



# Kensington Unitarians

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## Annual Report 2010





# Essex Unitarian Church

## Annual Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010

### Name of Charity

Essex Unitarian Chapel and Minister's House and Other Charities, as shown, known locally as Kensington Unitarians, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, London W8 4RT.

### Charitable Registration

The church is registered as Charity number 230789. The original governing instrument is a conveyance dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 1783 and modified by schemes dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1884, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1973 and 18<sup>th</sup> April 1986, which last incorporated the remaining eight charities.

### Trustees

Howard Hague (*Chairperson*), Caroline Blair, Doris Campbell (*from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010; deceased 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010*), David Francis Darling (*from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010*), Juliet Edwards, Heidi Ferid-Hands, Harold Lorenzelli, Roy Parnell.

The Custodian Trustee is the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Incorporate.

### Management Committee

Caroline Blair (*Chairperson*), Louisa Bird (*to July 2010*), Doris Campbell (*deceased 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010*), David Francis Darling, Juliet Edwards, Heidi Ferid-Hands, Angela Gasparetto (*to May 2010*), Howard Hague, Harold Lorenzelli.

### Minister

Rev. Sarah Tinker  
The Manse Flat, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, London W8 4RT

### Treasurer

Juliet Edwards  
6A Essex Road, Acton, London W3 9JA

### Warden

Jenny Moy  
Warden's Flat, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, London W8 4RT

### Secretary

Jane Blackall  
20 Manchester Grove, London E14 3BG

### Auditors

Lindeyer Francis Ferguson  
North House, 198 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1BE

### Investment Advisers

Citi Quilter  
4th Floor, The Pinnacle, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG

### Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd.  
25 King's Hill Avenue, King's Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA

### Restriction on Funds

All Funds/Trusts under the control of the Trustees are for the benefit of the Church other than the Carlisle Fund (income may be expended at the sole discretion of the Minister) and Stock Bequest (income must be used for Church music).

# Essex Unitarian Church

Annual Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010

## The Charity's Purpose and Objectives:

### Charitable Purpose and Policies

The purpose of the charity is to perpetuate public worship and to celebrate divine service every Sunday in the Unitarian manner. There have been no material changes in the policies since the last report.

### Public Benefit

The Trustees have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when reviewing the charity's objectives and planning future activities.

### Aims and Activities of the Charity

We are here to worship, to share our experiences, to learn from each other, to explore our diverse faiths, to welcome spiritual seekers and to offer companionship on life's journey. We advance Unitarianism in West London for the benefit of the public through: the holding of open Sunday services; celebrating rites of passage and multi-faith festivals ; sharing our experience and learning from each other in religious education and social activities. We welcome spiritual seekers and offer companionship on life's journey (including visiting the sick and comforting the bereaved) and producing and distributing Unitarian literature.

The church also provides meeting spaces to other spiritual and social groups that are in accord with our liberal and spiritual ethos.

### Organisation

The running of the church is under the control of the management committee with the trustees having overall responsibility for finance and staff employment. Trustees are appointed by invitation with a maximum number of 9 trustees to serve. They manage the charity by means of monthly meetings. The management committee is elected at the AGM with casual vacancies filled during the year. New trustees are given copies of the church accounts and previous Annual Reports along with a Charity Commission booklet explaining the responsibilities of trustees and a verbal explanation of how the church is organised. The need for further training will be assessed during 2011.

### Trustees

The trustees who have served during the year are listed, with other key personnel, on page 1.

### Review of Activities

During 2010 the trustees continued to work towards key objectives identified during previous AGMs. In particular these objectives included:

- The on-going maintenance and improvement of our church building and its facilities and renting space to other groups whose activities are in accord with our Unitarian ethos
- The on-going commitment to maintain a high standard in public liberal religious worship and in making our congregation visible to the wider world through high quality publicity materials and notice boards
- Encouraging families with children into our community by running weekly children's activities on Sunday mornings
- Widen the number of people actively involved in congregational life by offering opportunities for people to attend a wide range of small group activities and to volunteer for a range of roles to support the life of the church.

These objectives will continue to shape the trustees' future plans with a particular emphasis on improved facilities within our building, such as a new sound system in the worship space, seeking professional advice about the continuing roof problems and ensuring that our liberal religious activities are well publicised.

## **Risks**

The major risk is generating enough income to finance the charity's occupation of the building. The trustees have reviewed the risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

## **Policy on Reserves**

Towards the end of 2010 the church was fortunate in receiving the first part of a large legacy and during 2011 the trustees will be reviewing their current policy of holding a minimum reserve of three months' running costs. A five year repair and renovation programme of our church building is almost complete although the major issue of the leaking roof has yet to be resolved and trustees are mindful of the considerable expense this may involve. A new church sound system will be installed in 2011.

## **Investment Performance**

The trustees will be reviewing the church's investment policy during 2011. Investments are currently held in line with the Unitarian & Free Christian General Assembly's investment policies.

## **Trustees' responsibilities statement**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in [England & Wales/Northern Ireland] requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

## **Auditors**

A resolution proposing that Lindeyer Francis Ferguson be re-appointed as auditors of the charity will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

## **Approval**

On behalf of the Trustees:

Howard Hague, Chair of Trustees

Date: 27 April 2011

## **ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH**

We have audited the financial statements of Essex Unitarian Church for the year ended 31 December 2010 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 and regulations made under section 44 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

#### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor**

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement set out on page 3, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements which give a true and fair view.

We have been appointed as auditor under section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 44 of that Act. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's (APB's) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

#### **Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charity's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the trustees; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

#### **Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 December 2010, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 1993.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities Act 1993 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**S Wells FCA**  
Lindeyer Francis Ferguson  
**Statutory Auditor**

**27 April 2011**

North House  
198 High Street  
Tonbridge  
Kent TN9 1BE

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

Income and expenditure	2010 Unrestricted Funds £	2010 Endowment Funds £	2010 Restricted Funds £	2010 Total Funds £	2009 Total Funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Voluntary income</b>					
Grant income	-	-	1,500	1,500	-
Collections and donations	11,113	-	1,195	12,308	20,524
Legacy	428,979	-	-	428,979	-
Income Tax on Gift Aid	1,073	-	-	1,073	1,431
<b>Investment income</b>					
Dividend income	7	-	4,322	4,329	4,492
Bank interest received	2,048	-	-	2,048	1,089
Lettings	116,225	-	-	116,225	105,003
<b>Other incoming resources</b>	-	-	-	-	2,575
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>559,445</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,017</b>	<b>566,462</b>	<b>135,114</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
<b>Costs of charitable activities</b>					
Donations	868	-	-	868	828
Projects	44,040	-	1,000	45,040	11,061
Ministry	43,621	-	-	43,621	42,453
Church running	29,312	-	-	29,312	27,849
Premises	26,128	-	1,500	27,628	29,835
Fixtures depreciation	-	8,379	-	8,379	8,061
Support costs:					
Other fees paid to the auditors:					
Accountancy costs	1,971	-	-	1,971	1,791
	<b>145,940</b>	<b>8,379</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>156,819</b>	<b>121,878</b>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Independent Examiner	-	-	-	-	1,810
Audit fee	2,640	-	-	2,640	-
	<b>2,640</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,640</b>	<b>1,810</b>
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>148,580</b>	<b>8,379</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>159,459</b>	<b>123,688</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers</b>	<b>410,865</b>	<b>(8,379)</b>	<b>4,517</b>	<b>407,003</b>	<b>11,426</b>
Transfers between funds	4,322	-	(4,322)	-	-
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains and losses</b>	<b>415,187</b>	<b>(8,379)</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>407,003</b>	<b>11,426</b>
Realised gains on disposal of assets	-	-	551	551	(311)
Unrealised gains/(losses) on revaluation of investments	-	749	4,776	5,525	8,771
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>415,187</b>	<b>(7,630)</b>	<b>5,522</b>	<b>413,079</b>	<b>19,886</b>
Balances brought forward	76,884	1,392,149	83,918	1,552,951	1,533,065
<b>Balances carried forward</b>	<b>492,071</b>	<b>1,384,519</b>	<b>89,440</b>	<b>1,966,030</b>	<b>1,552,951</b>

**ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH  
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2010**

	Notes	2010 Unrestricted Funds £	2010 Endowment Funds £	2010 Restricted Funds £	2010 Total Funds £	2009 Total Funds £
<b>Fixed assets</b>						
Tangible assets	3	-	1,340,215	-	1,340,215	1,347,340
Listed investments	4	-	12,048	88,552	100,600	94,687
		-	1,352,263	88,552	1,440,815	1,442,027
<b>Current assets</b>						
Cash held for rent deposit	5	25,190	-	-	25,190	25,396
Debtors and prepayments		7,045	-	-	7,045	7,057
Other debtors		219,131	-	-	219,131	-
Due from Stockbroker		-	-	363	363	368
Cash at bank and on deposit		275,843	32,256	525	308,624	112,183
		527,209	32,256	888	560,353	145,004
<b>Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year</b>						
Creditors and accruals		9,948	-	-	9,948	8,684
Rent deposit		25,190	-	-	25,190	25,396
		35,138	-	-	35,138	34,080
<b>Net current assets</b>		492,071	32,256	888	525,215	110,924
<b>Net Assets</b>		492,071	1,384,519	89,440	1,966,030	1,552,951
<b>Capital and reserves</b>						
Endowment funds	6	-	1,384,519	-	1,384,519	1,392,149
Restricted funds		-	-	89,440	89,440	83,918
General funds		492,071	-	-	492,071	76,884
		492,071	1,384,519	89,440	1,966,030	1,552,951

Approved by the trustees on 27 April 2011 and signed on their behalf by:

S M Tinker (Minister)

H Hague (Chairman)



## ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

#### 1 Accounting policies

##### a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" published in 2005 and applicable accounting standards.

##### b) Grant income

Grant income is recognised on a receivable basis.

##### c) Collections and donations

All congregational giving and donations are included on a cash received basis.

##### d) Legacies

Legacies are recognised on a receivable basis, once the conditions for the receipt have been satisfied and the amount can be measured with certainty.

##### e) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed assets (excluding investments and the freehold property) are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. The costs of minor additions, or those costing below £400 are not capitalised.

Fixtures, fittings and works of art are depreciated at rates of 10% or 20% on cost per annum, depending on the estimated useful life of the asset. Computer equipment is depreciated on a straight line basis over 3 years.

Freehold property is included at the balance sheet at an historic valuation plus the cost of subsequent improvements. The trustees consider that the market value of the property is not less than the amount at which it is stated in the balance sheet.

##### f) Resources expended

Resources expended are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on an accruals basis.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries.

Expenditure on **Projects** relates to the costs incurred by the church during the year on the Repairs & Buildings project, as detailed in note 6.

Expenditure on **Ministry** includes the Minister and congregation costs.

Expenditure on **Church Running** includes the warden staff costs and general administrative expenses.

Expenditure on **Premises** includes the general running costs of the property.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the

##### g) Investments

The investments are held in a variety of investment funds see note 4 and these are valued at the market value in the balance sheet. All movements in the valuations of the investments are taken to the statement of financial activities as they arise.

##### h) Pension costs

The charity contributes to the Ministers Pension Fund. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the charity to the fund totalling £2,509 (2009: £2,850).

## ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

#### i) Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for any other purpose.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds represent those assets which must be held permanently by the charity, principally the church building and the investments. The income arising on The Carlisle endowment fund can be spent at the discretion of the minister. The income arising on the other endowment funds can be used in accordance with the objects of the charity and is included as unrestricted income.

#### 2 Employee costs

There was an average of three employees in the financial year. The significant volume of voluntary contribution to the life of the Church by members of the congregation is not quantified in these accounts.

	Ministry £	Church Running £	2010 Total £	2009 Total £
Minister	20,520	-	20,520	20,176
Warden and Outreach Officer		20,947	20,947	16,709
Social security costs	1,895	1,219	3,114	2,941
Pension contributions	2,509	-	2,509	2,850
<b>Employee costs</b>	<b>24,924</b>	<b>22,166</b>	<b>47,090</b>	<b>42,676</b>
Locum Preachers	610	-	610	480
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>25,534</b>	<b>22,166</b>	<b>47,700</b>	<b>43,156</b>
<b>Average number of staff:</b>				
31 December 2010	1	2	3	
31 December 2009	1	2	3	

The trustees are not remunerated. Fees are paid to trustees for officiating at services and preaching. During the year the following fees were paid to trustees for such services: preaching fees £280 (2009 £80), choir fees £1,760 (2009 £1,280). One of the trustees was reimbursed £29 (2009 £67) for travelling expenses incurred on the business of the charity.

#### 3 Fixed tangible assets

	Freehold Property £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 31st December 2009	1,322,709	79,516	1,402,225
Addition	-	1,254	1,254
At 31st December 2010	1,322,709	80,770	1,403,479
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 31st December 2009	-	54,885	54,885
Charge for the year	-	8,379	8,379
At 31st December 2010	-	63,264	63,264
<b>Net Book Value</b>			
At 31st December 2010	1,322,709	17,506	1,340,215
At 31st December 2009	1,322,709	24,631	1,347,340

The Freehold property relates to the Essex Church building in Palace Gardens Terrace.

**ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010**

<b>4 Listed investments</b>	<b>The Stock Bequest £</b>	<b>The Carlisle Fund £</b>	<b>Endowment funds £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Market value at 31 December 2009	83,388	7,510	3,789	94,687
Add: Additions at cost	8,114	-	-	8,114
Less: disposals at carrying value	( 7,726)	-	-	( 7,726)
Net gain/loss on revaluation	4,776	500	249	5,525
Market value at 31 December 2010	<u>88,552</u>	<u>8,010</u>	<u>4,038</u>	<u>100,600</u>

All of the investments are held in UK companies.

Included in the market value of the investments are holdings of Charifund Income Units (£64,822) and Shroders Charity Equity Fund Units (£15,954).

**5 Cash held for rent deposit**

This balance represents a rental deposit received from Lucy Williamson under a revised Rent Security Deposit Deed dated August 2007. According to the revised terms of the Deed, the deposit represents half of the revised annual rent and must be held in an interest bearing account in the name of the trustees. All interest earned on this account is payable to Miss Williamson on written request.

<b>6 Analysis of funds</b>	<b>Brought forward £</b>	<b>Income &amp; expenses £</b>	<b>Transfers £</b>	<b>Unrealised gain (loss) £</b>	<b>Carried forward £</b>
<b>Endowment Funds</b>					
* Permanent Endowment	1,343,149	( 8,379)	-	-	1,334,770
Carlisle Capital Fund	7,510	-	-	500	8,010
Theophilus Lindsey	2,378	-	-	-	2,378
Percival North	535	-	-	-	535
Harriet Pearson	1,464	-	-	-	1,464
Thomas Scott	2,162	-	-	-	2,162
Mrs M L Whyte	2,825	-	-	-	2,825
Lindsey Hall	32,126	-	-	249	32,375
<b>Total endowment funds</b>	<u>1,392,149</u>	<u>( 8,379)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>749</u>	<u>1,384,519</u>

**Endowment Funds:**

The endowments listed above comprise the original charity, known from 1793 as the Essex Unitarian Chapel and Minister's House, together with a number of other charities founded between the 19th and 20th centuries. These have been brought together by a number of Schemes of the Charity Commissioners, the most recent dated 18 April 1986. Under the terms of the Scheme, these charities are administered as a single charitable body. The smaller charities are accounted for as Endowment Funds, with the exception of the Stock bequest (for the Choir Fund).

- \* The permanent endowment fund consists of the estimated value of the property from which the charity operates and is not a readily convertible asset.

With the permission of the Charity Commission, in 2003 the Trustees realised £33,000 of investments held in endowment funds, for expenditure on the Minister's flat. It is a condition of that permission that the Trustees set aside one sixth of that amount for each of the next six years (ending in 2009), in order to reinstate the value of the investments. The funds are held in a CAF deposit account. To date, £30,600 has been transferred into this account and the balance stands at £35,334 at 31 December 2010.

## ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

6 Analysis of funds (cont.)	Brought forward £	Income & expenses £	Transfers £	Unrealised gain (loss) £	Carried forward £
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
A E Stock Bequest	83,688	3,929	( 3,929)	5,327	89,015
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	-	393	( 393)	-	-
Africa Education Project	230	( 230)	-	-	-
Community Arts Project	-	425	-	-	425
Repairs & Building Fund	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>83,918</b>	<b>4,517</b>	<b>( 4,322)</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>89,440</b>

**Restricted funds:**

**Africa Education Project:** a fund set up in 2008 to receive donations and money raised through fund raising efforts to help support educational projects in Africa, as agreed by the management committee.

**Community Arts Project:** a fund set up in 2008 to support the provision of arts activities for the benefit of Unitarians and the wider community, receiving individual donations and grants from funding bodies.

**Repairs and Building Fund:** During 2010 the Church received a grant of £1,500 from the Stamford Street Trust to help with the refurbishment of the foyer and Lindsay Hall.

**Unrestricted Funds**

General Fund	68,887	453,405	( 30,221)	-	492,071
Designated funds:					
Repairs & Building Fund	7,997	( 42,540)	34,543	-	-
	<b>76,884</b>	<b>410,865</b>	<b>4,322</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>492,071</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,552,951</b>	<b>407,003</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,076</b>	<b>1,966,030</b>

**Designated funds:**

During 2007 the trustees set up a 'designated fund', 'Repairs and Buildings Fund', to set aside income to cover the costs of adding a Disability Access toilet which together with work relating to the kitchen was completed in 2009. The balance on the fund was utilised to pay for rewiring and ceiling work to the Lindsey Hall and foyer during 2010.

### 7 Capital Commitments

	2010 £	2009 £
At 31 December 2010 the charity had capital commitments as follows:		
Contracted for but not provided in the financial statements	-	13,598

### 8 Legacy

During the year the Church received notification of an extremely generous legacy from a deceased member of the congregation. Half of the legacy was received in June 2010 with the balance being received in January 2011. The accounts include the legacy receivable in full, with the amount received in January 2011 being recorded as a debtor.

## Treasurer's Report

Thank you all for your generosity, both in giving to the church collection each week and in giving to special charitable collections that we have responded to during the year. During the year we had special collections for the earth quake in Haiti and for the Trinity Hospice in Clapham (which did so much to help Doris Campbell at the end of her life.) When there is a fifth Sunday in a month we are donating the cash collection that day to a particular cause and invite congregation members to nominate a charity that is significant for them. During the year we continued with our five year commitment to SOS Villages in Swaziland where we sponsor two children's education as well as giving towards the general running of the village. We have committed ourselves to giving £1,000 a year and most of this money was raised by donations this year.

Many of you now donate to the church by having a regular monthly standing order to our CAF bank account, which is very helpful, and others use the brown envelope scheme to Gift Aid their contributions. I realise that gift aid is not an option for everyone but would recommend that anyone who pays income tax considers using this effective way of donating more. It is always a pleasure for the church to receive a cheque back from the Inland Revenue each year! We also appreciate your annual membership payments, which go towards the cost of our church newsletter and the per person annual quota payment that we make to the Unitarian General Assembly.

This has been another good year for lettings and we have increased our income thanks to Jenny our warden who makes such effective use of the rooms we have. To have maintained the level of our lettings income during a time of economic difficulties and in a year when our building had to be closed for three weeks because of builders discovering asbestos in the ceiling, is a fine achievement. We continue to have a good relationship with the Lloyd Williamson School, our major letting, who run their nursery in the basement of our building.

In June we received £210,921.34 as the first part of a legacy from Patricia Walker's estate. We now have the responsibility and the pleasure of considering how best to use this generous legacy. We had expected to use some of that money to refurbish the library in her memory but we were able to pay for that excellent work out of regular income. We were also grateful to receive a grant of £1,500 from the Stamford Street Trust during the year. This was to help with the cost of refurbishing the foyer and Lindsay Hall back in January. Discovering asbestos meant that the job took far longer and was more expensive than expected but once again we were able to cover the costs without further fundraising and the new lights, ceilings and curtains certainly are worthwhile.

As in most organisations, the largest part of our income is spent on salaries and wages. I'm pleased to report that we have been able to increase all of them this year. We hugely appreciate the work that each one of them does with skill and enthusiasm.

Our small investments have improved in value during the year in line with the stockmarket upturn. Our savings with Caf bank continues to gain a very small amount of interest, in line with low interest rates.

Thanks are once again due to Jenny Moy who helps me with the bank spreadsheets and reconciliation each month, to William Featherstone who oversees our investments and to Lindeyer, Francis Ferguson who examine our accounts and are responsible for payroll each month.

**Juliet Edwards**  
**Congregational Treasurer**

## Minister's Report

As I write this report on the life of our community here at Essex Church during 2010 certain images come to mind and most of them seem to involve food and drink! Nourishment of both a spiritual and a physical kind are clearly an important aspect of our congregational life here.

This has perhaps not been the easiest of years for this community. It began in January when our building was closed because of the asbestos found in our ceilings during renovation work. There was a rush to complete the work in time for the memorial and champagne reception we held in honour of Patricia Walker. Many of us commented on how much Patricia would have loved to witness the church used for this delightful and full gathering. A year later, in January 2011, we made similar comments at the memorial held in honour of Doris Campbell, another linchpin of our congregation. Her memorial service and lunch were a cultural delight as her sisters and other family members provided a really slap up feast, Caribbean style. But to start and end the year with memorial services for much loved congregation members was hard, especially for those who had known and loved Patricia and Doris for many years.

During the year we also said farewell or at least au revoir to various congregation members whose lives were taking them to different parts of the world. Some have maintained their membership of Kensington Unitarians in absentia whilst others have joined other Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist communities, but saying goodbye to each of them represented another change, a loss in some way. It is said that loss is the price of loving and I think there are times in the life of a church when those sentiments are made very clear.

But along with goodbyes we said plenty of hellos during 2010 as we welcomed new visitors and members and found many reasons to celebrate and enjoy our fellowship. John Hands and Heidi Ferid entertained us twice during the year for John's 80th birthday celebration and their special wedding anniversary. As usual we enjoyed a number of bring and share lunches. It always cheers my spirits to see us feeding visitors who had not known to bring a contribution with them, for there is always enough to go round, except perhaps when it comes to Betty's renowned trifle! It is also pleasing to note that church held a number of baby naming and wedding blessing ceremonies during the year, with families expressing gratitude for the flexibility of the ceremonies that we offer.

Ministry can sometimes be a lonely job and I recognise my good fortune here at Essex Church in having a loyal and committed staff team to work with – Gitana Kleitaname who cares for this building as she would her own and does so much to protect and improve it; Jenny Moy as our live in warden who brings order to impending chaos and encourages us regularly to sit down, talk and listen; Jane Blackall as our indefatigable Education and Outreach Officer who structures so much of our programming and maintains our much praised newsletter and professional web presence as well as leading many of our small group activities; Fraser Jackson who keeps smiling when our quirky building presents him with yet another challenge to resolve. I literally could not do my job without this team of people. Nor could our community survive and prosper without the many volunteers who perform such a wide variety of tasks. When a new person starts helping in the kitchen or suggesting ideas for groups we could run or worship themes or choosing hymns or talking to a newcomer, then I know that they are starting to feel that this is their community – a vital sense of ownership is emerging. Our rotas for people to act as stewards, greeters and coffee makers continued to be filled during the year and we are always eager to train new people in these small but vital tasks which help to keep our community ticking over and also help everyone to feel more actively involved. Even churches with paid staff rely on volunteers to keep things bubbling along and I hope that people who fulfil all these tasks feel a rewarding sense of involvement. In particular I am grateful to all those who serve as trustees and attend management committee meetings. As someone who has spent many years attending church committee meetings around the country it is cheering to be able to report that our meetings at Essex Church are some of the most positive and well run that I have attended. In particular I would like to thank our key office holders – treasurer Juliet Edwards, chair of the management committee Caroline Blair and chair of trustees Howard Hague for steering our community so calmly, sensibly and supportively. It has also been lovely during the year to have Jordan McCrindle and Jennie Blair running such lively activities for our children's group and we are very pleased to hear that two young people have completed stages of the Chalice Award Scheme.

Living 'over the shop' I am ever aware of the many different groups that use our building and with whom we have quite close relationships. They often describe Essex Church as a spiritual home to their particular group and it is inspiring to hear their comments about the quality of the facilities we offer and the warmth they experience here.

The building is rarely empty these days and I think we should feel proud of this aspect of our ministry in busy central London. These user groups really appreciate the on-going effort we are making to improve the facilities we offer. Our five year building improvement programme is coming to an end and we have achieved so much in that time but of course buildings always need loving attention, especially when they are as well used as our church is.

One of our continuing commitments is to ensure that we maintain a high standard in our public worship and I am grateful for the increasing number of congregation members who are involved in leading worship here. We are fortunate to have many visitors here on Sunday mornings and it is good to hear their feedback, which is full of praise for our beautiful music, our lusty singing of hymns and for the warmth of our welcome.

Essex Church has always been known for its small group activities and adult religious education courses. I think in 2010 we ran an exceptionally eclectic number of activities and it was good to see the widening range of people who attended these courses. We held a focus group as part of a research project for an MA student from Heythrop College, who was suitably impressed by our ability to articulate our faith. During 2010 we also supported other affiliated events including a Jewish and Arab story telling evening, an on-going Nia dance class and monthly Universal Spiritual Gatherings.

No church exists in isolation and we are part both of a wider denomination and a wider world. Various congregation members played an active part in district and national activities in the Unitarian and Free Christian movement and our committee offered various subsidies to help people attend a range of events and courses. I was pleased that we supported various charities during the year, especially when these arose from members own interests and concerns.

As I look back over 2010 with all its inevitable highs and lows perhaps the most significant aspect to report on with regard to ministry is the number and variety of conversations that I have been privileged to have with such a wide range of people as they deal with life's challenges and joys. Thank you for sharing this journey of life with one another.

**Rev. Sarah Tinker**  
**Minister with Kensington Unitarians**

## Warden's Report

This year got off to a shaky start when the contractors who were meant to be replacing the ceilings in the Hall and Foyer found asbestos in the old light fittings. This resulted in those parts of the building being sealed off for over a month and although in theory we could still use all the other parts, access to them became quite tricky: for example to get to the library it was necessary to go down the passageway to the right of the church, through the nursery play area and in through the sliding window. The main church was similarly only accessible through the back garden and the kitchen and upstairs toilet through the side door. We'd planned the ceiling work take place in the quiet period before bookings restarted in the new year; coping with not having a front door, once regular groups got going again, required a great deal of creativity (made all the more difficult by the heaviest snowfall in London for about 20 years). However we got through it somehow and the new lighting has greatly improved the look of the Hall. We also replaced the old brown curtain with one in flame coloured velvet and in the summer the room was repainted. The room now looks very much smarter and we've had lots of compliments about it.

Later in the year, the library also got a makeover, with the installation of custom built shelving on the right hand wall and the replacement of the piano with an electronic keyboard. The shelving was designed jointly by Jane Blackall and I to accommodate the storage needs of various groups who use the room as well as the book collection. Particularly nice features of the design include a sloping display shelf (which can be propped up to reveal extra storage) and a pull out shelf to house the keyboard and enable it to be played in situ. Once the new shelving was in place, the library, corridor, foyer and Hall were redecorated, greatly improving their appearance and we also recarpeted the library and installed some smart vertical blinds.

Partly inspired by the above, I also re-organised the office, introducing some extra shelving and creating space for temporary storage in hopes that this would reduce the problem of the office rapidly becoming cluttered by things left here for collection or needing some kind of action. We've also had to replace the office computer – albeit with such a similar model it hardly feels like there's been a change.

Other small improvements to the building include mounting a hose reel on the outside store to make it easier to water the back garden and installing shelving inside; replacing three of the church heaters and freeing up one of the Hall cupboards for chair storage – making all of the rooms look less cluttered.

On a more personal note: my sister gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, on 10 December 2009 and the Church kindly let me swap my days off from Sun/Mon to Fri/Sat so I could visit her regularly on Fridays. It's been a great joy to see the babies progress week by week and working on Sundays has had the added bonus of helping me feel more connected to the life of the congregation. It's also meant I could take over the task of getting cheques signed after the service. Juliet will be standing down as Treasurer at the end of 2011 and we wanted to streamline the role for the new Treasurer as much as possible.

Financially, lettings income has been very healthy this year, coming in at over £60,000 rather than our budget target of £50,000. This is particularly impressive considering how much lettings income we lost in January due to the asbestos crisis. The increased income is a reflection of how busy the diary is now, so we've decided that as well as no longer taking one-off evening bookings, we also won't take Saturday bookings except from existing users. We'd found that it had become increasingly difficult to accommodate Saturday events for groups who've been meeting here for many years and we want to prioritise providing that service for them.

**Jenny Moy**  
**Essex Church Warden**



## Outreach Officer's Report

In my role as outreach officer for the church I am responsible for numerous aspects of church communication (our newsletter, website, podcasts, leaflets, posters and signage). I am also involved, alongside Sarah, in planning the programme of church events and adult religious education (RE), with a particular interest in engagement groups.

We continue to receive very positive feedback from visitors regarding our newsletter and website. I am constantly on the lookout for potential improvements to our online presence and would be interested to hear any suggestions. Perhaps the most notable progress made during this year has been in improvements to our on-street noticeboards and the facilities for displaying information for visitors in the church foyer. We had been planning this work for a long time, and I spent a while carefully researching potential suppliers, before we took the plunge in early summer 2010 and placed the order for new, sturdy signage, magnetic noticeboards, and custom-built leaflet racks. I also made a start on a photoboard in the church foyer, showing members and friends, which we hope will make it easier for newcomers to learn our names. If your face isn't there already I would be happy to take your picture in 2011!

Small group activities have continued to be a key part of our programme of activities throughout 2010. It is not always straightforward to draw a distinction between engagement groups and adult RE courses because all of our sharing groups tend to be facilitated using engagement group principles, which help to create a safe space, and support careful speaking and listening. These two long-running engagement groups ran throughout the year:

### Reading Engagement Group

Our reading engagement group has been running since 2003 and, once again, tackled a diverse selection of material in 2010: *'Maurice'*, *'Notes from an Exhibition'*, *'Father and Son'*, *'A Book of Silence'*, *'Head Trip'*, *'Island'*, *'The Case for God'*, *'The Tipping Point'*, *'Howard's End is on the Landing'*, *'Somewhere Towards the End'* and *'Wolf Hall'*. By the end of the year we had read our 77<sup>th</sup> title. The reading group is quite small, but is supported by a core of about five regular members, who take their turn to nominate titles for members to tackle. Individual sessions are facilitated by whoever selected the book. The reading group has a relaxed atmosphere and newcomers are always welcome to drop in and join at any time.

### Creativity Engagement Group

Our creativity engagement group has been running once a month since 2002. Attendance at this group has been rather variable over the last year, with attendance averaging at around five people, though we do regularly get new visitors dropping in for sessions that are of particular interest to them. We had a number of fun one-off sessions during the year at which we tried out various different craft activities: *'Printmaking'*, *'Marbling'*, *'Totem Animals'*, *'Mixed-Media Self-Portraits'*, *'Watercolour Painting'*, *'Decorating Papier Mache'*. In the autumn of 2010 the regular members decided to change the format of the group so the sessions were all *'Bring Your Own Crafts'* which will require less advance preparation of a specific activity.

In addition, there were a number of adult RE courses during the year, mostly led by Sarah with help from others:

- 'Heart to Heart'** – co-facilitated by Sarah and Jane, a 5-session course, focussed on simple sharing and listening.
- 'Soul Poetry'** – facilitated by Carole Grace, a 5-session course, sharing poems on love, anger, joy, grief and hope.
- 'This I Believe'** – facilitated by Sarah, a 3-session course, encouraging people to articulate their personal beliefs.
- 'Compassionate Communication'** – with Jill & Richard Broadbent, external trainers in non-violent communication.
- 'Reclaiming the Bible'** – facilitated by Sarah, a 4-session course, exploring the bible from a liberal perspective.

As ever, we very much welcome offers of help with the organisation of events and activities, and I would encourage you to get in touch with me or Sarah if you would like to assist with an existing project (e.g. our social action group, walks, lunches, outings, youngsters' socials, etc.) which would benefit from energetic volunteers to take it forward. We would also be interested to hear of any new initiatives that you would like to see at Essex Church. Our regular small-group communions started in the autumn as a direct result of such a *"wouldn't it be nice if..."* conversation (thanks are due to Tristan Jovanović for helping to get this off the ground) and are now happening monthly. I have long hoped that we might start up a regular prayer group and wonder if this is an idea we might return to in 2011.

Finally, I would very much like to thank the trustees for increasing my paid hours this year, to two days a week.

**Jane Blackall**  
**Outreach Officer (Arts and Education)**

## **Chairperson of the Congregation's Report**

Sadly the Church lost a long-serving and much-loved committee member when Doris Campbell died before Christmas. She was a tremendously warm and enthusiastic supporter of the Church and we miss her very much.

The Church had a challenging start to the year when asbestos stripping forced an unplanned closure for a few weeks, but from then on the news about the building was nothing but good. Hard work by Jenny, Jane and Sarah has transformed the notice boards, foyer and particularly the library. Jane's design for the shelving unit is a work of art, and Howard has assisted in rearranging all the books, so they look much more attractive. Patricia Walker's legacy to the church was very welcome in doing this work, which I know she would have loved. Jenny and Jane seem to have made it their mission to scour through every corner of the church getting rid of clutter and making it more attractive. Visitors are now greeted by fresh new notice boards, up to date literature and (another welcome innovation) greeters at the door.

The life of the church continues to be bursting with energy, from the many successful evening groups to Margaret Marshall's new singing workshops (all welcome), social events (John Hands managed both an 80th birthday party and, with Heidi, a silver wedding party) and even monthly communion services for those interested. We have continued to sponsor two orphans, Patience and Fortunate Zeeman, at SOS Children's Village in Mbabane, Swaziland, as well as donating additional money to the village for general use. Jim, Caroline and Iona Blair were able to visit Patience and Fortunate in the summer (their winter) and found them healthy and cheerful (though shy) and living in a pretty bungalow with fresh flowers on the table and plenty of clothes and toys in their room. Swaziland has far too many orphans as it has the highest HIV rate in the world, and we are pleased to be able to help some of them in this way.

Thanks as always to all those who keep the church running so well: to Sarah, whose services are always a joy and who keeps the show on the road with unflinching good humour; to Juliet for another year as Treasurer; to Jane for the much admired newsletter and website, for managing the IT, for supervising the rotas and for the aforementioned work on the building; to Jenny, the warden, for her quiet efficiency in managing the bookings and also for so many building improvements; to Gitana, the cleaner, who keeps everything spotless; to Howard for chairing the trustees and looking after the library; to Harold for overseeing the music, which is always excellent; to Margaret, for the voice workshops; to Jenny and Jordan for looking after the Sunday School; to Daniel Tinker for doing lots of day to day practical jobs; to Michaela for her work in the garden; and to everyone who has helped on the committee; or with coffee, stewarding and greeting; or with welcoming and chatting to newcomers; or just with participating in the activities of the church. It continues to feel like a very positive community to belong to.

**Caroline Blair**  
**Chairperson of the Congregation**

## **Sunday School Report**

Kensington Unitarians has had a cheerful Sunday School throughout 2010, run by Jordan McCrindle and Jennifer Blair. We saw between two and six children each week and the two young people who attended weekly have been working towards achieving the Bronze and Silver levels of the Unitarian Chalice Award Scheme.

Among other activities, the young people have learned about the origins of fair trade food and the carbon footprint of food they then prepared for the congregation; they have learned about our responsibility to animals (and looked after Sherlock the rabbit and Euclid the hedgehog); they have learnt about poetry and written poems on nature; and they have created a map of a peaceful and sustainable island.

During 2011 we hope to have finished the first stage of the Chalice Award Scheme and to welcome any new children into the group.

**Jennifer Blair**  
**Sunday School Leader**

## **Chairperson of Trustees' Report**

Our management committee met eight times during the year (unfortunately losing the September meeting to a tube strike!). The May meeting was preceded by a short annual trustees' meeting, and it was agreed that this pattern would be followed in future. At that meeting Doris Campbell and David Francis Darling were elected as new trustees and they duly signed the 'Declaration of acceptance and willingness to act in the trusts of the Charities', as required by our governing instrument, the Charity Commission Scheme of 18 April 1986. At that point our trustee body consisted of Caroline Blair, Doris Campbell, David Darling, Juliet Edwards, Heidi Ferid, Howard Hague, Harold Lorenzelli and Roy Parnell (the Scheme provides for a maximum of nine trustees). All except Roy were also members of the management committee and active members of the congregation. Roy is a former chairperson of the congregation, though other commitments now prevent him from attending regularly. But it is very sad to report that our dear friend Doris Campbell died on 25 November 2010 after a very brave fight for her health over several years. Doris was herself a former chairperson of the congregation and committee, and her life will remain an inspiration to all of us at the church. Her funeral took place on 10 December, with a memorial service on 16 January 2011.

There is no doubt that the smooth running of the church owes a great deal to our small 'staff team', consisting of our minister Rev Sarah Tinker, our warden Jenny Moy and our outreach officer Jane Blackall. I am immensely grateful to all of them for the work they do on our behalf. In addition we now have Fraser Jackson as our buildings and maintenance advisor, which has helped a great deal with practical problems around our site. Jane and Jenny's salaries were reviewed and increased as from 1 June 2010, and Jane's contract was renewed for a further year from 1 September 2010. It also came as something of a surprise in September to realise that Sarah has been with us as minister for five years (doesn't the time go fast when we are enjoying ourselves!). We are so grateful for all that she has done for us. It was decided to review her own salary to take account of her extra responsibilities for staff matters and the care of the building, with effect from 1 January 2011. At the December meeting Juliet said that she would be stepping down as church treasurer from the end of 2011. This will give us a big challenge in the weeks and months ahead as we look for a new treasurer, with probably more of the work being done by an external book-keeping service. Let me take this opportunity to thank Juliet and all the other committee members and volunteers for the work they do for the church week by week. Their contribution is much appreciated and valued.

As ever our Essex Church building – now almost thirty-four years old – gives us headaches from time to time, though we love it dearly. In January we had to close briefly while asbestos in the hall and foyer was dealt with. More positively the refurbishment of the library later in the year has been a great success with lovely new wooden shelving on which to put our expanding book collection. The Lindsey Hall was also repainted and the large curtain replaced (though it needed some work to make it hang correctly). Some church heaters have been replaced. The committee has spent some time discussing a new sound system which is 'in process' at the time of writing. I am continuing the search for our apparently missing trust deeds. It was expected that they would be in the strongroom at Essex Hall (Unitarian Headquarters on Essex Street near The Strand, on our church's original site), but sadly they weren't. I am now hoping that Dr Williams's Library in London might be able to help us. During 2009/10 I revised our church history leaflet, and this was re-published early in 2011. It is hoped that this will be of some interest to members and visitors alike. It explores our rather complicated history as a congregation, with two different sites and several buildings over more than two centuries.

**Howard Hague**  
**Chairperson of Trustees**

## **Church Music Report**

The year has once again seen a variety of Music and Musicians providing musical support to enliven and strengthen our act of worship. Solos and duets continue to be a staple of the weekly service with quartets at least once a month. We are fortunate in having a group of experienced singers and musicians to call upon and are grateful for the feedback from members which is both encouraging and useful. In addition to the regular Sunday worship we are delighted at the success of the singing group led by Margaret, a long-standing member of the choir.

**Harold Lorenzelli**  
**Church Music Coordinator**

## Essex Church Congregational Library and Archives: Librarian's Report

My librarian's report for 2009 was very much an interim or 'holding' report, since we expected that major changes would be taking place in the library in our church basement. It is good to report that this has duly happened, and what a wonderful space we now have for our collection. The room was re-carpeted and in August 2010 new wooden shelving was built in, followed by re-decoration. It all looks most attractive, as well as practical. When everything was ready the books were put back on the shelves, and I am very grateful to Jane Blackall for all her work in this regard. The books are now arranged in subject groupings such as Christianity, Church History, Ecospirituality, Inspirational Material, Interfaith, Mythology, Secular World Views, Theology, Unitarian History and Women's Spirituality. This should make it easier to find what you are looking for. Early in the year we received many books from Patricia Walker-Hesson's personal library, and these are gradually being added to stock. The first of these were listed in the church newsletter for June 2010. Some further items from Patricia are included in the following list, with other items that were acquired during the year:

ARMSTRONG, Karen	The case for God: what religion really means. Bodley Head, 2009
BOUX, Dorothy	The golden thread: words of wisdom for a changing world. 2000
BROWN, Thelma P.	Spiritual life coaching. Primrose Publishing, 2007
CADDY, Eileen	Foundations of Findhorn. The Findhorn Press, reprinted 1987.
DAWKINS, Richard	A devil's chaplain: selected essays. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003
DAWKINS, Richard	The greatest show on earth: the evidence for evolution. 2009
DAWSON, David	With heart and mind: forty mini-essays with prayers ... GA, 2007
DAWSON, David	With heart and mind 2: a second anthology. GA, 2010
ELIADE, Mircea	A history of religious ideas. Vol 1. Collins, 1979
FISHER, Adrian	The art of the maze (with many illustrations). Seven Dials, 2000
JACOBY, Susan	Freethinkers: a history of American secularism. Owl Books, 2005
LINGWOOD, Stephen	The Unitarian life: voices from the past & present. Lindsey P, 2008
O'DONOHUE, John	Anam Cara: spiritual wisdom from the Celtic world. Bantam, 1999
ORIAH MOUNTAIN DREAMER	The invitation. Thorsons, 1999
PITTENGER, Norman	The lure of divine love: human experience and Christian Faith. 1979
REED, Cliff	Sacred earth: words for prayer and reflection. Lindsey Press, 2010
SHERMER, Michael	The science of good and evil. New York, Times Books, 2004
TAYLER, Robert	From heaven to hell and back again: an autobiography. 1991
UNDERHILL, Evelyn	The life of the spirit and the life of today. Mowbray, 1994
WATTS, Laura J.	Mandalas: spiritual circles for harmony and fulfilment. 2000

A number of books have also been donated from Doris Campbell's personal collection, and these were listed in the church newsletter for February 2011. We are very grateful for all the items donated during the last year. In addition, it is intended that there will be a more active policy to acquire new books in the future so that the library is kept up-to-date. Much of the previous library stock will be found at [www.librarything.com/catalog/essexchurch](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/essexchurch).

**Archives:** sadly very little progress has been made with the church archives during the year, due to the pressure of other work for all of us. It is hoped that this matter will receive more attention during 2011, now that the refurbishment of the library has been largely completed. The church continues to receive occasional historical enquiries (e.g. about the former Little Portland Street Chapel in London), and Sarah and I do our best to respond to these as we are able.

**Howard Hague**  
**Honorary Librarian**

# Minutes of the AGM Held at Essex Church on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2010

**Present:** Jean Barker, Louisa Bird, Jane Blackall (*minute-taker*), Caroline Blair (*chairperson*), Kate Brown, Doris Campbell, Maire Collins, Jo Cresswell, Gordon Deaville, Natasha Drennan, Juliet Edwards, Betty Evans, Gill Hague, Howard Hague, Jill Inskip, Christine Joshi, Alice Lambert, Harold Lorenzelli, Jenny Moy, Geoffrey Olans, Sheila Prellberg, Sam Reed, Jo Ridgers, Ken Rogers, Stephanie Saville, Susan Smith, Mary Spurr, Michaela von Britzke, Diana Ward, Daffyd Young-Finch.

1. **Opening:** Opening words were spoken by Rev. Sarah Tinker.
2. **Welcome and Apologies:** Caroline Blair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Julia Alden, Heidi Ferid, Carole Grace, John Hands and Will Lyons.
3. **Review of 2009 AGM Minutes:** The minutes were accepted as a correct record and signed by Caroline.
4. **Review of Reports:**
  - a. **Treasurer:**

Juliet reminded the meeting that it would soon be the time when we collect for the SOS Children's Village and that we needed to keep raising money. She was very happy with people's contributions.
  - b. **Minister:**

Sarah said that it had been a full and interesting year in many ways and that it was great to see the congregation growing in vitality and enthusiasm. She particularly drew attention to the difference it had made to have greeters and commented that we "don't see visitors wandering around as lost souls."
  - c. **Warden:**

Jenny had nothing to add to her written report.
  - d. **Engagement Groups and Secretary:**

Jane reminded people to keep sending new material for the newsletter to help keep the standard up.
  - e. **Chair of Congregation:**

Caroline commented that, having been to the annual meetings of the Unitarian General Assembly, she had been reminded that Essex Church's situation at this time is very unusual. Many other congregations seem to be struggling in various ways. Caroline said: "we are so lucky to be in a positive and multi-generational congregation, and the leaky roof is not the most important thing."
  - f. **Chair of Trustees:**

Howard remarked on the loss of Patricia Walker-Hesson in the previous year, a much-loved member of the congregation, who was also a very active trustee. Howard reminded the congregation that the trustees were mostly also members of the management committee and that in a welcome development Doris Campbell and David Francis Darling had joined the trustees during the year. The trustees are ultimately responsible for the building. Caroline noted we will need more new trustees for the future.

Diana Ward asked about the amount we are able to reclaim in tax on donations. Sarah estimated that the church received about £1500 through the Gift Aid scheme last year and that it could be more. Juliet reminded people that when they fill in their membership renewal they can sign up for Gift Aid and that signing the envelopes is not sufficient. Sarah mentioned that people can make Gift Aided donations in brown envelopes but that it is much easier for the church to administer standing orders. Caroline reminded people that they must pay sufficient tax.

**g. Music:**

Harold explained that the church used to have paid 'Directors of Music' in the past but the search to replace the last one had been unsuccessful and so the music was now organised on a cooperative basis. The pianists and singers are friends of Harold's and he coordinates the arrangements.

**h. Librarian:**

Howard reported that he had started to go through a large quantity of books from Patricia Walker-Hesson's collection which she had bequeathed to the church library. This will be quite a long job. Jane mentioned that there is a list of the church library holdings linked to our church website.

**5. Acceptance of 2009 Reports and Accounts:**

Doris Campbell proposed, and Juliet Edwards seconded, the acceptance of the Annual Report and Accounts, and this was agreed.

**6. Election of Management Committee**

Jane stated that the present members of the management committee had been put forward for re-election:

Caroline Blair, Louisa Bird, Doris Campbell, David Francis Darling, Juliet Edwards, Heidi Ferid, Angela Gasparetto, Howard Hague, Harold Lorenzelli.

Christine Joshi proposed, and Mary Spurr seconded, that all these names should be elected en bloc and this was agreed.

**7. Congregational Growth**

Sarah drew people's attention to the list of congregational growth goals (shown below) which were printed on the back of the agenda for the meeting.

*The following goals have been set by the management committee and the minister.  
Over the next 3 years (from the date of the 2009 AGM):*

- *Increase membership to 75.*
- *Increase average worship attendance to 50.*
- *Have a paid children's leader and thriving children's group.*
- *Have new people on the committee and more people actively involved in running the congregation (its programmes, worship, and building matters).*
- *Improve systems for greeting visitors and encouraging them to return and join the congregation.*
- *Increase publicity for the congregation and its activities – completing a review of our outreach and our communications.*
- *Broaden range of activities offered – as another way for people to access our congregation – and increase attendance for groups.*
- *Complete the 5-year building programme (started in 2006) so that our building is a positive and vibrant advert for our community.*
- *Hold a congregational residential event.*
- *Lower the congregation's age profile and have a more balanced gender ratio.*
- *Create a congregational covenant together (or utilise what is already written).*

Sarah felt that we were making positive strides towards these goals. She commented that she was less interested in the membership number than the number attending worship on Sunday mornings. Sarah highlighted a number of goals we have already achieved:

- we have a team of paid children's leaders (Jennifer Blair and Jordan McCrindle).
- we have a few more people involved in running groups.
- we have a greeter every Sunday morning.
- we have a new on-street noticeboard (and indoor improvements on the way).
- our age/gender profile is improving.

A couple of the goals were 'on hold': Sarah did not wish to push forward with the idea of a residential event but said that if a small group wished to take this on as a project then it might happen; we were still thinking about the idea of a 'congregational covenant' but the words we use in the membership service might be something we could work with.

Susan asked if the 'growth list' was something that should be displayed on our noticeboard. Sarah agreed this was a good idea and that it might also be of interest to display a list of what we are working on around the building.

Harold commented on the goal to have 'a more balanced gender ratio' and stated that he felt it didn't matter at all and wouldn't want people to think they weren't welcome. Louisa commented that she would like a more balanced gender ratio ("yin and yang") having worked in female-dominated environments.

Mary queried the idea of having a residential, with some time to relax, and some workshops. Caroline stated that she would be interested but that if it was to be held at the denomination's conference centre, Great Hucklow, it would probably have to be midweek as the centre is heavily booked at weekends. Howard mentioned the London district was already planning a residential weekend early in the New Year. Sarah mentioned that the Southern district was also planning an event in the autumn. Jane queried whether the London event was more of a networking event than a retreat based on the publicity material. Doris commented that the journey to Great Hucklow is long and there might be a more convenient location.

Gordon encouraged the committee to look at holding an intergenerational 'Bright Lights' group. Sarah explained that this is held at a different time to the normal morning service and said that we would need a team of four or five dedicated people to make it happen. Jane gave an account of the success of 'Bright Lights' in the Bristol congregation where it was started and it has attracted quite a few local families.

## **8. Building Matters**

Sarah reported that there had been a lot of progress with improvement works on the building but that things "get worse before they get better" and that it felt like "for every two steps forward there is a knock back".

- An expert had come in to assess the sound system and make a proposal and he is due to report back on how much it is going to cost.
- The new curtain in the hall was poorly finished and has been sent back for remedial work.
- The on-street noticeboards have been installed and we have a plan for replacing and improving the indoor ones in the foyer too.
- The roof seems to be getting worse, with a new leak, and any work on this is likely to be hugely expensive. However, we have found an interested structural engineer. The roof is semi-flat and water runs into parapets then down into drainpipes so there are many places where it might be leaking. At the moment we cannot see how we are going to solve this problem but we hope that a few years down the line we might be able to fix it.
- Jenny, Jane and Sarah are looking at streamlining storage in the building, including new shelving and cupboards in the library downstairs.

Diana asked about access to the library downstairs. Sarah felt that it would not be a good use of money as the last quote we had to make the basement wheelchair-accessible was £70,000. We have done our best with regard to accessibility but the basement cannot be reached by wheelchair.

Michaela stated that she was impressed at all that we have achieved and Sarah's own love of the building. Sarah stated that she realises how much other groups value this building too. Doris stated that, having visited other churches, she felt we are very lucky to have a space like this.

Stephanie asked about "remedial work on the hearing system" and commented that she had missed lots of things that were being said. Sarah said that we were looking into wireless microphones and we will have to educate ourselves about how to use them as it is not possible to amplify every sound without the result being cacophonous. Stephanie expressed her appreciation for a working loop system: "a triumph: if someone is speaking into the microphone it is as if you are the only person in the room."

**9. Any Other Business**

Jane reminded people that there would be a meeting of the Social Action Group, organised by Karl Askew, the following Sunday. Sam explained that this is to be a formative meeting where people discuss what such a group might do and how this would fit in with the church's existing activities.

- 10. Votes of Thanks:** Were given by Caroline Blair. Caroline thanked everyone who contributes to the life of the church and referred people to her written report where specific individuals were named. She concluded by thanking Sarah "who drives *everything* in this place" and paying tribute to Patricia Walker-Hesson: "it is impossible to overstate the love and commitment she has given to this community and at this meeting we should record this formally for the last time."

- 11. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned. The closing words were read by Sarah.

**Minutes taken by Jane Blackall**