

United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2021

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. Our current membership is 172. During the year, 6 new members were welcomed into the Church, 4 had their membership transferred to other churches, 5 members died, 5 moved away and 8 former members, with whom we had lost contact, were removed from the list. Another 68 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. Policies and

procedures for the induction and training of new trustees are in place and available in the restricted section of the church website, containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation. All stewards have up to date DBS clearance and have or are attending Advanced Safeguarding training.

- 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 Minister(s) 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 Minister(s), Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.
- 1.4.4. Our AGM was held on the church premises in July 2021.

The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2021 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 – until his retirement in September 2021.

Stewards who stood down at the AGM:

- John Hilton (2017)
- Mary Martin (2017)

Stewards who resigned in 2021:

- Janice Young (2018)
- Marylyn Mould (2021)

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

- John Parson (2018) Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards
- VACANCY Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)
- Colin Gannaway (2004) Treasurer (Finance, Lettings)
- Maria Jacobson (2019) (Community Service, Home & World Mission)
- Diana Leeming (2019) (Finance)
- Brian Savage (2020) (Outreach)

Stewards elected July 2021

- Jenny Mair (2021) (Worship)
- Marilyn Mould (2021) (Pastoral Committee) – resigned in November 2021
- Paul Smith (2018) (Property and Finance)

Stewards co-opted July 2021

- John Hilton (2021) Acting Church Secretary (Worship, Lettings)

Observer

- Sue Bird (representing the Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit)
- Catherine Welch (2021) Safeguarding Officer

Minute Taker: Di Lawrence (UCD Administrator)

1.5. Staff members

- Joint Minister: Revd John Yarrien
- Joint Minister: Revd Peter Clark, 30% from September 2020, retired September 2021
- Pastoral Visitor: VACANT
- Children and Families Outreach Worker: Mr Peter Jenner – part time (employed by the Circuit)
- Clerical Co-ordinator: Mrs Di Lawrence 11 hrs per week

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 – VACANT
- Treasurer – Colin Gannaway
- Finance Committee – Paul Smith
- Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton
- Youth and Family – Peter Jenner
- Property - Paul Smith

- Worship Secretary – Linda Gundry
- Lettings – John Hilton
- Coffee Shop Manager – Mary Martin, Elizabeth Haynes and Diana Leeming
- Church Shop Manager – Margaret Knighton
- Wednesday Morning coffee – Sue Gannaway
- Safeguarding Officer – Catherine Welch
- Community Service, Home and World Mission – committee under review?
- Outreach – John Yarrien (deputy chair – Peter Jenner)

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 the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. The two churches have been combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. Revd Peter Clark retired in September 2021 after spending part of his time looking after the congregation at UCD as well as BUC; his commitment and generosity in his managerial, spiritual and pastoral care for our congregation has been much appreciated.
- 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.

1.8. Governance issues

- 1.8.1. The third lockdown, just after Christmas 2020, proved to be the most difficult for many. At its end in February 2021, we were waiting for the roadmap to indicate the way ahead. Gradually those under 70 were then being offered the vaccination and those who had received early vaccination were starting to receive their second injection.
- 1.8.2. The stewards were able to meet regularly and discussed opening activities and revisited the United Church Vision discussion that we started before the pandemic.
- 1.8.3. Gradually throughout the year, a few more chairs were brought into the church so additional people could be accommodated at the service of their preference (10 and 11.15 services were maintained). People were asked to book a seat each week at both services initially, then just at the 10 am service.
- 1.8.4. We were able to hold our first AGM in 2 years (July 2021), and a questionnaire was composed to gather the congregation's views on both the church's vision going forward and on the roadmap for moving out of Covid. This informed the stewards' meeting in September.
- 1.8.5. In October everyone could now sit wherever they wished and total numbers were only needed for the first service. The distance between individuals, couples and groups was changed to just one empty seat. If people needed a specific seat due to a hearing problem, a disability issue or they wanted more than one seat gap between them and the next person, they could still reserve a specific seat at either service.

- 1.8.6. During the summer we started serving coffee in a Covid-safe way; this has allowed people to see and chat with each other - some had not done so for many months. Safety measures remained in place, i.e. everyone needing to sanitise their hands on entering the hall, wear a mask and sit at a table before the mask could be removed.
- 1.8.7. In May, some hip tiles were blown off the church roof down the side alley; it was difficult to find scaffolders and roofers to repair the leaking roof, but after much searching, the scaffolding went up later in the month. Covering the roof to stop leaks before work could start, proved a challenge and we were very grateful to those who successfully managed to complete the task. Scaffolding also had to be erected internally for the safety of the roofers. This meant that space in church became very limited, and we had to remove several chairs at the front of the church to accommodate the scaffolding and reorganise the seating. All activities until almost the end of the year had to be planned around the scaffolding, e.g. harvest festival, reintroduction of choir and music group. The re-roofing of the east end of the church is due to be completed early in the New Year. It is hoped that the western end of the roof will be re-roofed in 2022.
- 1.8.8. Also in October and following changing guidance, more restrictions were lifted at church: we were now able to sing, although seated, with the majority wearing masks.

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. Online church services introduced after the first lockdown in March 2020 have continued: a Zoom Sunday service, a YouTube service, as well as printed services for those without appropriate technology. Zoom Lent and Advent groups and coffee mornings were also held.
- 2.2.4. On Palm Sunday, we opened the church to worship in person for the first time, followed by a Maundy Thursday communion (our first with both bread and wine) and then a full church for two services (10 and 11.15) on Easter Sunday. How great it was to hear the church organ ringing again on Easter Sunday, to see so many faces and to experience Easter worship together.
- 2.2.5. During the summer the music group joined worship again, although sadly the congregation still could not sing. Junior Church also returned.
- 2.2.6. We hosted the Tolpuddle martyrs' service in July with others in the circuit and across the district, welcoming the President and Vice President of conference to lead the service. This was the first service live streamed.
- 2.2.7. For the time being we are continuing to record our first Sunday service which is then available on YouTube for anyone to watch whenever they like.
- 2.2.8. From October we were able to sing, although seated and the majority wearing a mask. The choir also started rehearsing again.
- 2.2.9. When the scaffolding went up in the church, all services and activities had to be fitted around this, and we had our two Harvest festival services with tables underneath the scaffolding laden with produce for the Foodbank; the choir also sang for the first time since lockdown. The service was followed by a Bring and Share lunch, the first in nearly 2 years; it was good to eat together, but numbers were low.
- 2.2.10. From October people were able to sit where they liked during services, with no need to book for the second service. The first Sunday of November saw an array of Christmas shoe boxes filled and wrapped for children living in poverty in south east Europe.
- 2.2.11. We were able to have our special services at Christmas: Journey to the Stable (limited due to scaffolding), Quiet Christmas and two Christingle services, as well as Feed me, Change me, Love me.

2.3. Teaching of the Christian faith

- 2.3.1. Many 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, but we offered a Lent Course during 2021 as well as an Advent Course; one House Group resumed meeting, initially on Zoom and towards the end of the year in person.

- 2.3.2. Work on our vision for the future is moving forward under the guidance of Rev John Yarrien.
- 2.3.3. Mission and evangelism
- 2.4.1 Junior Church started meeting half way through the year. Numbers were low but those who lead it remain very enthusiastic and take great care to keep the children safe.
- 2.4.2 Forest Praise has now become a joint venture with our Anglican friends at St George's and has gone from being held in School holidays to once a month.
- 2.4.3 The 'Story-Tots' group, did not meet for the first part of the year. We were able to start Story Tots again in June as there was a demand from parents who just wanted to get out of the house, meet other parents and let their children play - so much so that we now meet weekly in the Church Hall with a regular attendance of 15 – 20 children and a parent/carer. Parents are offered a drink and plenty of equipment (toys) for children to play with. We kept going through the School holidays (normally we close for a break) and made it Story Tots Plus so that parents could bring their older school-aged children.
- 2.4.4 Journey to the Stable was planned, but owing to scaffolding in the church building at the time, the duration was curtailed. This meant that the Youth and Family worker took the Journey experience into one of the local schools. Schools were invited; one school managed to attend but the other which had planned to visit had to cancel due to Covid. Despite this, the overall attendance and positive feedback were encouraging.
- 2.4.5 Our Youth Worker and Minister visited a School and did the Journey to the Stable with the children in class years 3 and 4. Our Youth Worker was also invited into a School to explain to Reception and Key stage 1 and 2 how Churches prepare for Christmas.
- 2.4.6 The annual Christingle service, was held on Christmas Eve, led by the Junior Church leaders but the format was a little different. It was well attended, at both 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.
- 2.4.7 In the week before Christmas, the church was open for several hours each day for "Feed Me, Love Me, Change Me" to allow people time to slow the busy rush to Christmas and let their children play and do crafts while the parents and carers had a drink and time to relax. Some parents and children made more than one visit.
- 2.4.8 On Easter Sunday we gave out Flowers and Sweets to the community. At Pentecost we had a well-attended Fun Day, which was all part of reaching out to the Community.
- 2.4.9 The South Street window is changed regularly to depict what is happening throughout the year, i.e. the different seasons, activities and events, local and world concerns.
- 2.4.10 The continuing Covid pandemic meant that the County Show did not take place in 2021.

2.4.11 We have an Outreach committee which looks at what is happening (events we are doing) and planning /suggesting other events for the future.

2.5 Pastoral work

2.5.1 Our Ministers, Rev John Yarren and Rev. Peter Clark offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs.

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. Due to Covid 19 the pastoral visitors only met once this year for safeguarding training. There have been several changes to the system; the pastoral committee has decided that no pastoral visitor should have more than 10 people in their group. Most of the pastoral visitors have attended a Foundation Course in Safeguarding as part of their role, and DBS checks have been updated where necessary.

2.5.3 Pastoral visitors have tried to keep in touch with their groups by email and by telephone calls and the occasional visit when allowed and have been a vital link distributing information in the rapidly changing world of lockdown. In August they delivered the Vision Magazine in person again for the first time.

2.5.4 Email and the church website remained hugely important in terms of relaying information to all church members, including those who have not yet returned to church. Printed services and newsletters continued to be delivered to those not attending church.

2.5.5 Kevin & Susy Rogers continued to organise a three times weekly Zoom "coffee and chat", with Myra Dawson acting as reserve 'host' on several occasions. Numbers joining each time inevitably varied according to the severity of national restrictions, but over 200 sessions had been held by the end of July. We finally suspended meetings in the summer - though we did gather for a pre-Christmas session in December, just for fun!

2.5.6 As part of the extra support to members throughout the period of Covid 19 restrictions, a shopping support service was offered; but was used less frequently than in 2020.

2.5.7 As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. Ministers took four funerals this year and provided support to the families, not all the deceased were Church members.

2.5.8 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 prayer chain keeps a confidential list of people for whom prayer has been requested both daily and weekly.

2.5.9 The Coffee Shop re-opened in October, as did the Wednesday coffee mornings.

2.5.10 The Solos Group had one meeting in December but only three people attended and had a Quiz; it may restart in March 2022.

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. During the week before Christmas, the Action

for Children group arranged Carol Singing outside the church, offering knitted angels to passers-by. The window onto South Street developed the Christmas story through a changing sequence of tableaux. 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 Dorchester 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. These continued throughout 2021. Other lettings, such as the Country Market and a local amateur orchestra have now also returned, along with country dancing and badminton, which are internal church groups.
- 2.6.2 The Church Shop re-opened in April for three days a week rising to four in October. It is staffed entirely by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. When open, the shop also acts as an information point for the church. Ms Margaret Knighton is the shop manager and is assisted by a team of buyers and sales staff. Being classed as a non-essential shop it observed all government lockdowns, Throughout the year we have continued to ask customers to use sanitiser on entry and wear masks, for the benefit of staff and customers.
- 2.6.3 We continued to provide lunches for the homeless after the covid shut down and although we do not have the numbers we had attending pre covid, we do have some new members, which is always good as that is our goal. We never throw anything away and those coming always take a second dinner away with them. It is a very rewarding experience. We have a small team of regular helpers (Sue Gannaway, Jean Janes, Roni Boyden and Diana Leeming); Peter Jenner and John Yarren help as and when they can.
- 2.6.4 **Support of other 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.
- 2.6.5 Locally the Church has supported, amongst others:
- a) The local food bank continues to have a collection point at UCD. In addition, at Christmas, church members gave financial support to the Family Support charity, which provides Christmas hampers to families with children receiving free school meals.
 - b) The Dorchester Child Contact Centre provides a safe space for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a controlled environment. It is an independent charity but the church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members. UCD also donated £200 from church funds. The Contact Centre was able to reopen in October, having been closed for 18 months due to covid.

- c) Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, who appreciate 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: Alzheimer’s Society (£200), Citizens Advice (£300), Dorchester Family Support (£500), Dorchester Poverty Action (£600), Dorchester Volunteer Centre (£450), Dorset Mind (£200), Dorset Nightstop (£300), Dorset Race Equality (£200), Durnovaria Silver Band (£200), Home Start (£500), Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) (£200), NHS Foundation Trust (£200), Quiet Space (£100), Transition Towns (£100), URC Retired Ministers’ Housing (£250), Weldmar Hospice (£400) and Women’s Refuge (£400).
- e) The Action for Children Fundraising Group raised a total of £1,493.98 from a range of events, including a garden party, carol singing and several collections at church services.

2.6.6 Internationally, the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. Restrictions under Covid 19 legislation meant that little activity was possible in May, the month of the traditional Christian Aid Week. Most of the events were rescheduled for later in the year, including a walk to the River Jordan at Bowleaze, a street collection and the Christian Aid market and lunch (for long the “baby” of the wonderful and much missed Sheila Mann). The ecumenical service led by Revd. John Yarren at the United Church had an excellent motivational speaker in Rob Pearce, a regional Christian Aid representative.

Because of the lack of very significant funding from house-to-house collections, the committee instigated the publication of a recipe book with contributions from members of Dorchester churches. It was sponsored fully by two generous supporters and we have so far sold over 350 for £10 each. The book gained national attention (in the Methodist Recorder) and received orders from across the south-west region.

In addition, Christian Aid held a stall at the Dorchester Christmas Cracker, where there were some healthy sales of Fair Trade goods and recipe books. Carol singing on Christmas Eve also proved an excellent fund raiser.

Christian Aid is also a campaigning organisation. We have written twice to Chris Loder, our local MP, urging him to oppose government reductions in foreign aid expenditure. Our Market focussed on the effects of climate change with Christian Aid’s River of Prayer for Climate Justice as well as a petition to support a “jubilee” to abolish the debt of the world’s poorest countries. We also joined Dorchester Churches Together Ecology Group Global Day of Action for Climate Justice.

It has been very encouraging to see the increase in fund-raising in 2021 to well over £8000 from across the Dorchester churches’ activities. The committee wish to offer their grateful thanks and appreciation to so many members of our Church for the tremendous support and encouragement Christian Aid continues to have in all it does.

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 a third year as the opportunities for fundraising have been limited by Covid. We restarted our fundraising by organising our usual World Church Christmas Coffee Morning, which was well attended and raised a

considerable amount of money. In total over the 3 years we raised an amazing £5,994.81. 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.

- 2.6.7 The Church contributes to world mission through the Methodist Overseas Mission fund and the Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church, contributing, a small amount to each from general funds.
- 2.6.8 In November 30 shoe boxes and a big bag of loose items were received and blessed in a Sunday morning service. They were collected for the charity FSCI (Foundation for Social change and Inclusion) for distribution to families in Eastern Europe.

2.7 Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

- 2.7.1. Our Property Chairman, Mr Paul Smith has prepared a significant quantity of paperwork to get approval from the relevant bodies to improve access to the loft space of No 51 Charles Street. Approval has now been gained from the URC Listed Buildings Committee, but some issues are still to be resolved with the Building Control Officer. Work is still proceeding to obtain quotes from qualified companies for the work.
- 2.8.2 A local architect produced the specification of works that is required to replace a number of iron retaining rings in the church spire. Three companies submitted tenders to undertake the work, the lowest of which has been accepted and the works are expected to be undertaken in the summer months of 2022. An inspection by this company had shown that there were up to six rings, most of which were very corroded, threatening to crack the stonework
- 2.8.3 In early May 2021 high winds and heavy rainfall combined to dislodge a row of hip tiles from the church roof. Because of the demand for the services of roofing and scaffolding contractors at the time, it took months to have the necessary repairs undertaken. In view of the general condition of the roof covering and insulation (straw) a decision was taken to strip the whole of the east end to the church roof. This was almost completed by the year end. A proportion of the work carried out will be claimed from our church insurance. It is intended that the remainder of the church roof is refurbished in 2022, hopefully assisted by grants from external bodies.
- 2.8.4 Plans to upgrade the ground floor toilet block at the Charles Street end of the church are progressing very 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, the Building Control Officer and Fire Officer for the works to proceed.
- 2.8.5 In 2020 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). 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. During 2021, the Property Committee have considered how the property might be protected in the future, since this size of event is predicted to increase in frequency owing to Global Warming. Some minor works are proposed for 2022 to reduce the chance of flooding through the roof.

- 2.8.6 During 2021 approval was given by the LBAC, the Building Control Officer and Fire Officer for a door to be formed in the west wall of the Cerne Abbas room, to give safe access onto the flat roof which surrounds three sides of the hall. Research was also initiated into the updating of the church heating, this could include the use of heat pumps instead of gas firing and the installation of fans to circulate the hot air at ceiling level down to the seating area.
- 2.8.7 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

The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town, in particular, Forest Praise is now carried out jointly at St George's Anglican Church. We are a member of Churches Together, which continued to meet via Zoom, but then was able to resume in-person meetings in the autumn. It was not possible to hold the usual joint services for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, nor have the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, but they will resume in 2022.

4 Staffing and Other Issues

4.1 Employed Staff

- 4.1.1 Reverend Peter Clark, our URC minister, based in Bridport, retired in September 2021. He has supported and encouraged us during some difficult years, always going above and beyond. His irrepressible positivity and his stories are greatly missed. A goodbye tea was held in his honour.
- 4.1.1 The Reverend John Yarren has been making an impact as UCD's new minister as well as superintendent. He has managed to meet and get to know most of his congregation despite social restrictions and safety measures preventing many face to face meetings, and is proactive in moving forward UCD's Vision going forward.
- 4.1.2 Mr Peter Jenner has continued to take a lead on key areas of Families and Young People's work within UCD, particularly, supporting the teams that deliver Forest Praise, Story Tots, Journey to the Stable, and "Feed me, Love me, Change me". Peter also chairs the Youth and Family Committee. As well as his work with the wider circuit, Peter has been working with a small team to develop a Saturday outreach project aimed at Families and young children, starting with a Family Fun Day at Pentecost.

4.1.4 Mrs Di Lawrence continued as Church Administrator helping the Stewards and Senior Management of the church with clerical work and managing the booking system for letting rooms in the church. She worked from home through the pandemic and has managed to catch up with many of the administrative changes that had been planned. 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 and the church shop. 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, normally, about £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 (£60,000) was set aside by the Church Meeting many years ago, to cover the costs of stabilising the church spire, which is in an unsafe condition. The work specification was completed this year and a qualified contractor has been engaged. The work is expected to start in summer 2022.

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

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. We now have two Safeguarding Officers at UCD, sharing the responsibility.
- 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, 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 complete an application form and have two references taken up, and those appointed to particular roles are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31 December 2021

2020			2021
	RECEIPTS		
61,358	Giving		57,956
	2434	Cash	3,175
	19984	Envelopes	14,391
	38940	Standing Orders	40,390
20,579	Donations		25,232
7,005	Lettings		12,885
1,785	Wednesday Coffee & Stall		714
35	Bank Interest		0
1,553	Investment Interest/Dividends		1,466
14,424	Tax Refund on Gift Aid		14,662
3,934	Earmarked		3,842
774	Other		593
1,093	Youth and Family		928
1,500	Coffee Lounge		2,489
1,500	Church Shop		0
115,540	Total Income		120,767
2020			2021
	PAYMENTS		
72,090	Church		69,645
	53,676	Dorset South & West Circuit	53,676
	5,045	Insurance	5,344
	5,562	Cleaning and Waste Collection	4,885
	2,358	Gas	3,746
	4,145	Electricity	562
	959	Telephone and BB	883
	81	Water	82
	264	Business Rates and BID	467
	0	Other	0
8,354	Minor Items		11,787
3,044	Property		23,223
2,527	Property Maintenance - General	4,879	
0	Property Maintenance - Emergencies	0	
0	Roof Repairs	14,436	
-1,553	Insurance reclaim	-5,710	
	Access to Flat Roof	4,500	
	No51 Loft Spce	269	
216	Church Spire	4,848	
0	Lift	0	
10,980	Charitable Giving		7,841
1,062	Music in Worship		1,095
398	Youth and Family		1,692
97,118			115,283
18,422	Net Receipts/Payments		5,484

UCD Coffee Shop: Accounts 2021

	2020	2021
Sales	1,836	1,304
Tips and donations	53	0
Charitable giving	-53	0
Less: Purchases of foodstuffs	-586	-84
Bank charges		-5
Net contribution to church funds	1,251	1,215
Cumulative funds		
At start of year	1,889	1,639
Net income from trading	1,251	1,215
Funds transferred	-1,500	-2,483
Funds at year end	1,639	371
Represented by:		
Balance at bank at year end	1,619	351
Cash held	20	20
	1,639	371

The accounts for the Coffee Shop support the main accounts of the United Church Dorchester, and as such there is no legal requirements for them to be independently examined.