

## **Diverse Church**

### **Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 December 2020**

The trustees present their report, which covers the period from 1 January 2020 to the year end 31 December 2020, together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2020. 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 Dr S.M.Wells (Chair)  
R. C. Kehoe               Joined 21.1.20  
A.J Irwin                 Joined 21.1.20  
A. Grenfell  
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 recent 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, thematic workshops, 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 2020 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, having been properly launched in Autumn 2019. It was agreed to extend the DC20 cohort period given the anxieties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to ensure a consistent safe space and stability for DC members. New groups will be formally launched when there is more social stability, and opportunities for in-person events to take place.

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.

During what has been a particularly challenging year for DC members and volunteers, the support that Diverse Church has been able to provide has been exceptional. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued the struggles that DC members were experiencing had grown. A combination of continued lockdowns and restrictions contributed to emotional wellbeing and mental health struggles, an increased sense of isolation as well as difficulties for those who are living with non-affirming family members. Darker days and colder weather made it harder to find peaceful moments of escape or connection with others.

The support structure that DC implemented included weekly zoom reflections, one to one mentoring, crisis response calls, crisis response visits when needed, small group support spaces, prayer events, collaborative events with other organisations, signposting when appropriate, online social events, online gaming groups, Easter support reflections, Advent support reflections, wellbeing workshops and an inclusive Christmas Card drive. Many of these initiatives have grown authentically from within the DC communities themselves.

## **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, and Christians for LGBTI+ Equality.

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 2020/21 to fund an initial full-time staff position.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

### **Finances**

Finances for 2020 were still relatively small, with the funds expended being used to further the charitable aims of Diverse Church and engage in further fundraising. As all activities of Diverse Church are currently carried out by volunteers, fundraising was not previously considered necessary. However, as Diverse Church has grown in both numbers and opportunity, it has become clear that the National Director role becoming a full-time remunerated post would significantly increase the effectiveness and reach of Diverse Church. During 2020, and into 2021, Diverse Church engaged in fund applications, using the services and expertise of Chell Perkins, to fund this strategic development. During 2020 other fundraising opportunities and activities have also been planned within Diverse Church supporters and networks.

**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 1 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

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



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name <b>DIVERSE CHURCH</b>		No (if any) <b>1179441</b>	<b>CC16a</b>
<b>Receipts and payments accounts</b>			
For the period from	Period start date 1/1/20	To Period end date 31/12/20	

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Voluntary Receipts	1,785	-	-	1,785	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>1,295</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-0	-0	-0	-	-
	-0	-0	-0	-	-0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-0</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>1,295</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Costs of Charitable Activities	402	-	-	402	1,926
Governance Costs	23	-	-	23	108
Fundraising Costs	450	-	-	450	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>2,034</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-0	-0	-0	-	-
	-0	-0	-0	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-0</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>2,034</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>- 739</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-0	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	3,715	-	-	3,715	4,454
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>3,715</b>

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Bank Current Account	4,625	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Endowment funds</b>
	<b>Details</b>	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which liability relates</b>	<b>Amount due (optional)</b>	<b>When due (optional)</b>
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		A. Grenfell	1 July 2021	
		P.S. Counsell	1 July 2021	