities. These include 'Story Tots' on a Thursday morning providing a space where children can play while parents and carers can catch up with each other in a safe environment. On average we have about 12-15 children each week and we have shared the joy of families welcoming newborns. As well as toys, we also have a different weekly craft activity. We all enjoy celebrating birthdays and give the children a birthday present. We also run 'Story Tots Plus's during school holidays so that older children in the family can come along with their

younger siblings. Throughout the year we open our doors to all families with our 'Family Fun Mornings' which offer a range of games, toys and craft activities with tea and toast provided. The Church is very grateful for the wonderful team of volunteers who come each week and make these events happen.

We have continued our 'Forest Praise Café' which is a joint venture with our Anglican friends at St George's Church in Fordington. We meet on the last Saturday of the month and often have 5-10 families attending. Our activities include various crafts, a story and a song which are themed to reflect the Christian festivals throughout the year. Hot food and drink is available during the morning so the parents and carers can sit and relax, and we use the outdoor space, weather permitting. At the St George's Fair in April, we offer craft activities for children and in December we help our families decorate a Christmas tree as part of the St George's Christmas Tree festival. This year the theme was 'Stories'. We have a loyal team who prepare crafts in advance and come on the day which makes the morning enjoyable for those who come.

We join with Churches Together in Dorchester for our biggest outreach event of the year, At the Dorset County Show during the first weekend in September we have a large marquee where we provide a place of welcome for all the people. Due to the numbers who attended in 2025, we are increasing our marquee space in 2026. Refreshments are provided along with crafts, games, 'Godly Play' and toys. A local school created a sea animals display which was on show in the marquee and the Eco-activity was popular. The safe and clean baby changing/feeding area is much appreciated by our younger families. We served over 1,000 drinks and over 200 babies were changed or fed. On the Saturday & Sunday we held an Ecumenical Songs of Praise Harvest Festival service in the marquee which was attended by about 45 people and lasted for 35 minutes. People from across the local Churches volunteer their time over the weekend with a core group working throughout the year preparing for the show. Whatever the weather we continue in love to serve all those we meet and look forward to the 2026 Show.

'Journey to the Stable' is our interactive re-telling of the Nativity story for schools and the public. In 2025 over 350 children and teachers from the Dorchester schools attended. Each child went away with items collected at each JTTS station so they could re-live their journey with their family and friends. We had about 70 people came to the Public Sessions. Good feedback from both the School and Public Sessions.

Pastoral Care

Our Minister, Rev John Yarrien, cares for the spiritual and emotional needs at UCD. Mrs Ruth Magee works as the Pastoral Support Worker to support the Minister and Pastoral committee. 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 understand their concerns. Ruth, the Pastoral Support worker supports every pastoral visitor.

An Annual Welcome Meeting is organised for all new people who have started attending UCD over the last year. This is an opportunity to meet other new members and learn more about the Church. Twelve new adherents were invited to this year's Welcome Meeting. Each new adherent is also given a welcome pack. Every new adherent is asked to complete a GDPR form explaining what information is kept and how it will be used. These details are kept on our Church Member's database.

Small groups of pastoral visitors met with the minister and pastoral support worker to trial a new support and training approach. The pastoral worker has also been visiting all pastoral visitors individually. The Quiet Christmas service with refreshments was attended by 20 people and led by the Pastoral committee.

Since the Vision Day several social activities have now got established in the diary. This includes the monthly Men's breakfast and a games afternoon. Other initiatives include an information notice board in the hall and a new welcome leaflet, which has been designed and is about to be launched.

As part of our pastoral support to the local community, we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took 11 funerals this year and provided support to the families; not all the deceased were Church members. Although there were no weddings in our Church this year. We also held 2 child baptisms. The baptised children and their siblings received a Christian book from the junior church. Another component of our pastoral care is the "Prayer Chain" where those in need, are remembered in prayer by several Church Members, including those who are housebound. The prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested both daily and weekly.

The Coffee Shop now regularly opens on Tuesday and Friday mornings and there is a Wednesday coffee morning in the hall. A welcome and a listening ear is given to all those who attend, and our Outreach Worker Mr Peter Jenner, now offers a weekly Chaplaincy presence at the Wednesday Coffee Morning. Carrying his mug of coffee, he tries to speak and engage with folks, especially visitors and those new to the church. In the weeks before Christmas, UCD members tried to spread the good news of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas, and this year that included offering Christmas Services in 4 care homes across Dorchester. We also offered Communion to those unable to attend church, in their own homes, reinforcing they are still very much part of the United Church Dorchester Community.

Serving the local community.

With its central location in the town, the United Church Dorchester is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. The groups that have used the building in 2025 include the Regional Blood Transfusion Service, Alcoholics Anonymous groups, the Dorchester Country Market, an orchestra, several choirs and along with the U3A.

The Church Shop remains open for four mornings a week offering a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and 'fairly-traded' goods, including food. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, we actively promote the use of 'fairly traded' goods within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop volunteers often engage in conversations about the Christian faith. The team of three of the buyers manage the shop.

A small team of volunteers provide monthly lunches for the homeless. No food is wasted as those coming always take a second dinner away with them. Our regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming) all find it a very rewarding experience.

Our buildings are well located for the community to use. Under the oversight of our Lettings Officer Peter Robinson, there were approximately 1800 bookings, 62% from UCD and 38% from external users. The majority of the UCD bookings are relatively easy to predict and manage as $\frac{3}{4}$ are regular, weekly room bookings, such as the shop four times a week and Sunday morning services 52 times a year, etc. The remaining 160 tend to be individual bookings for meetings but, because most of our church members are flexible, they also are relatively easy to manage. As a result, most of Ellie's time is spent managing the 700 bookings from external organisations. (Our Admin officer, Ellie Minns, has taken six months maternity leave from August 2024 and we have been very pleased to welcome her back in March 2025).

In 2025 UCD made extensive use of the building with Sunday and Market Day Services, Coffee Lounge, Shop, Children's events, meetings, funerals, charity markets, coffee mornings, Country dancing, Craft group, Badminton. Along with seasonal events i.e. Journey to the Stable, charity concerts.

We hired rooms to 41 separate outside customers, ranging from single events, such as a birthday celebration, to seven customers who have regular weekly bookings; these regular customers include the Country market and, in 2025, 4 AA group meetings per week. Five choirs and one orchestra, meet at UCD, on different days, generally for three ten-week periods per year. Also, we have the Repair Café, Blood Donor Service and U3A groups use our premises. Since we give a discount to charities, and bookings per client range from 1 per year to 52.

Based on a rough approximation it is believed that the annual footfall of people using the building is 52,000 with 29,300 consisting of external users.

In July 2025 we changed our booking and invoicing system to an online version. This replaced a manual Access database. This now means less work by our Admin Assistant and that hirers have access to a bookings calendar to know when there are rooms available for hire. Income to UCD is now running at approx. £18,000.

Supporting charities in the UK and overseas.

The United Church Dorchester has a continuing commitment to local, national, and international charities through members working as volunteers and donations of goods and money. Locally the Church supports the Dorchester Food Bank which continues to have a

collection point at UCD. Church Members give financial support to the Dorchester Family Support charity which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.

Having supported 'Wheels for the World' for the previous two years, in 2025 we adopted a new overseas charity 'The Leprosy Mission'. This is a well-established Christian charity that works in areas still affected by leprosy (aka Hansen's Disease) in the Indian sub-continent and parts of Africa. They work in partnership with churches, governments, health organisations and research institutes in diagnosis, treatment, caring for those affected, fighting stigma and advocating for change.

In March we were delighted to welcome Gabby North from 'The Leprosy Mission' to our World Church service. Gabby very movingly shared the impact of the charity on the lives of those affected, a retiring collection that day raised £883.80 for the charity.

Many fundraising events were organised to support this charity including Easter and Christmas Coffee mornings and Sales and various Stalls at Wednesday coffee including a very successful nearly-new Clothes sale. Other events included an enjoyable Quiz Night and an Autumn evening concert given very kindly by Encore Singers.

Fundraising events plus individual donations and the retiring collection in March raised the magnificent total of £5255.45 throughout the year for The Leprosy Mission.

In October our World Church Sunday service focussed on the work of the Methodist World Mission Fund and was led by our own minister, Revd John Yarrien. The retiring collection at this service raised £324.20 for the World Mission Fund. Additional donations of £110.18 came from Mission Box holders, shared between CWM and the Methodist World Mission Fund. The church also donated £1000 between these two organisations.

We have decided to support 'The Leprosy Mission' for a second year throughout 2026 and are very pleased that Gabby North will be making a return visit to our morning service on 17th May. We will be seeking a new overseas charity to support in 2027.

The Church also made £9235 in donations to the following charities in 2024.

Christian Aid £1,200, Dorchester Family Support £600, Dorchester Food Bank £808, Dorchester Poverty Action £935, Dorset Mind £200, Weldmar Hospice £300, Wheels for the World £3,792, Women's Refuge £300, Council for World Mission £500, Methodist Fund for World Mission £500, Churches Together in Dorchester £100.

The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £3245 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing, a quiz night, book sales, charity stalls, several collections at Church services and the "League of Light boxes", which are added throughout the year by regular donors.

During 2025 we continued inviting one charity each week to have a stall at our Wednesday Coffee Mornings. We provide tables and chairs, and there is no charge. Early in the year, we were let down three times by charities who had booked but failed to come. We also had three blank weeks

during the peak holiday season when charity volunteers would themselves be away on holiday. Altogether, twenty charities came, some only once, others several times. This not only supports the charities but also promotes the church to people outside our walls.

Tony Boyden has been Chair of Christian Aid in Dorchester and stepped down in 2025 after many years of committed service in the role. Christian Aid Week in 2025 focused on Aurelia, an inspirational farmer and community leader from an indigenous tribe in Guatemala. It encapsulated the impact of climate change and industrial plantations on her people. Christian Aid is providing training and resources to help her and her community become more climate resilient. with training on growing resilient crops, making fertilizer, and conserving water, all of which are vitally important. Our ecumenical Christian Aid service at St George's on May 11th highlighted this case study. Led by Revd Cora Yarrien, the guest speaker was Dominic Brain, Christian Aid national head of project funding with some experience of working in Guatemala. We were delighted that the Mayor and Mayoress joined us in what was a truly inspirational service.

This year Christian Aid Week will focus on supporting mothers in Kenya who are facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children. Tony Boyden highlighted the case study of Aurelia in some detail and mentioned the Kenyan mothers because it is sometimes imagined that Christian Aid is a form of 'fire brigade' set up solely to relieve the immediate impact of famine and war. This is not surprising because of the number of crises so caused, two of the most recent being the dreadful impact of Hurricane Melissa in the Caribbean and famine in the Sudan resulting from civil war there. . But Christian Aid is also about helping people to develop sustainable self-governing projects of their own ("a hand up rather than a hand-out") and about campaigning on issues such as climate change; tax justice and the humanitarian treatment of all people. Most recently, alongside sister organisations, it has spoken out against recent stringent cuts in the national foreign aid budget and has campaigned for an urgent resolution of the conflicts in the Ukraine and in Gaza. Never has there been a more urgent time to raise funding to support the range of initiatives. Individual church collections at times of crisis have been very generous and six-monthly street collections (our next one is on May 15th) have proven fruitful too as has annual carol singing. We are struggling to find house to house collectors and our 'Go for Ten' project had only a limited success, but more money was raised than in recent years. However, we would welcome any suggestions for making house to house collections more effective and for recruiting more collectors.

Occasional events in 2025 also proved to be good fund raisers. An evening of poetry with Peter Green and Brian Caddy, combined with a fish and chip supper, was a very pleasant experience. A bingo evening at St George's in February was also a very popular fund raiser. Among social activities planned for the new year are a quiz night, a light music concert and another bingo evening. We also have some sponsored events to raise funds such as the nine mile Walk to the River Jordan each autumn which always seems to be blessed by good weather. Whilst those who go on the walk universally say how much they enjoy it somehow it only manages to attract disappointingly low numbers. Perhaps we need to advertise it earlier to highlight such a pleasant way of taking exercise. Just before Christian Aid Week 2025, Tony McDougal from our committee spent three days on sponsored walk covering 80 km on the Jubilee Trail to mark the 80 years that Christian Aid has operated. In the Spring Matthew Boyden has promised to do a sponsored abseil from the Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth. The popular Market which is now an Autumn event and combined with ploughman's lunches raised nearly £750 this year. Also the United Church's weekly

ploughman's lunches during Lent contribute handsomely to our funds as well as providing excellent value for money. One project which we have been keen to introduce for some time will involve greater Christian Aid participation in local schools. There is a range of 'hands on' pupil activities designed to highlight Christian Aid projects, and we have had early expressions of interest from some local schools.

Tony feels it has been a privilege to work alongside a committee with such a committed and pleasant membership; always keen to take on new ideas and projects. We have been blessed by the addition of Ceri Davies and Fiona Daborn (a former District organiser) to our committee. Our church members are very well represented on the committee and contribute a great deal to its success as do many other members at UCD. It is due to the dedication and commitment of our committee and all our other supporters that we have been cited nationally by Christian Aid as a model of good practice.

Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

An application for the installation on the hall roof of Solar Panels was resubmitted. LBAC and Planning Permission were obtained. Tenders' documents were drafted by the Architect Gareth Jenkins for the refurbishment of most of the church roof and tenders were invited. Only one was received by 13th December 2025. Documentation was drafted for an application to the URC LBAC for permission to replace the wooden windows in the hall with aluminium double-glazed windows. After much deliberation and gathering of information of what is required in the Ladies Toilet, this will now go out for quotations and hopefully work will commence summer 2026. The South Street foyer and entrance and the Charles Street entrance are under discussion by a specially allocated committee. The Quinquennial Report was carried out in October and nothing major was found. The inspection holes in the paving outside No 51 Charles St have been postponed until 2027.

The requirements of a Building Management Company scheme have been formulated, and costs are being investigated. There was no spare money in the budget due to the impending cost of the roof repairs which would have to take priority over everything due to more leaks happening after the heavier rainfall. Drawing of Gas and Electricity floor plan is being worked on. New igniters had been bought for the church heating system. Members of the Property committee continue to contribute a huge amount of time to the maintenance and development of the church premises.

Ecumenical Relationships

Local Relationships

We continue to work closely with friends from various churches and denominations across Dorchester and the surrounding area through Churches Together in Dorchester. Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church, as was the midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Highlights of Churches Together in Dorchester include:

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January

- Walk of Witness on Good Friday
- Sunrise Service at Maumbury Rings on Easter Sunday
- Christian Aid and Pentecost services in May

Retail Chaplaincy

The Retail Chaplaincy team has continued its effective work for an eleventh year during 2025. Eleven Ecumenical Chaplains continue to visit around 200 varied outlets in the centre of town, normally on a weekly basis. The good news is that Chaplains report how much they enjoy their role. We also receive good reports of how much their visits are appreciated. They receive support from each other, working in pairs, and from their yearly review. They have all completed the training course and are checked for DBS and safeguarding. We have had an interesting challenge this Easter. We buy cards for each of our places of contact as at Christmas. Unfortunately, we have noticed that the cheaper cards are all bunnies and eggs this year so have gone for dearer ones to convey the importance of Easter to us. We would be very pleased to hear from anyone who would like to know more about the work and we are always glad to receive new potential Chaplains. We are grateful for the support of the Chaplaincy Management Group including Robin as Chair and Janet as Secretary. The work is supported by Churches Together, BID (the business development organisation) and the Town Council.

Volunteers

Most 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 and the Church Shop. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.

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.

Financial Review

The 2025 Annual Church Accounts are available as a separate document.

Reserves policy

The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need. Thus, the figure of £80,000 will be used as the target for the Reserves Policy. Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure.

Restricted and Designated funds

Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific use, are not included in the reserves. The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment under which only the interest may only be used for Youth and Family work.

Investment Policy

Our Investment Policy is to hold an accessible balance of £50,000 in Lloyds Bank; a further balance of £80,000 as our Reserve in deposit and low risk funds; our remaining capital of £100,000+ is for longer-term use and invested in managed funds. These amounts are benchmark figures, and the balances held will vary month by month. The Finance Committee will review our Investment Policy mid-way through the year. It is our practice to hold our longer-term funds as investments held 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.

Names and addresses of:

Names and addresses of Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc Victoria (309950) Branch

HSBC: 18 St Mary Street, DT4 8PH

Nat West: 76 St Thomas Street, DT4 8HU

Independent Examiner – Elliot & Co 7 King Street, Weymouth DT47BJ

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, Linda Scott and Diana Leeming who share the responsibility. 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, young people, and adults at risk of abuse.

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. A Safer Recruitment policy and procedures are now in place. These require that new staff and volunteers complete an application form and have two references taken up, and those appointed to roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety policy has been reviewed and updated. Risk assessments are currently being reviewed and updated where required. A fire risk assessment and evacuation plan are in place, and the Stewards have undertaken Fire Safety training. Health and Safety updates have been on both Church meeting and Property committee agendas.

United Church Dorchester, April 2026

RECEIPTS

	Notes	2025				2024
		£	£	£	£	£
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total
Collections		10,617			10,617	12,533
Standing Orders		60,689			60,689	57,124
Gift Aid on Giving		15,704			15,704	14,942
Donations	1	24,097			24,097	3,005
Lettings		19,644			19,644	22,474
Investments	2	5,288			5,288	7,788
Interest	3	225			225	311
Fundraising	4		7,805		7,805	7,625
Other	5	1,505	93		1,597	1,507
Grants	6	0			0	0
Refunds	7	0			0	818
Youth and Family			1,247		1,247	2,040
Church Flowers			535		535	1,073
Lunches for Homeless			570		570	30
Music Fund			0		0	1,557
Church Shop & Coffee Shop A/C	11	25,341			25,341	24,491
Totals		163,110	10,250	0	173,360	157,318

PAYMENTS**Church Costs**

UCD Assessment		77,443			77,443	69,552
Church Administrator		8,414			8,414	5,513
Pastoral Visitor		6,682			6,682	6,682
Church Shop/Coffee A/C Admin		1,336			1,336	1,336
Church Insurance		7,568			7,568	7,135
Church Cleaning		9,694			9,694	9,104
Waste Collection		285			285	277
Gas		5,230			5,230	3,902
Electricity		5,679			5,679	7,961
Telephone & Broadband		821			821	957
Water		133			133	129
Business Rates & Dor BID		1,049			1,049	512
Minor Items	8	950			950	3,683
Audio/Visual equipment		568			568	
CCLI Licences		837			837	
UCD Website		270			270	
External Printing		97			97	

Property Costs

Property Maintenance		4,588			4,588	5,374
Property Emergencies		0			0	1,248
Odd-job man		1,300			1,300	0
Trades		2,131			2,131	0
Decoration		1,945			1,945	0
Roof Repairs		1,046			1,046	868
Lift		0			0	765
Main Toilets		749			749	0
Hall Windows		0			0	1,194
CCTV		2,246			2,246	0
Solar Panels		2,337			2,337	0
Kitchen		1,853			1,853	0

Other Costs

Charitable Giving	9	3,100	6382		9,482	9,235
Music in Worship	10	2,000			2,000	1,900
Outreach			147		147	21
Church Flowers			870		870	823
Youth and Family			1,154		1,154	1,337
Minister's Discretionary Fund			35		35	27
Music Fund			0		0	509
Lunches for Homeless			413		413	465
Maurice Dale Legacy			667		667	113
Church Shop & Coffee Shop A/C	11	11,266			11,266	11,525
Totals		161,616	9,668	0	171,284	152,146

ASSETS

	2025			
	£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Revaluation	Total
Fixed Assets				
TMCP-Florence Fare Trust		68,148	805	68,953
TMCP-Surplus Funds Trust	32,371		504	32,875
TMCP-Elma Burge Trust	2,715		0	2,715
COIF-Investment Fund	38,712		-1,854	36,858
URC -Investments	878		6	884
Current Assets				
Current Accounts				
HSBC Bank	235			235
Lloyds Bank	11,322			11,322
Nat West Bank	6,923			6,923
Deposit Accounts				
HSBC Bank	601			601
Lloyds Bank	25,450			25,450
COIF Deposit Fund	82,748			82,748
Cash in Hand				
Church Petty Cash	76			76
Flowers		10		10
Church Shop & Coffee A/C	86			86
Stock				
Shop	6,872			6,872
Coffee	50			50
LIABILITIES				
Debtors (Note 12)	15,000			15,000
Creditors (Note 13)	-105			-105
Church Groups (Note 14)	-1,820			-1,820
Net Assets/Liabilities	222,114	68,158	-539	289,733

2024

£
Total
68,148
32,371
2,715
38,712
878
235
12,286
5,731
0
25,229
82,748
0
365
86
6,555
131
19,076
-5,129
-1,538

288,599

FUNDS

Summary of Funds at 31 December 2024

	2025			
	£	£	£	£
	Net Income	Transfer	Revaluation	Total
Endowment				
Florence Fare Trust			805	68,953
Restricted				
Youth & Family	92			2,673
Outreach	-147			585
Homeless Lunches	157			283
Church Flowers	-336			15
Maurice Dale Legacy	-667			0
Music Fund	0			1,183
Discretionary Fund	-35			1,080
Shop & Coffee A/C	14,428	-13,000		13,931
Unrestricted				
General Funds	9,748	-13,000	805	201,030
Totals	23,240	-26,000	1,610	289,733

2024

£
Total

68,148

2,581

732

126

351

667

1,183

1,115

12,503

203,477

290,883

Notes for Financial Statements to 31 December 2025

1 Donations	Includes all one-off donations given to the church for general use
2 Investments	Investments are mainly with TMCP and CCLA and are for general use with the exception of the Florence Fare Trust.
3 Interest	Earned on CCLA Deposit Account and Bank Deposit Accounts with HSBC and Lloyds.
4 Fundraising	Amounts given for any specific charity, eg The Leprosy Mission. Payments to charities are shown under Charitable Giving.
5 Other	Vision advertising, Ride and Stride, external services, etc
6 Grants	No grants applied for or received this year.
7 Refunds	No refunds received this year.
8 Minor Items	Covers small items eg. Candles, audio/visual equipment, CCLI licences, etc.
9 Charitable Giving	Amounts given to specific charities plus Churches Together, Lunches for the Homeless, etc
10 Music in Worship	A gift made to the UCD Musical Director from church funds.
11 Church Shop & Coffee	Income/expenditure is combination of Church Shop and Coffee Lounge takings/outgoings. Outgoings also include Sunday after-service coffee in the hall. Administration costs met by UCD.
12 Debtors	Gift Aid estimate £15,000 for 2025 (yet to be claimed).
13 Creditors	The only outstanding bill is to Paul Smith (UCD Property Manager).
14 Church Groups	Monies held in UCD bank account on behalf of two Badminton groups, and the Country Dancing group.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
United Church Dorchester

On accounts for the year
ended

31/12/2025

Charity no
(if any) 1137996

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2025.

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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination 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.

Signed:

Date:

22/04/26

Name:

Ben Elliot

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

FMAAT

Address:

Elliot and Co LLP

7 King Street

Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7BJ