

Diverse Church

Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 December 2021

The trustees present their report, which covers the period from 1 January 2021 to the year end 31 December 2021, together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2021. 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
A.J. Irwin
A. Grenfell
P.S. Counsell
M. Kenny (from 15th Feb 2021)
V. Blackford (from 15th Feb 2021)
K. Allen (from 29th April 2021)

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 meetups 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 meetups and discussions and physical meetups 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 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 LGBTQ+ young adults, 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 2021 Diverse Church supported DC members, parents, friends and wider communities such as schools, youth organisations, community groups and faith-based groups in a range of ways, including peer support groups, training, workshops, mentoring, reflections and social events. Many young people continue to join DC, finding community which helps them breathe, think, feel, connect and be themselves. With many LGBTQ+ people already experiencing oppression and discrimination in their family units, workplaces, hometowns and faith groups, the impact of the pandemic and lockdowns have been disproportionately painful for many people involved in DC communities. The need for such safe, brave and inclusive spaces continues. In the words of a DC member, "I can be

open and be myself without worrying about things I might worry about in a traditional church setting like judgement or homophobia is important."

As well as facilitated workshops and sessions lead primarily by the DC Director, DC members themselves have taken opportunities to contribute both within the DC communities and more publicly through DC's platforms. Members have generously shared their stories, offered activities for the wider groups using their skill sets, provided advice and information, mentored, written poems or songs, prayed, campaigned, networked and collaborated. Special events were held throughout the year, often linking with significant calendar dates for LGBTQ+ people. The willingness of DC members to open their minds, hearts and lives has sustained communities that truly feel connected, as well as resourcing the public and wider society to become more mindful and inclusive in their own communities and lives.

In addition to a wide variety of activities, DC has started a consultation with members to ensure the support provided is relevant and needs-led. This consultation will engage with DC communities in a variety of ways to gather thoughts, views and hopes from DC members on what is working well, what could be better and what should change.

The final words go to DC members themselves, who summarise the impact of being part of these communities:

"DC for me has become a place of sanctuary. There was a real community of people where I could discuss things I was going through - the struggles and complications of coming out to people, and I could embrace my identity and who God made me to be." - R

"The phrase 'safe space' has been used so much, it has become a cliché, but I have glimpsed Heaven in Diverse Church, a brave space where I can be safe." - M

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. The volunteer National Director leads 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 charities and organisations, particularly those with a Christian connection and / or those with an LGBTQ+ support or advocacy focus. During the year the National Director and other Diverse Church members were invited to speak to many organisations and at conferences on behalf of Diverse Church. These have included YMCA Ireland, Corrymeela, the Gathering Voices Conference, various faith-based organisations and several schools.

Following the previous success of Space To Be events, Diverse Church continues to collaborate well with other organisations, including One Body One Faith, Two:23, House of Rainbow, Open Table and Quest. It is beneficial to all of these organisations, and to those each organisation supports, for such effective partnerships to be flourishing. Co-facilitated events such as public storytelling have been well attended and positively reviewed.

Diverse Church has been able to provide pastoral, emotional and practical support to young LGBTQ+ people 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 to equip both the Diverse Church cohorts and groups, together with the wider community. As these connections and opportunities to support

young LGBTQ+ people continue to increase, it has been very encouraging to that Diverse Church has secured grant funding from All Churches Trust (now known as Benefact Trust) to begin in January 2022, lasting for two years. Undoubtedly this will significantly support the essential, life-giving work of DC and everyone involved in the DC communities is excited for what is to come.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Finances

As all activities of Diverse Church have generally been 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 to continue to support the community well, to increase the effectiveness and the reach of Diverse Church and to fulfil the charitable aims, it would be advantageous to be able to fund the release of specialist resources, ultimately leading to the National Director role becoming a full-time remunerated post.

During 2021 a major financial focus has been to engage Chell Perkins to lead the submission of ten bids for funding support. The decision to take this approach was confirmed when the bid to the All Churches Trust was successful, with All Churches Trust awarding Diverse Church a total of £20,000 per year in 2022 and 2023. The first payment was received in early 2022.

During 2022/3 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 always 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 30 September 2022, and signed on its behalf by



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



Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	1/1/21		31/12/21

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	12,290	-	-	12,290	1,785
Gift Aid	718	-	-	718	-
Charitable Activities	300	-	-	300	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	13,308	-	-	13,308	1,785
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-0	-0	-0	-	
	-0	-0	-0	-	-0
Sub total	-0	-0	-0	-	-0
Total receipts	13,308	-0	-0	13,308	1,785
A3 Payments					
Cost of Charitable Activities	940	-	-	940	402
Governance Costs	35	-	-	35	23
Fundraising Costs	3,150	-	-	3,150	450
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
	-0	-	-	-	-
Sub total	4,125	-	-	4,125	875
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-0	-0	-0	-	
	-0	-0	-0	-	
Sub total	-0	-0	-0	-	-0
Total payments	4,125	-0	-0	4,125	875
Net of receipts/(payments)	9,183	-	-	9,183	910
A5 Transfers between funds	-0	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,625	-	-	4,625	3,715
Cash funds this year end	13,808	-	-	13,808	4,625

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	13,808	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	13,808	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		P.S.Counsell	Sept 2022	
		R. C. Kehoe	Sept 2022	