

## **CORNERSTONE CHURCH SECRETARY REPORT AGM & CHURCH MEETING 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

A unique year (hopefully) as we have seen the last 6 months disrupted by the COVID-19 virus that has become Global and has stopped almost all church activities at times.

Prior to closure, Cornerstone had a number of successful events including a Picnic on Ashdown Forest, Working parties at the church, Holy Habits leading to fortnightly Bible Study on a Thursday in church, Beetle Drives, Whist Drive, Ten Pin Bowling, community lunches (whilst not large in numbers they were very enjoyable for all who came and we did see some new faces), Christian Aid Climate Change exhibition in June 2019, Bring and Share meals including a focus on One World Week, The Concert Brass and Young Talent Concert on 26 October 2019, Schools coming at Christmas, and the usual carol singing. If I have missed any you would like added to the record, please let me know.

March to September 2020 however saw church activities including services halted and communication maintained between members as best we could, using phones and computers and occasional outside visits. Phones remain the basic way of communicating, being used to make sure that members are safe and healthy; with mental wellbeing an increasing concern throughout the UK during this period as contact with family and friends has been very restricted outside of peoples individual households.

The resumption of services in September, following detailed Risk Assessments, saw very strong support at church despite the new rules. This allowed us to share some contact, but communication is limited as speaking and singing by the congregation is not permitted. Outdoor restrictions mean that no more than 6 people can gather.

During closure of our buildings, Worship Services from our Minister were distributed by e-mail, with paper-based versions for those needing that option. In addition, weekly news and prayer sheets were distributed to keep members and church friends together whilst physical gatherings were not allowed. I would like to thank Tony Budgen for diligently distributing them to our members in Millington Court, as that helped all there to remain safe.

The service sheet is still being sent weekly. The news and prayers may also resume shortly, but at less frequent intervals, as they have been missed by some. Please do let me have thoughts and news to pass on. Remember to get consent before passing on news about others. We thank God for whatever contact we can have, as face masks at least allow a smile with one's eyes to be shared.

Sadly, in this period people have not been able to carry on normal activities and could not meet to comfort each other as we would wish on the loss of Mervyn Mountjoy (passed away 15 April 2020 aged 91) and Rev Derek Nuttall MBE (passed away 24 June 2020 aged 83). Lives well lived, much loved and remembered with affection.

Sheila Warner, a valued member for many years, is planning to form closer links in Burgess Hill but hopefully Sheila will still attend at times and I am sure links with her will continue.

Even simple celebrations such as traditions of sharing cake after services for peoples' birthdays have been halted as they are higher risk than attending the service. Indeed, even church staples of tea and coffee have halted to reduce the virus spreading as it can be asymptomatic (a new word for our vocabularies – at least it makes a change from all new words relating to computers whose presence in the world still increases rapidly).

Should restrictions increase, we will be looking to use Zoom for services on our computers and phones although we are not yet ready for that. Church meetings will have to use that media as

gatherings for such purposes are not allowed. Church Trustees have been using Zoom for their meetings which reduces pollution and time spent travelling, so there are some advantages to the new ways of life. A few people have also joined our Minister and others for weekly online prayer sharing, which it would be great to see increase should members get used to the idea. We want to arrange some form of Bible group and that will have to be online due to ongoing restrictions or very restricted in numbers. We will see what can be offered and what people would like and then how best to make it happen.

A separate issue involving technology has been the upgrading of the audio/visual function within church which I think is really adding to services, in addition to being safer than handling Orders of Service, hymn books and bibles. Many thanks are needed to Adam Earle for this and to Clare and Jess for the processing and operating of it in the services. Thanks also go to Gillian Earle as her duets with Adam are much nicer and more personal than an unknown choir performing a recording.

We are also due to get internet access at the church. This will allow short features to be played occasionally from organisations like Christian Aid, Fairtrade etc or sharing special services together with others. COVID is therefore encouraging us to try changes and whilst they will not replace personal communication, it will compliment it.

Changes to the premises have been high up our agenda since joining the Methodist and URC members into Cornerstone. That has not been forgotten, but priorities and capabilities have changed, even if only for the short term in which COVID has made its presence felt. John Harriyott continues to investigate this, and report as and when appropriate. There will be more on this in John's report.

Finances have been concerns in the past, but thanks to all members and church supporters we are doing better than had been feared. Doug will update you fully on this, but I want to give my thanks to him for what is crucial in allowing trustees and members to aim for whatever improvements we feel will help spread the Word of God in Uckfield.

Linked to Cornerstone's finances has been our ongoing support of Fairtrade. The money involved is still in our name although it was always the intent that profits were not ours, and instead be used for Fairtrade and global emergency needs. Charity rules that we now have to follow, will need us to do more detailed and time-consuming monitoring and reports. In itself, we don't have a problem with closer controls, but for the small sums involved the time would be a big burden when our resources could be better used in directly promoting the church. The trustees have agreed to pass the balance and stock to the Uckfield Fairtrade Group, which include Jeremy and Teresa as well as people from other churches and the secular community, so the support remains in good hands, with the same goal of promoting Fairtrade and using the profits to help those involved.

Please continue to be a part of Fairtrade's success in Uckfield which is now the town with the longest continuous status as a Fairtrade town in East Sussex. Teresa or I should be approached if you want anything. We will now be showing products and making sales at the Farmers Market on the first Saturday of each month between 9.30 & 12.30 as we cannot do our teas & Coffees in the Source. Please look us up if you can do so safely as it helps make our morning a pleasanter time.

Finally, we are entering the last year of working with Amanda as our Minister who has helped us enormously and challenged us to live closer to Jesus. Renewal is something that we do with our Lord Jesus, so let us pray that we strengthen ourselves for what lies ahead post COVID, and when Amanda leaves us, for example reconnecting with Harlands School. God bless everyone. **Jeremy Hallett**

**CORNERSTONE CHURCH UCKFIELD ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED**  
**30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020.**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>See Note</b>
Offertory – Loose	3,010.88	4,538.55	<b>1</b>
- Envelopes	7,365.55	7,005.00	<b>1</b>
Standing Orders	7,546.00	7,841.00	<b>1</b>
Hall Rent	5,683.00	4,327.40	<b>2</b>
Donations /Legacies	1,326.70	5,746.25	<b>3</b>
Gift Day & Tax Refund	7,908.14	6,851.02	<b>4</b>
Fundraising	2,447.74	1,931.30	
Organ	250.00	250.00	<b>5</b>
Sundries	4,000.66	3,171.55	<b>6</b>
Christian Aid Restricted	578.62	275.50	<b>5</b>
CFL	60.00	120.00	
Future Repairs- (Rest)	1,400.00	1,500.00	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>41,577.29</u></b>	<b><u>43,557.57</u></b>	

<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	
M & M & CSUA	15,496.00	20,552.00	7
Heat, Light & Water	5,470.43	4,093.36	8
Pulpit Supply	0.00	20.00	
Post & Stationery	27.88	62.49	
Cleaning	915.94	838.89	
Insurance	3,951.04	2,694.53	9
Photocopying	189.19	144.95	
Repairs & Maintenance	4,002.63	1,891.75	10
Mission	4,498.05	2,829.16	11
Organ /Piano	677.40	1,023.80	5
Miscellaneous & Flowers	891.97	994.43	12
Licences etc.	206.90	257.62	
Equipment	325.59	409.64	
CFL	350.00	350.00	
Capital Expenditure	6,068.40	6,507.99	13
Total	<b><u>43,071.42</u></b>	<b><u>£42,670.61</u></b>	
Excess Income/Expenditure	<b><u>1,494.13</u></b>	<b><u>886.96</u></b>	14
Balances at Bank – 30/04/19		15,080.44	
<b>DEFICIT/SURPLUS for period</b>	<b>1,494.13</b>	886.96	
Balances at Bank	<b><u>15,080.44</u></b>	<b><u>£15,967.40</u></b>	

**CORNERSTONE CHURCH UCKFIELD NOTES TO ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD ENDED**  
**30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020.**

1. The totals for Envelopes, Standing Orders and Gift Day do include all Gift aid payments made by members. They are separated only because of the way in which the income has been received. Overall freewill giving is continuing to hold up well which continues to be encouraging.
2. Hall rent down because of loss of a couple of tenants.
3. Donations mainly relate to money received from members and friends towards the cost of the Solar Panels.
4. Only one Gift Day last year owing to the appeal for the Solar Panels. Tax refund was, however, higher than in previous years reflecting the increased giving.
5. **Restricted Funds.** The “**Organ Fund**” forms part of the accounts held at the Bank but is regarded as “Restricted Funds”. “**Future Repairs**” is also treated as restricted funds.
6. Mainly money received from CSUA owing to us from monies paid out in respect of Uckfield Methodist Church after closure and eventual sale.
7. Payments to CSUA and M&M (URC) amounted to £17,195 and £3357 respectively. This will increase considerably in the coming year.
8. Reduction on previous year reflecting milder winter and more efficient boiler.
9. Some reduction as anticipated as we no longer cover UMC buildings.
10. Reduced expenditure this year but always conscious of ensuring the buildings are properly maintained.
11. Mission payments continue to include everything that has been sent to other outside charities and organisations. Reduction partly because of lower fundraising totals.
12. Figure includes cost of Flowers following agreement to pay the sum of £10 each week to those who provide them.
13. Main item of expenditure was for the Solar Panels.
14. A small surplus which was slightly better than budget. However, this would not have been achieved had it not been for the generosity of those who contributed towards the cost of the Solar Panels with only a very small shortfall between the amount given and the total costs. All of

the difference should be reflected in an increased repayment of Gift Aid from HMRC.

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Balances at Bank as at 30/04/20 were as follows: - Lloyds TSB and CAF Bank were £4,917.96 and £10,818.43 respectively, but after allowing for outstanding credit and cheques, the balances total £15,967.40 of which £8,381 is the balance of "Future Repairs", and a balance of £3,109.84 is in the Organ Fund. This does mean that the balance available for all other running costs for the church is only £4,476.56. Bearing in mind the uncertainties **following the Covid 19 Pandemic, it will be necessary to carefully manage our income and expenditure.**

Organ Fund Account (held within Operating Accounts) – **Organ Fund**

Balance of Account 30/4/197	£2,659.84
Transfer from Church Operating Account	200.00
Donations	250.00
<b><u>Balance</u></b>	<b><u>£3,109.84</u></b>

.....(Doug Scott ) (Hon. Treasurer.)

.....(Jeremy Hallett) (Hon. Secretary.)

Accounts examined and found to be correct.....

Roy Hayward ACIB (Hon. Examiner) Dated.....



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