



Kensington Unitarians

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Annual Report 2019



Essex Unitarian Church

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2019

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 7th January 1783 and modified by schemes dated 9th December 1884, 15th January 1973 and 18th April 1986, which last incorporated the remaining eight charities.

Trustees

Gina Bayley (until February 2019), Roy Clark (chair), Brian Ellis, Heidi Ferid-Hands, Howard Hague, Harold Lorenzelli and Roy Parnell.

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

Management Committee

Gina Bayley (until February 2019), Roy Clark (chair), Maureen Cummings (from February 2019), Brian Ellis, Heidi Ferid-Hands, Harold Lorenzelli and Jennifer Young (from July 2019).

Minister

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

Treasurer

Juliet Edwards
112 Palace Gardens Terrace, London W8 4RT

Warden

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

Secretary

Jane Blackall
20 Manchester Grove, London E14 3BG

Independent Examiners and Accountants

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

Essex Unitarian Church

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2019

The Trustees submit their annual report together with the financial statements of Essex Unitarian Church for the year ended 31 December 2019. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) (Charities SORP FRS 102).

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.

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 (including visiting the sick and comforting the bereaved). 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; learning from each other in religious education and social activities; producing and distributing Unitarian literature. The church also provides meeting spaces for other spiritual and social groups that are in accord with our liberal and spiritual ethos.

Structure, Governance and Management

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 regular meetings, typically meeting eight times a year. 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 trustees who have served during the year are listed, with other key personnel, on page 1.

Review of Activities

During 2019 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
- Renting space to other groups whose activities are in accord with our Unitarian ethos and enabling some local groups to use our building at low cost
- Our commitment to maintain a high standard in public progressive religious worship and in making our congregation visible to the wider world through high quality publicity materials, notice boards and use of digital media.
- Continuing our social justice work in the world, with monthly charitable collections and other fundraising projects.
- Welcoming families into our community by running weekly children's activities on Sunday mornings

- Widening the number of people actively involved in congregational life by offering opportunities for people to take on leadership roles, to join a varied programme of small group activities and to volunteer for tasks which support the life of the church.
- Encouraging congregation members to attend national Unitarian events in order to forge links with our wider movement.

Future Aims and Objectives

These objectives will continue to shape the trustees' future plans with a continuing emphasis on maintaining and improving facilities within our building, continuing to seek professional advice about the back wall and basement damp problems, and ensuring that our activities are well publicised and accessible. As always we commit ourselves to welcoming warmly all who seek an open-minded and open-hearted spiritual community and reaching out to work with others, particularly connecting with other local groups for the benefit of our wider community.

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.

Financial Review

The results for the year are set out in the statement of financial activities on page 6 and the position at the end of the year is shown in the balance sheet on page 6. The total income for the year was £183,610, compared to £181,219 in 2018 and expenditure was £155,337 compared to £156,240 in 2018, which resulted in a surplus of £100,985 (2018 deficit of £29,620) after the net gains (2018 net losses) on the revaluation of investments. Excluding gains and losses on investments we achieved a surplus of £28,273 for the year compared to £24,979 in 2018.

Policy on Reserves

The Church's unrestricted funds at 31 December 2019 were £649,521 of which £422 was held in fixed assets leaving free reserves of £649,099. The church has invested most of the reserves in funds expected to give a reasonable rate of interest, while keeping accessible enough to cover six month's running costs, and to fund anything but very major repairs to the building.

Restrictions on Funds

All Funds/Trusts under the control of the Trustees are for the benefit of the Church other than Thomas Scott's Endowment (income may be expended at the sole discretion of the Minister) and Stock Bequest (income must be used for Church music). We are working towards merging the small trusts, except the Stock Bequest and the Lindsey Hall Trust, into the main Essex Church charity, in which case Thomas Scott's Endowment will be replaced by a sum from general church funds, agreed by the trustees, being set aside for the minister's discretionary use.

Investment Performance

Having consulted financial advisors attached to the Unitarian and Free Christian General Assembly, the church divided their financial reserves between short and long term investments, bearing in mind their duty to invest safely and sensibly.

Trustees' responsibilities

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), including the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Charity law 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, including the income and expenditure, 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 FRS 102;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and

- 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 adequate 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 2011. 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.

Approved on behalf of the Trustees:

Roy Clark
Chair of the Congregation
Date:

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Essex Unitarian Church (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2019.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Samantha Wells FCA
LINDEYER FRANCIS FERGUSON LIMITED
Chartered Accountants

North House
198 High Street
Tonbridge
Kent TN9 1BE

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2019 Unrestricted Funds £	2019 Endowment Funds £	2019 Restricted Funds £	2019 Total Funds £	2018 Total Funds £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	10,442	-	-	10,442	20,652
Investments					
Dividends	14,076	-	6,325	20,401	19,118
Bank interest	2,217	-	-	2,217	2,272
Gift aid reclaim	2,331			2,331	2,155
Other trading activities					
Lettings income	148,219	-	-	148,219	137,022
Total income	<u>177,285</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,325</u>	<u>183,610</u>	<u>181,219</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	56,077	-	-	56,077	54,020
Charitable activities	99,260	-	-	99,260	102,220
Total expenditure	<u>155,337</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>155,337</u>	<u>156,240</u>
Net (loss)/ gain on investments	55,266	2,470	14,976	72,712	(54,599)
Net(expenditure)/income	<u>77,214</u>	<u>2,470</u>	<u>21,301</u>	<u>100,985</u>	<u>(29,620)</u>
Transfers between funds	6,325	-	(6,325)	-	-
Net movement in funds	<u>83,539</u>	<u>2,470</u>	<u>14,976</u>	<u>100,985</u>	<u>(29,620)</u>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Funds brought forward	565,982	1,368,403	115,075	2,049,460	2,079,080
Funds carried forward	<u>649,521</u>	<u>1,370,873</u>	<u>130,051</u>	<u>2,150,445</u>	<u>2,049,460</u>

In the previous year income included restricted dividends of £5,875. Net losses on investments included losses of £13,971 on restricted funds and £539 on endowment funds.

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019**

	Notes	2019 Total Funds £	2018 Total Funds £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	5	1,323,131	1,323,464
Investments	6	611,299	536,917
		<u>1,934,430</u>	<u>1,860,381</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	8	11,008	14,743
Cash at bank and in hand	9	230,432	199,221
		<u>241,440</u>	<u>213,964</u>
Creditors : amounts falling due within one year	10	25,425	24,885
		<u>25,425</u>	<u>24,885</u>
Net current assets		216,015	189,079
Total net assets		<u>2,150,445</u>	<u>2,049,460</u>
The funds of the charity			
Endowment funds	11	1,370,873	1,368,403
Restricted income funds	11	130,051	115,075
Unrestricted funds	11	649,521	565,982
		<u>2,150,445</u>	<u>2,049,460</u>

Approved by the trustees on

and signed on their behalf by:

S M Tinker (Minister)

Roy Clark

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

1 Accounting policies

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) (Charities SORP FRS 102).

The Essex Unitarian Church meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue, and so the going concern basis of accounting has been adopted.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

Incoming resources

Lettings income is recognised on a receivable basis.

Grant income is recognised when a formal offer is made in writing to the Society, unless the grant contains terms and conditions which must be met before the charity is entitled to the funds.

Donations are recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the funds have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from legacies is recognised when there has been a grant of probate, the executors have established that there are sufficient assets in the estate to pay the legacy, and any conditions attached to the legacy are within the charity's control or have been met.

Income from investments, is stated at the amount receivable.

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer resources to a third party, settlement is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Expenditure is stated gross of irrecoverable VAT and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Support costs are allocated between raising funds and charitable activities based on the usage of the building.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party, and the amount due to settle that obligation can be measured reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The charity only has financial instruments of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

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.

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 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.

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 its deemed cost plus the cost of subsequent improvements. The freehold property is not depreciated as in the opinion of the trustees the estimated residual value and useful economic life of the property are sufficiently high that any depreciation would be immaterial. 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.

Investments

Investments held are stated at market value. All movements in valuation are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities.

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 £3,884 (2018: £3,875). The charity also operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of the other employees. Contributions payable are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year they are payable. The charge for the year was £3,554 (2018: £3,494).

Status

The Society is a registered charity in England and Wales. The address of the registered office is given in the Report of the Trustees.

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

2 Expenditure on raising funds

	2019 Unrestricted Funds £	2019 Endowment Funds £	2019 Restricted Funds £	2019 Total Funds £	2018 Total Funds £
Staff costs	32,399	-	-	32,399	31,381
Book costs	38	-	-	38	40
Support costs (Note 4)	23,640	-	-	23,640	22,599
	<u>56,077</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,077</u>	<u>54,020</u>

3 Expenditure on charitable activities

Staff costs	58,519	-	-	58,519	57,989
Staff courses & training	2,221	-	-	2,221	2,232
Congregational costs	6,638	-	-	6,638	8,550
Music	10,779	-	-	10,779	10,078
Donations, grants & projects	3,145	-	-	3,145	4,859
Support costs (Note 4)	17,958	-	-	17,958	18,512
	<u>99,260</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>99,260</u>	<u>102,220</u>

4 Support costs

General support costs

Insurance	3,449	-	-	3,449	3,263
Utilities	9,595	-	-	9,595	9,569
Cleaning	1,712	-	-	1,712	813
Repairs and maintenance	9,252	-	-	9,252	11,336
Office costs	11,119	-	-	11,119	8,421
Depreciation	333	-	-	333	497

Governance function

Independent Examiner fees	2,400	-	-	2,400	2,340
Other fees paid to the Independent Examiner:					
Accountancy and payroll fees	3,738	-	-	3,738	4,872
	<u>41,598</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>41,598</u>	<u>41,111</u>

5 Fixed tangible assets

	Freehold Property £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At 1st January 2019	1,322,709	87,899	1,410,608
At 31st December 2019	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>87,899</u>	<u>1,410,608</u>
Depreciation			
At 1st January 2019	-	87,144	87,144
Charge for the year	-	333	333
At 31st December 2019	<u>-</u>	<u>87,477</u>	<u>87,477</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31st December 2019	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>422</u>	<u>1,323,131</u>
At 31st December 2018	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>755</u>	<u>1,323,464</u>

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

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

6 Listed investments	General Fund £	The Stock Bequest £	The Carlisle Fund £	Endowment Funds £	Total £
Market value at 1 January 2019	406,258	114,612	10,298	5,749	536,917
Add: Additions at cost	1,670	-	-	-	1,670
Net losses on revaluation	55,266	14,976	1,441	1,029	72,712
Market value at 31 December 2019	<u>463,194</u>	<u>129,588</u>	<u>11,739</u>	<u>6,778</u>	<u>611,299</u>

Non-UK investments total £232,215 as at the year end. UK investments total £379,084.

7 Employee costs

There was an average of five 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 £	2019 Total £	2018 Total £
Minister	29,835	-	29,835	29,835
Outreach Officer	19,616	-	19,616	18,867
Warden	-	19,276	19,276	18,649
Administration	-	2,246	2,246	2,160
Cleaner	-	8,181	8,181	7,924
Social security costs	2,184	699	2,883	2,770
Pension contributions	5,441	1,997	7,438	7,369
Employee costs	<u>57,076</u>	<u>32,399</u>	<u>89,475</u>	<u>87,574</u>
Locum Preachers	1,443	-	1,443	1,796
Total staff costs	<u>58,519</u>	<u>32,399</u>	<u>90,918</u>	<u>89,370</u>
Average number of staff:				
31 December 2019	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	
31 December 2018	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	

No employee earned over £60,000 during the year.

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 two trustees for such services: preaching fees £NIL (2018: £75), choir fees £1,545 (2018: £2,120) and repairs £154 (2018 £NIL). There are no other related parties to disclose.

8 Debtors

	2019 £	2018 £
Trade debtors	7,653	9,990
Other debtors	1,669	3,155
Prepayments	1,686	1,598
	<u>11,008</u>	<u>14,743</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

9 Cash at bank and in hand

	2019	2018
	£	£
Cash at bank and on deposit	226,055	194,339
Cash held for rent deposit (see below)	4,377	4,371
Cash held by Stockbroker	-	511
	<u>230,432</u>	<u>199,221</u>

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 represented half of the revised annual rent in the prior period, and approximately one month's rent for the current period, 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.

10 Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

	2019	2018
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,523	1,627
Social security & pensions	2,771	2,766
Held as agent	(169)	(169)
Accruals and deferred income	16,923	16,290
Rent deposit	4,377	4,371
	<u>25,425</u>	<u>24,885</u>

Income is deferred on the letting of the nursery billed quarterly.

11 Analysis of funds - current year

	Brought forward	Net movement	Movement on investments	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£
Endowment Funds				
* Permanent Endowment	1,316,255	-	-	1,316,255
Carlisle Capital Fund	8,698	-	1,441	10,139
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	34,086	-	1,029	35,115
Total endowment funds	<u>1,368,403</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,470</u>	<u>1,370,873</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 deemed cost of the property from which the charity operates and is not a readily convertible asset.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

11 Analysis of funds - current year (cont)

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on investments £	Carried forward £
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	115,075	-	14,976	130,051
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	<u>115,075</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,976</u>	<u>130,051</u>

The AE Stock Bequest funds were a bequest for the use of the choir.

Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	565,982	28,273	55,266	649,521
	<u>565,982</u>	<u>28,273</u>	<u>55,266</u>	<u>649,521</u>
Total Funds	<u>2,049,460</u>	<u>28,273</u>	<u>72,712</u>	<u>2,150,445</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above, are as follows:

	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Net movement £
Endowment Funds				
Permanent Endowment	-	-	-	-
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	6,039	-	(6,039)	-
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	286	-	(286)	-
	<u>6,325</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(6,325)</u>	<u>-</u>
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	177,285	(155,337)	6,325	28,273
	<u>183,610</u>	<u>(155,337)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,273</u>

12 Analysis of funds - prior year

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on investments £	Carried forward £
Endowment Funds				
Permanent Endowment	1,316,255	-	-	1,316,255
Carlisle Capital Fund	9,073	-	(375)	8,698
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	34,250	-	(164)	34,086
Total endowment funds	<u>1,368,942</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(539)</u>	<u>1,368,403</u>

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

12 Analysis of funds - prior year (cont)

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on investments £	Carried forward £
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	129,046	-	(13,971)	115,075
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	129,046	-	(13,971)	115,075
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	581,092	24,979	(40,089)	565,982
	581,092	24,979	(40,089)	565,982
Total Funds	2,079,080	24,979	(54,599)	2,049,460

Net movement in funds, included in the above, are as follows:

	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Net movement £
Endowment Funds				
Permanent Endowment	-	-	-	-
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	5,595	-	(5,595)	-
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	280	-	(280)	-
	5,875	-	(5,875)	-
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	175,344	(156,240)	5,875	24,979
	181,219	(156,240)	-	24,979

13 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2019 £	Endowment Funds 2019 £	Restricted Funds 2019 £	Total Funds 2019 £	Total Funds 2018 £
Current year					
Tangible assets	422	1,322,709	-	1,323,131	1,323,464
Investments	463,194	18,517	129,588	611,299	536,917
Net assets	185,905	29,647	463	216,015	189,079
	649,521	1,370,873	130,051	2,150,445	2,049,460
Prior year					
Tangible assets	755	1,322,709	-	1,323,464	1,323,961
Investments	406,258	16,047	114,612	536,917	590,156
Net assets	158,969	29,647	463	189,079	164,963
	565,982	1,368,403	115,075	2,049,460	2,079,080

Treasurer's Report

I am writing this report in April 2020 when we are experiencing 'lock down', and we are not able to use the church building either for services or lettings, nor is the Lloyd Williamson nursery in our basement able to open. Consequently our financial situation has completely changed since December 31st 2019. At that time we were a little concerned as to the effect that Brexit might have financially on the value of our investments.

Our financial situation last year was comfortable and we certainly had more than sufficient finance to cover the traditional three months without income, little knowing what 2020 would bring. Our Warden /Administrator Jenny's report will have covered the increase in charges for renting our rooms at the start of 2019.

We were able to pay for any work required to the building, such as the re-surfacing of the church, Lindsey Hall and library floors, from the Congregational Account. We also were able to open a new account with Shawbrook Bank, with a deposit of £10,000. We did this because our accounts with Ecology Building Society and Cambridge Counties Bank were each accruing relatively good interest which meant that each account was getting close the £85,000 level of savings protected by the government. We have also benefitted from interest paid every quarter from the investment of our longstanding charities.

I am grateful to members of the congregation for their financial giving to the church collection each week. Several more members have chosen to give by standing order which is very much appreciated, and this is increased by 25% if it is Gift Aided too. Please do ask Jenny or myself.

We should be proud that as a congregation we have a collection each month for a chosen charity. We try to select a Unitarian Charity one month and a charity that one of our members has a special interest in on alternate months. In 2019 we made donations to Hope Not Hate, the Unitarian Youth Programme, a St. Michael Steiner School Trip, Yemen Crisis Appeal, Stonewall Housing, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, Hammersmith and Fulham Foodbank, Kew: Feed the Future, SimpleGifts Unitarian Centre for Social Action, Red Cross, Rewilding Britain, and Glass Door (West London Homeless Charity).

It cannot be repeated too often that all your giving is appreciated, giving of time and effort as well as money; the coffee makers, the stewards, the greeters, the people who help to put away the chairs after the service and all those who see something that needs doing and just attend to it.

Thank you all.

Juliet Edwards
Congregational Treasurer

Chair of Trustees and Management Committee Report

One of the benefits of being Chair of Essex Church is that generally there is very little for me to do in the way of duties, due to our devoted and diligent staff, and the enthusiasm and dedication of my fellow trustees. The duties that remain are very pleasant ones involving the planning of future events, courses on aspects of spiritual growth and other church and faith based activities. The aforementioned staff team consist of Jane, our Outreach Officer, who continues to impress and encourage us all with her breadth of skills and commitment. Jane combines her day job with her Ministerial Training course and is also part of our Ministry team. The other two members of this unit being Jeannene and our Minister Sarah. Jenny our Warden remains key to our day to day operations, an ever conscientious presence controlling the traffic in and out of the building from our various church hirers and tradespeople. She is also along with Juliet our treasurer involved with the accurate and up to date accounting and book keeping. Harold, our music coordinator, has this year as in many years past created a varied and delightful programme of music for our services with our wonderful musicians. I think we are very fortunate indeed in having the services of our industrious and experienced cleaner Gitana.

We are very pleased to be joined on the church management committee this year by Jennifer whose commitment to the life of the church, sound ideas, and fresh thinking have been a welcome addition to the work of this group. Lastly and never least, our linchpin and guiding light in so many ways, Sarah our Minister continues to bring joy and reflective practice to both our individual journeys of faith and our collective community.

Roy Clark
Chair of the Congregation

Minister's Report

Writing this report on the year 2019 from the vantage point of May 2020 brings to mind Joni Mitchell's famous chorus of 'You don't know what you've got till it's gone'. As I write this report, no groups are hiring our premises for their meetings and classes. The nursery in our basement is closed and silent. The usually busy street is strangely quiet and Jenny Moy our warden and I are busily engaged in financial projections to guide our church through this unprecedented change in our financial situation. Our aim is to ensure that our building remains in good condition, ready for a time when it is safe for people to meet in person once again, and that our financial reserves are kept safe. We are grateful to everyone who has made a special donation to help us through this challenging time when our income has dropped almost to zero, yet our bills and wages still need to be paid. I thank Jenny wholeheartedly for the insights she has brought to the predicaments caused by the coronavirus.

So as we read this Annual Report for 2019 let us give thanks for a year of steady achievement and for a harmonious community of people committed to supporting one another and building a better world for all. Sunday worship lies at the core of our congregational life and we were all grateful for the dedication of our musicians, loyal pianists Peter Crockford and Sandra Smith singers Harold Lorenzelli and Margaret Marshall and our new music scholar Abby Lorimier with her cello. Kensington Unitarians have always been noted for the quality of our community singing and our pleasure in making music was enhanced both by Margaret's monthly voice coaching and by members joining the Kensington Singers choir. Working with ministry team Jane Blackall and Jeannene Powell on monthly themes was inspiring and I delight in the new insights Jane is bringing back to our community from her ministry training courses. Throughout 2019 we worked to strengthen connections between the congregation and various community groups using our building, knowing how valuable it is to offer our building as a community resource. Hundreds of people entered our doors every week in 2019 and expressed gratitude for our well maintained facilities and warm welcome.

A quiet week just before Christmas enabled a group of volunteers to work on some deep cleaning and clutter clearing projects and special thanks go to trustee Brian Ellis who has quietly throughout the year tackled so many jobs that needed attention both in the building and out in our grounds. Gitana Kleinaitiene cleaned for us with dedication and determination and also helped with building management in so many ways, with her years of experience. I am grateful to all staff and volunteers for all they brought to our community life in 2019, sharing in the task of ministry, which so benefits from our shared hands and hearts. Caring for one another lies at the hearts of any spiritual community so thank you to everyone who took a conversation a little deeper, offered to meet someone, gave someone a lift or picked up a phone or posted a card. These generous actions have eased many a burden.

Caring for our wider world, maintaining an outward focus, is also essential. As a community we joined others in this country and throughout the world in 2019 in declaring a climate and ecological emergency and committing ourselves to various actions to heighten our individual awareness and to join with other like-minded groups. With David Carter's support and encouragement we formed a West London GreenSpirit group, part of the national GreenSpirit organisation, combining spirituality alongside scientific education and exploration. It's heartening to see how many of our activities appeal to people beyond Unitarian circles.

Our congregation took part in many Unitarian initiatives throughout the year with representatives attending our Annual Meetings, District Association events and the popular Hucklow Summer held at our movement's Nightingale Centre in the Peak District. Our trustees maintain a commitment to involve congregation members in national events by providing generous grants. As minister I appreciate the on-going support and encouragement from trustees' for my involvement in our national movement as chair of our Interview Panel and interim chair of the Ministry Strategy Group. This national perspective helps me realise how fortunate we are to have a healthy congregation with a very attractive and usable building to meet in. I have also personally benefitted from on-going connections with Unitarians in the Czech Republic and the States. Our Sunday services are often blessed with visitors from congregations abroad.

We are also blessed by our group of trustees who guide us with a light touch and encourage us as staff to take our own initiatives and keep moving forward. My thanks go especially to Juliet Edwards who brings such good sense to our financial dealings and to Roy Clark who has a wealth of experience of working as a trustee with various charitable bodies. Our previously sound business and financial model is taking a battering in 2020 but through prudent management of our assets in previous years and by forging strong foundations of love for our community, I believe we will weather these uncertain times and emerge ready to face new societal needs. In the meantime who could have imagined that we would be hosting church online coffee mornings and enjoying conversations with friends in Australia, Canada and Romania. What next I wonder. Let's continue to work together to offer a progressive and welcoming version of 'church' here in West London and to use our considerable assets for the greater good of all.

Rev. Sarah Tinker
Minister with Kensington Unitarians

Warden's Report

We raised lettings charges at the beginning of the year (for the first time since 2015) leading to a modest increase of about 10% in income. Lettings income has been fairly stable for the last 4 years, averaging around £83,000 per annum. However, unfortunately, we anticipate we may need to lower charges for many hirers – at least temporarily – when it is considered safe to re-open our building, as groups try to rebuild business after the Coronavirus shutdown. Expected lettings income for 2020 is therefore considerably lower (around £20k perhaps).

I reported last year that, many years after we first experimented with a Monday night choir – led by Jen Hazel – Kensington Singers would transfer here in September. They have duly done so and had a successful first term, with several congregation members now attending.

Some other new bookings this year are support groups for people with macular degeneration and Parkinsons, a third AlAnon group, and training courses by the National Childbirth Trust.

At the end of 2018, Nicola Webb approached us about offering a free community course from the Action for Happiness foundation. This duly ran on Wednesday evenings in the library from January to March and was very well attended. Nicola and Marylouise Morris then asked if they could start a monthly 'Happy Café' as a follow on, which took place in the autumn.

Another new regular booking with a community / spiritual focus is a fortnightly Heart Meditation on Tuesdays, run by Mehrdad Noorani and Beverley Eve. Beverley is a member of the Soveida Ensemble, who have held several Sunday concerts here. The meditation course is free, or by donation and the group pay 50% of the standard room cost.

In the autumn, trustees reviewed all of the groups that we support with free or discounted space. This includes most of the groups above and also a very popular Tai Chi class run by Kensington and Chelsea Forum for Older Residents on Friday lunchtimes and attended by several congregation members. We also support Sonya Leite to run a Wednesday lunchtime (and monthly Sunday) Nia exercise class – and other congregational initiatives include a quarterly Tea Dance (Jane Blackall) and regular performances of Playback Theatre (Veronica Needa).

Other religious groups we support are Sufi chanting with the Ansari Qadri Rifai Order on Mondays and monthly OneLight gatherings connected with the OneSpirit Interfaith Foundation. We also give space to several Eritrean refugee support groups – an initiative dating back many years – and tenants' organisations from neighbouring flats, Broadwalk Court and Mall Chambers, hold their AGMs here. Trustees were content with the amount of support currently offered (and consequent reduction in lettings income) but decided to keep this under annual review.

In response to a request from hirers, we have upgraded to a faster broadband connection and installed a new socket at the back of the church to make it easier to project with a very large screen. This opens the enticing possibility of Essex Church cinema nights - as it is fairly straightforward for a community organisation to get a licence to show classic / educational films. LED light bulbs in the worship space will help to reduce electricity costs, part of our on-going environmental commitment.

Another small project to improve the premises was a request to our gardener, Jackie Danks, to buy autumn bulbs. These were duly planted in 2019 and we are now seeing the results. As I write this, I'm greatly enjoying some beautiful tulips (Professor Roentgen) through the office window.

Jenny Moy
Essex Church Warden

Outreach Officer's Report

This was the third full year of 'Thematic Ministry'. Our minister Sarah Tinker, Jeannene Powell, and I get together to select a theme for each month of the year, to focus on and explore from a range of different angles in worship. It is rewarding to work with Sarah and Jeannene in this way, exploring possible angles on each topic, and coming up with service ideas. In

2019 our themes were 'Choices & Decisions', 'Story & Imagination', 'Forgiveness & Redemption', 'Great Lives', 'Relating & Relationships', 'Flourishing & Coping', 'Curiosity & Wonder', 'Hopes & Dreams', 'Moving On & Staying Put', 'The Religious Life', 'Time & Transience' and 'Scarcity & Abundance'. In addition to we three on the 'Thematic Ministry Team' a number of other people have been involved in leading worship during the year, including our own Harold Lorenzelli, who led his now-regular annual service while some of us were away at FUSE in February. Thanks too for all those who have given readings in our services in the past year. We held a special 'Readers' Workshop' in March to encourage more potential readers.

We continue to have a varied programme of regular groups and activities to be proud of here at Essex Church. 'Heart and Soul' goes from strength to strength, not only in Kensington, but across the district and beyond as other Unitarians are picking up the model we developed and successfully running it in their own congregations. Thanks to Brian Ellis and Roy Clark who, along with Sarah and I, led 'Heart and Soul' gatherings during the year. Communion services have also continued approximately quarterly, led by Sarah Tinker, David Carter, John Newton, Tristan Jovanović, and me. Margaret Marshall continues to offer her popular 'Finding Your Voice' singing workshops once a month. Sonya Leite continues to offer lively Nia Dance classes year-round on Wednesday lunchtimes and once a month on Sunday afternoons. Sunday Conversations continued on the last Sunday of the month to enable people to explore each monthly theme in more depth.

A new initiative for 2019 was the launch, in autumn, of the West London GreenSpirit group. Earlier in the year a draft 'Statement of Environmental Concern and Action' was brought to the church AGM and then approved by the committee. At the AGM we also had an in-depth exploration of how to welcome and integrate newcomers into the congregation better. As a result of this we held a 'Greeters' Training Workshop' in August which was very well-attended and sharpened our thinking. In our service on the day of the AGM we also introduced the idea of a congregational covenant – a simple statement of the congregation's purpose, aspirations, and how the members pledge to be with each other – which can help to create a more welcoming and respectful space, where there is clarity about our culture and expectations. We invited some initial contributions from the congregation and suggested this might be something to explore in more depth in the year ahead.

We have also had a number of occasional activities throughout the year. Veronica Needa's Playback Theatre returned to perform, on topics connected to our ministry themes, on several occasions during the year. Our quarterly Tea Dances, aimed primarily at the LGBTQ+ community and allies, continued throughout the year and were well-received as ever. In 2019 these events supported 'Stonewall Housing', a charity providing safe spaces and advice for LGBTQ+ people fleeing violence, harassment and abuse. Many thanks to Rachel Sparks, our enthusiastic dance teacher, and all our helpers and bakers, particularly Jennifer Young, Jeannene Powell, Chloë Harewood, Charlotte Chanteloup, Carolyn Appleby, Rae Cooksey and Jane Sparks. There were several shared congregational lunches throughout the year, and we are particularly grateful to all those who brought food, helped set it up and clear away, particularly Maureen Cummings and Marianne Harvey who bravely volunteered to coordinate in the kitchen. Sarah and Brian offered several seasonal poetry evenings in summer and winter which proved very popular. Estelle Pataki organised a trip to Osterley Park in January, Heidi Ferid hosted a trip to Tate Britain in February, Sarah led a walk in the Chilterns in May and a trip to Southend in June, and David Carter coordinated a visit to the BEDZed eco-building project in July. Our congregation was well represented with participants at FUSE in February (the Festival of Unitarians in the South East) and Hucklow Summer School in August. John Hands and Heidi offered a poetry reading in October to raise funds for charity. Michaela von Britzke and Sarah offered a fascinating workshop in November on 'Our Stories of Migration' based on the work of Shakespeare.

On a personal note, I would like to note that April 2019 marked my twentieth anniversary of first coming to Essex Church! I've probably never been away from church on as many Sundays, in those twenty years, as I was in 2019 due to the travel required to engage in my ongoing ministry training (weekends away on various courses, and at my placement congregation). I've found it strange to be away so much but appreciate everyone's support, encouragement, and interest in my progress.

Jane Blackall
Outreach Officer (Arts and Education)

Minutes of the Essex Church AGM – 12th May 2019

1. Opening Words: were spoken by Sarah Tinker,

2. Welcome and Apologies for Absence: Roy welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Present: Jane Blackall (*minutes*), Kate Brown, David Carter, Roy Clark (*chairperson*), Helena Coope, Maureen Cummings, Varinder Dhaliwal, Brian Ellis, Juliet Edwards, Ian Entwistle, Heidi Ferid, John Hands, Billy Jackson, Tristan Jovanović, Harriet Loeffler, Harold Lorenzelli, Jenny Moy (*warden*), John Newton, Jeannene Powell, Redwood, Sara Taylor, Rev. Sarah Tinker (*minister*), Marc Viera, Jennifer Young

Apologies: Carole Grace, Pat Gregory, John Humphreys, Jill Inskip, Veronica Needa, Michaela von Britzke.

3. Review of 2018 AGM Minutes: There were no matters arising from last year's minutes which will not be covered by the sections to follow. The minutes were accepted as a true record and this was approved by the meeting.

4. Review of Reports:

a. Treasurer's Reports and Accounts

Juliet thanked all those who have signed up to give regularly to the church via Direct Debit. This is much easier for the church and knowing we have this regular income helps with financial planning. Juliet also expressed gratitude for one-off donations and thanked all those who have signed up for Gift Aid. Juliet explained that we get most of our income from lettings and said that everybody should be extremely grateful for Jenny who arranges the lettings and tactfully increased the rents this year. Juliet explained that our accountants thoroughly check our finances. Juliet noted that our church is in a very unusual situation, certainly among Unitarian congregations, to employ five people (minister, warden, outreach officer, treasurer, and cleaner). Juliet stated that this is tremendous and we as a congregation benefit hugely from the hard work of this staff team. Several others including the gardener, musicians, and occasional guest preachers are paid as-and-when and are all much appreciated. Juliet noted that we had a significant dip in investment income due to world events but this situation has now improved.

b. Chairperson of Congregation's Report

Roy drew attention to all the 'extra mural' activities, in addition to Sunday services and regular groups, which we host at church. He was particularly enthusiastic to host a gathering and awards ceremony for the local charity 'Migrants Organise'. We often give use of our building for free, when we are able to fit them in, to groups who share our ethos that we'd like to support. Roy also drew attention to the success of the Men's Group, typically consisting of 5-9 people, only about half being from the congregation. Our Sunday Conversations are well-attended and appreciated. Roy commented that we'd like to have more groups which encourage talking and listening as that is an important part of what our congregation is here for.

c. Minister's Report

Sarah commented that she might look busy but she hopes she would never be too busy to have a conversation. She encouraged congregation members to seek her out for a walk-and-talk or a chat over a coffee. Sarah stated that ministry is a privilege and she feels very grateful to have a job which she loves so much.

d. Warden's Report

Jenny said that she also feels very privileged to live and work here and she has now been at Essex Church for 10 years. Her job as warden is to take care of the building and support the use of the building by other groups. We have one big ongoing tenant, the Lloyd Williamson nursery school, which brings in over £50,000 each year. The building is busy with a wide range of other activities during the week – children's activities, over 50s Tai Chi, yoga, lectures – to name just a few. Jenny mentioned that a highlight of the last year was having all the floors re-varnished and particularly rediscovering a wooden floor under carpet tiles in the library. Jenny noted that our chairs are as old as the building and Brian Ellis has sanded, varnished, patched, and polished the chrome. These are great chairs and the longer we can make them last the better. Jenny reported that we've agreed that there will be a local choir, Kensington Singers, meeting in the building from September 2019. We have negotiated that congregation members can take part in the choir for free. Brian has already joined so he is a good person to talk to for more information about the choir.

e. Outreach Officer's Report

Jane drew attention to the 'How to be a Unitarian' course which was run as a six-part series in the spring and repeated in a condensed half-day version in the autumn. This was a success though there was a huge amount of material to squeeze in. This is something we could do with running on a regular basis as so many people come and go through the congregation.

f. Additional Report on Church Music

Harold apologised for not submitting a written report. He reflected on some changes on how we provide music for services. We now aim to have an instrumentalist once a month and it is lovely to have musical contributions from congregation members. There is now a little less vocal input as we have one service a month no singers in support. Quartets are for special occasions. Harold reported that we have recently raised the fees for musicians. The musicians are always open to suggestions.

5. Acceptance of 2018 Reports and Accounts

Tristan Jovanović proposed acceptance of the report and accounts. This was agreed unanimously.

6. Election of Management Committee Members

Jeannene Powell proposed and Juliet Edwards seconded that the current committee members (Roy Clark, Maureen Cummings, Brian Ellis, Heidi Ferid and Harold Lorenzelli) should be re-elected en-bloc and this was agreed unanimously.

7. Votes of Thanks

Roy Clark thanked the pillars of our community who do so much. He drew attention to the work of our children's leader Nadia, our music coordinator Harold, our treasurer Juliet, our warden Jenny, our minister Sarah, and our outreach officer Jane. Sarah added thanks to all our regular volunteers, including Jeannene who leads worship, Roy our chair, and all those who have contributed to help our community move forward (including by turning up at church on Sundays).

8. Discussion on Environmental Statement

Sarah presented a draft environmental statement to the meeting (see below). She explained this will go to the church committee. It commits the congregation and individuals to take action in the face of the climate emergency. In recent weeks various cultural organisations have signed on to declare a climate emergency. Sarah expressed gratitude to David Carter for his encouragement in this regard. The Sunday Conversation in June will be dedicated to this subject. Sarah invited everyone to offer feedback.

Kensington Unitarians Declare a Climate & Ecological Emergency

Kensington Unitarians join with organisations across Britain and our wider world to declare a climate & ecological emergency. We commit ourselves to:

- *Learning more about climate change and loss of species and the actions we can take to redress these emergencies through changes in our own lifestyles and in how our church building is used and run.*
- *Forging alliances with other groups working towards sustainable living and using our resources to support their work.*
- *Encouraging national and international governments to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions as a matter of urgency, with justice for those affected by climate change as a prime concern.*
- *Reflecting environmental concerns in our worship and other group activities.*

9. Discussion on How Best to Integrate Newcomers

Jane Blackall, Roy Clark, and Jeannene Powell read out a discussion paper on this subject that was brought to the meeting:

Notes for Conversation on Welcome and Integration of Newcomers to Essex Church

In recent years we have noticed that the turnover of people at church seems to be getting faster and faster. People may come to London to study or work for just six months or a year and then move away. Many younger people in particular have irregular working hours (including Sunday shifts) or other commitments which make it difficult/impossible to come to church every Sunday (and tricky to say for certain when you're going to be here). These and other economic and social changes are having an impact on our church community which we'd like you to reflect on today.

Welcoming People and Making Connections

It can be harder to make meaningful connections with people in this 'high turnover' environment. On any given Sunday we might see faces we don't recognise and it's hard to be sure if it's their first visit (or perhaps we just haven't been here on the same weeks). We want to make newcomers feel truly welcome without feeling 'jumped on' the moment they come through the door. Although we have a nominated 'greeter' each week this is something we'd like everyone to be alert to and to help out with as they are able. Ideally we'd like to think that anybody who comes in will be personally welcomed by someone who will find out their name, something about them, and introduce them to one or two others. Sometimes people can 'slip through the net' and be left standing alone and feeling awkward in the foyer before or after church (though be sensitive - some people might prefer to be left alone). If someone is welcomed well and stays for a good conversation we think that they are more likely to come back (and keep coming). More generally a community is built of such connections and taking care to nurture these connections helps us thrive as a community.

Q1: How can we get more people to take an active part in making sure the quality of our welcome is high, week-in, week-out?

Getting People Involved as Volunteers

The church depends on volunteers to function: taking on Sunday tasks such as stewarding, greeting, and coffee-making; writing items for the newsletter; helping with pastoral support; reading and helping to lead services such as 'Heart and Soul'/communion; serving on the management committee, etc. In the past we've waited until people have been attending quite a while before encouraging them to help with such tasks but due to high turnover people might have come and gone before we get round to asking! Also it's got to be OK for a proportion of those attending to come and go without being roped into tasks if that's what they need. There's a dilemma about when/how much to ask people to help.

Q2: How can we get more people involved in volunteering roles more speedily (without unduly pressurising those people who aren't in a position to take on such tasks for whatever reason)?

Orientating People within Unitarianism

It is easy for people to come to church for quite a long time whilst still being a bit uncertain about what Unitarianism is! We think it is important for congregation members to know at least a little about the wider Unitarianism – for their own understanding – and so they are able to better communicate what we're about to others. This deeper understanding may also be important in getting people to feel a sense of ownership and belonging within Unitarianism. Last year we ran a six-part course called 'How to be a Unitarian' (and followed this up with a half-day condensed version) which was well-received but not everybody can/will spend time on a course. We are unlikely to run courses more than once a year at most so some people will miss out given the high congregational turnover.

Q3: How can we help newcomers (and existing members) to be better informed about Unitarianism and help them feel a greater sense of ownership & belonging within the Unitarian movement?

Jane invited people to get into three groups and spend ten minutes discussing one of the three questions. She encouraged people to take the printed notes away, to reflect further in their own time, and email her with any additional responses. Sarah took some feedback from the groups:

Q1: Helena suggested we could make people more welcome at coffee time, taking care not to sit in cliques around the tables, and to be aware of people who are 'hovering' and can't find a group to sit with. Helena also suggested including some sort of time for greeting within the service where you turn and introduce yourself. Brian commented that the role of the greeter requires a lot of skill and suggested that we could have a greeters' training workshop (along the lines of the recent readers' training workshop).

Q2: Jeannene noted that people come and go and so we need to regularly let people know, via announcements in the service as well as the newsletter, that we're open to newcomers volunteering. We could perhaps have the rota sheet up in a designated place such as next to the coffee hatch. The rota could have an extra column for 'what would you like to contribute' (e.g. 'water the flowers'). Varinder requested that the rota be printed at a larger size. Jane commented that she would like to have a 'rota monitor' who would take it off the wall and from table to table during coffee time (especially when she is away).

Q3: Harriet commented she liked the idea that you can come here and 'not believe a particular thing or behave a particular way'. Billy added that 'you don't have to adopt a Unitarian dogma' and that you can still retain your religious tradition of origin. Sarah asked what we can do to increase people's sense of ownership locally and mentioned 'knowing where the loo rolls are' and 'where to make a cup of tea'. Jennifer raised a question about how to do this process of integration faster.

Sarah reiterated the invitation for people to take these discussion points away and get in touch with further suggestions. She particularly encouraged newcomers to alert her to any blunders we are inadvertently making as a congregation.

10. Adjournment and Closing Words

Roy formally adjourned the meeting. The closing words of the meeting were read by Harold Lorenzelli.

Minutes taken by Jane Blackall