

Diverse Church

Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 December 2019

The trustees present their report, which covers the period from becoming a registered charity in August 2018 to the year end 31 December 2019, together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2019. The trustees have prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis as the total income of the charity is less than the SORP threshold for the year, in line with Charity Commission guidance, CC15d November 2016.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1179441

Correspondence Address

6 St. Martin's Place
London
WC2N 4JH

Trustees

Revd S.Hitchiner
Revd S.M.Wells
A. Grenfell
G.Evans
P.S.Counsell

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, the Constitution, and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO - Foundation) and was registered with the Charities Commission on 3 August 2018.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The trustees of the charity are responsible for the leadership and management of the charity to fulfil the objects of the charity in line with Christian principles and legal requirements. Appointment of additional trustees is the responsibility of the existing trustees.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Diverse Church was founded in 2013 by Revd Sally Hitchiner, who over the next several years established and developed the organisation, and served as our first National Director. Diverse Church was established and exists to foster Christian communities across the United Kingdom that enable young LGBTQ+ people to celebrate their identity and flourish in faith. These communities provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ Christians to share their experience of their sexuality, to discuss the interrelation of their sexuality and Christian theology, and to support each other through prayer and encouragement.

The objects of the Church are for the benefit of the public, and are:

The advancement of the Christian faith, in particular, but not exclusively, among lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, asexual and intersex Christians, through the provision of pastoral support, theological discussion and other activities as the trustees from time to time think fit.

In accordance with its aims, Diverse Church has planned and delivered a range of support and activities throughout the year. This support and the activities were planned with due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

Diverse Church participants become part of online cohorts using a closed Facebook group, and create communities of 50-80 members. Once this size is reached, then a new community cohort is planted. Given the situations many of the young LGBTQ+ people who join Diverse Church have experienced, the welcome into the group is especially important. The beauty and importance of this welcoming process where people, who have often been very isolated, are able to talk to somebody supportive who will listen, potentially even for the first time, cannot be underestimated. It is easy to forget just how powerful and important this is, but a beautiful quote from one of the newest members sums it up perfectly:

So I'm sure most, if not all, of us have struggled with the idea that we had to choose either our sexual identity or our faith/religion. But being here, it's so comforting and reassuring to have a place/group where both (y)our faith and sexuality can coexist without having to choose one, or be more one way than the other.

Once each cohort is established and functioning there are regular online meet-ups and discussions for encouragement and support, with communication and support from the Diverse Church leaders and local and national physical meet ups arranged, as an additional layer of development. These online meet-ups and discussions and physical meet ups include teaching, encouragement and collective acts of worship.

Aims and purposes

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that Diverse Church fulfils its charitable aims, which are to advance advancement of the Christian faith, in particular, but not exclusively, among lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, asexual and intersex Christians, through the provision of pastoral support, theological discussion and other activities.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities and review of the year

Diverse Church is open to all young LGBTQ+ people, with a faith or of no faith, to provide support, and encouragement at what can be very difficult parts of the individual's journey.

During 2019 Diverse Church supported the DC19 cohort as it came to the end of their formally supported year, and developed into a peer group of friends giving mutual support, on request support from Diverse Church leaders when required. The DC20 group was formed during the year with several people joining each month, and was properly launched in Autumn 2019.

Resources for the cohorts have been developed, primarily by the National Director, together with some from the leaders and from the parents group, which are made available to the DC19 and DC20 cohorts. These have been so helpful that these have been made available to the leaders of all the previous cohorts too. As a development of this initiative, a communal contributors' space has been created to gather and refine contributions for the benefit of all. These can take the form of stories, reflections, Bible insights, and encouragements, and are a powerful means of communication and support.

Staff and Volunteers

All areas of Diverse Church are staffed by volunteers who freely give their time and skills, and without whom the charity could not function. During the year we recruited a volunteer National Director to lead the direction and pastoral care of Diverse Church.

During the year all policies and procedures are reviewed (and updated where appropriate). The Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and kept current in line with expert advice.

Connections

Diverse Church has connections with other LGBTQ+ charities and organisations, particularly those with a Christian connection. During the year the National Director, together with other Diverse Church members, have been invited to speak to many organisations and conferences on behalf of Diverse Church. These have included YMCA Ireland, Corrymeela, Gathering Voices Conference at De Montford University, Christians for LGBTI+ Equality, together with connections with Stonewall and the European Forum of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Groups.

Diverse Church has been a part of the 'Space To Be' events, in collaboration with One Body One Faith, Two:23, House of Rainbow, Open Table and Quest, and it is a positive development to be working together again in the future.

Diverse Church has been able to provide pastoral, emotional and practical support to young LGBTQ+ Christians throughout the year. In all these areas the Trustees are grateful to God for direction and provision, and wish to record their thanks to all the volunteers and participants who have sacrificially given of their time and finance to support and equip both the Diverse Church cohorts and groups, together with the wider community. As these connections and opportunities to support young LGBTQ+ Christians increased, a review was started by the trustees to create a strategy whereby the charity could deliver the maximum benefit to the community. This has led to the decision to engage in fundraising during 2020 to fund an initial full-time staff position.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Finances

Finances for the year were relatively small, with 100% of the funds expended being used to further the charitable aims of Diverse Church. As all activities of Diverse Church are currently carried out by volunteers, fundraising was not considered necessary. However, as Diverse Church has grown in both numbers and opportunity, it has become clear that the National Director becoming a full-time remunerated post would significantly increase the effectiveness and reach of Diverse Church. During 2020/21, Diverse Church is investigating the option of fundraising to fund this strategy development.

Reserves policy

The Charity has a Reserves Policy that identifies a prudent level of reserves, based on holding an amount equal to circa six months operating costs. This is under regular review and will be updated as fundraising activities allow the implementation of the strategy for establishing remunerated key posts within Diverse Church.

Approved by order of the board of Trustees on 22nd September 2020 and signed on its behalf by:

..... Revd S.M Wells - Chair of Trustees



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
Diverse Church	1179441

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	1/1/19		31/12/19

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Voluntary Receipts	1,295	-	-	1,295	1,635
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	1,295	-	-	1,295	1,635
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
None	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total receipts	1,295	- 0	- 0	1,295	1,635
A3 Payments					
Costs of Charitable Activities	1,926	-	-	1,926	91
Governance Costs	108	-	-	108	234
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total	2,034	-	-	2,034	325
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
None	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total payments	2,034	- 0	- 0	2,034	325
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 739	-	-	- 739	1,310
A5 Transfers between funds	- 0	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,454	-	-	4,454	3,144
Cash funds this year end	3,715	-	-	3,715	4,454

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Current Account	3,715	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

