



Kensington Unitarians

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Annual Report 2017



Essex Unitarian Church

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2017

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, Roy Clark, Natasha Drennan (until December 2017), Juliet Edwards, Brian Ellis (from March 2017), Heidi Ferid-Hands, Howard Hague, Harold Lorenzelli, Roy Parnell.

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

Management Committee

Gina Bayley, Roy Clark (chair from December 2017), Natasha Drennan (treasurer until December 2017), Juliet Edwards (*chairperson until December 2017 and then treasurer*), Heidi Ferid-Hands, Harold Lorenzelli and Bobby Rebeiro from March 2018.

Minister

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

Treasurer

Natasha Drennan (until December 2017)
Juliet Edwards (from December 2017)
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 Limited
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 2017

The Trustees submit their annual report together with the financial statements of Essex Unitarian Church for the year ended 31 December 2017. 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; sharing our experience and 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 2017 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 liberal religious worship and in making our congregation visible to the wider world through high quality publicity materials, notice boards and use of digital media.
- Strengthening our social justice work in the world.
- 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, seeking professional advice about the back wall and basement damp problems, and ensuring that our liberal religious activities are well publicised. 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 on social justice projects.

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 7. The total income for the year was £159,858, compared to £176,069 in 2016 and expenditure was £155,712 compared to £268,586 in 2016, which resulted in a surplus of £45,896 (2016 deficit of £40,668) after the net gains on the revaluation of investments. After the deficit sustained last year due to the exceptional expenditure on roof works and the central heating in the building we are pleased to report that as expected we have returned to an annual surplus in 2017.

Policy on Reserves

The Church's unrestricted funds at 31 December 2017 were £581,092 of which £1,252 was held in fixed assets leaving free reserves of £579,840. The church has invested most of the reserves in funds expected to give a reasonable rate of interest, while keeping accessible enough to cover three 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 2017.

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 Trust 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 2017**

	2017 Unrestricted Funds £	2017 Endowment Funds £	2017 Restricted Funds £	2017 Total Funds £	2016 Total Funds £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	8,204	-	-	8,204	21,007
Investments					
Dividends	12,752	-	5,506	18,258	17,511
Bank interest	2,069	-	-	2,069	2,203
Gift aid reclaim	1,572			1,572	3,869
Other trading activities					
Lettings income	129,755	-	-	129,755	131,479
Total income	<u>154,352</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,506</u>	<u>159,858</u>	<u>176,069</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	2 52,867	-	-	52,867	121,288
Charitable activities	3 102,845	-	-	102,845	147,298
Total expenditure	<u>155,712</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>155,712</u>	<u>268,586</u>
Net gains on investments	6 33,249	1,109	7,392	41,750	51,849
Net income/(expenditure)	<u>31,889</u>	<u>1,109</u>	<u>12,898</u>	<u>45,896</u>	<u>(40,668)</u>
Transfers between funds	5,506	-	(5,506)	-	-
Net movement in funds	<u>37,395</u>	<u>1,109</u>	<u>7,392</u>	<u>45,896</u>	<u>(40,668)</u>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Funds brought forward	543,697	1,367,833	121,654	2,033,184	2,073,852
Funds carried forward	<u>11 581,092</u>	<u>1,368,942</u>	<u>129,046</u>	<u>2,079,080</u>	<u>2,033,184</u>

In the previous year income included restricted donations of £10,000 and restricted dividends of £5,213. Charitable expenditure included £10,000 of restricted expenditure and net gains on investments included gains of £11,101 on restricted funds and £1,475 on endowment funds.

**ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017**

	Notes	2017 Total Funds £	2016 Total Funds £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	5	1,323,961	1,324,645
Investments	6	590,156	547,110
		<u>1,914,117</u>	<u>1,871,755</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	8	5,095	10,777
Cash at bank and in hand	9	179,004	172,105
		<u>184,099</u>	<u>182,882</u>
Creditors : amounts falling due within one year	10	19,136	21,453
		<u>19,136</u>	<u>21,453</u>
Net current assets		164,963	161,429
Total net assets		<u>2,079,080</u>	<u>2,033,184</u>
The funds of the charity			
Endowment funds	11	1,368,942	1,367,833
Restricted income funds	11	129,046	121,654
Unrestricted funds	11	581,092	543,697
		<u>2,079,080</u>	<u>2,033,184</u>

Approved by the trustees on

and signed on their behalf by:

S M Tinker (Minister)

Juliet Edwards

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

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.

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.

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

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 £3,998 (2016: £3,769). 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 £1,910 (2016: £1,764).

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 2017

2 Expenditure on raising funds

	2017 Unrestricted Funds £	2017 Endowment Funds £	2017 Restricted Funds £	2017 Total Funds £	2016 Total Funds £
Staff costs	20,331	-	-	20,331	10,991
Book costs	18	-	-	18	-
Investment management charges	810	-	-	810	735
Support costs (Note 4)	31,708	-	-	31,708	109,562
	<u>52,867</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>52,867</u>	<u>121,288</u>

3 Expenditure on charitable activities

Staff costs	50,843	-	-	50,843	48,571
Staff courses & training	4,346	-	-	4,346	5,292
Congregational costs	10,537	-	-	10,537	5,128
Music	10,704	-	-	10,704	10,200
Donations, grants & projects	3,720	-	-	3,720	6,074
Support costs (Note 4)	22,695	-	-	22,695	72,033
	<u>102,845</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>102,845</u>	<u>147,298</u>

4 Support costs

General support costs

Insurance	3,096	-	-	3,096	2,867
Utilities	6,866	-	-	6,866	7,694
Cleaning	1,840	-	-	1,840	7,702
Repairs and maintenance	29,328	-	-	29,328	148,437
Office costs	5,748	-	-	5,748	6,746
Depreciation	684	-	-	684	897

Governance function

Independent Examiner fees	2,220	-	-	2,220	2,400
Other fees paid to the Independent Examiner:					
Accountancy and payroll fees	4,621	-	-	4,621	4,852
	<u>54,403</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,403</u>	<u>181,595</u>

5 Fixed tangible assets

	Freehold Property £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At 1st January 2017	1,322,709	87,899	1,410,608
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31st December 2017	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>87,899</u>	<u>1,410,608</u>
Depreciation			
At 1st January 2017	-	85,963	85,963
Charge for the year	-	684	684
Written off on disposals	-	-	-
At 31st December 2017	<u>-</u>	<u>86,647</u>	<u>86,647</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31st December 2017	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>1,252</u>	<u>1,323,961</u>
At 31st December 2016	<u>1,322,709</u>	<u>1,936</u>	<u>1,324,645</u>

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 2017

6 Listed investments	General Fund	The Stock Bequest	The Carlisle Fund	Endowment Funds	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Market value at 1 January 2017	410,442	121,191	10,036	5,441	547,110
Add: Additions at cost	1,296	-	-	-	1,296
Less: disposals at carrying value	-	-	-	-	-
Net gains on revaluation	33,249	7,392	637	472	41,750
Market value at 31 December 2017	<u>444,987</u>	<u>128,583</u>	<u>10,673</u>	<u>5,913</u>	<u>590,156</u>

Non-UK investments total £184,632 as at the year end. UK investments total £405,524.

7 Employee costs

There was an average of four 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	2017 Total	2016 Total
	£	£	£	£
Minister	29,835	-	29,835	28,688
Outreach Officer	13,631	-	13,631	13,113
Warden	-	11,562	11,562	10,027
Cleaner	-	7,573	7,573	-
Social security costs	571	365	936	946
Pension contributions	5,077	831	5,908	5,533
Employee costs	<u>49,114</u>	<u>20,331</u>	<u>69,445</u>	<u>58,307</u>
Locum Preachers	1,729	-	1,729	1,255
Total staff costs	<u>50,843</u>	<u>20,331</u>	<u>71,174</u>	<u>59,562</u>
Average number of staff:				
31 December 2017	2	2	4	
31 December 2016	2	1	3	

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 £50 (2016: £150), choir fees £1,665 (2016: £1,290).

8 Debtors

	2017	2016
	£	£
Trade debtors	2,585	4,170
Other debtors	1,000	5,168
Prepayments	1,510	1,439
	<u>5,095</u>	<u>10,777</u>

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

9 Cash at bank and in hand

	2017	2016
	£	£
Cash at bank and on deposit	173,168	165,550
Cash held for rent deposit (see below)	4,368	4,365
Cash held by Stockbroker	1,468	2,190
	<u>179,004</u>	<u>172,105</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

	2017	2016
	£	£
Trade creditors	378	50
Social security & pensions	2,565	2,701
Held as agent	1,300	1,376
Accruals and deferred income	10,525	12,961
Rent deposit	4,368	4,365
	<u>19,136</u>	<u>21,453</u>

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	8,436	-	637	9,073
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	33,778	-	472	34,250
Total endowment funds	<u>1,367,833</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,109</u>	<u>1,368,942</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.

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

11 Analysis of funds - current year (cont)

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on investments £	Carried forward £
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	121,654	-	7,392	129,046
Total restricted funds	<u>121,654</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,392</u>	<u>129,046</u>

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

Unrestricted Funds

General Fund	543,697	4,146	33,249	581,092
	<u>543,697</u>	<u>4,146</u>	<u>33,249</u>	<u>581,092</u>
Total Funds	<u>2,033,184</u>	<u>4,146</u>	<u>41,750</u>	<u>2,079,080</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	5,232	-	(5,232)	-
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	274	-	(274)	-
Repairs & Building Fund	-	-	-	-
	<u>5,506</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(5,506)</u>	<u>-</u>
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	154,352	(155,712)	5,506	4,146
	<u>159,858</u>	<u>(155,712)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,146</u>

12 Analysis of funds - prior year

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on £	Carried forward £
Endowment Funds				
Permanent Endowment	1,316,255	-	-	1,316,255
Carlisle Capital Fund	7,464	-	972	8,436
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	33,275	-	503	33,778
Total endowment funds	<u>1,366,358</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,475</u>	<u>1,367,833</u>

ESSEX UNITARIAN CHURCH

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

12 Analysis of funds - prior year (cont)

	Brought forward £	Net movement £	Movement on investments £	Carried forward £
Restricted Funds				
A E Stock Bequest	110,553	-	11,101	121,654
Repairs & Building Fund	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	110,553	-	11,101	121,654
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	596,941	(92,517)	39,273	543,697
	596,941	(92,517)	39,273	543,697
Total Funds	2,073,852	(92,517)	51,849	2,033,184

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	4,959	-	(4,959)	-
Carlisle Fund Income Fund	254	-	(254)	-
Repairs & Building Fund	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
	15,213	(10,000)	(5,213)	-
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	160,856	(258,586)	5,213	(92,517)
	176,069	(268,586)	-	(92,517)

13 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Endowment Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Current year					
Tangible assets	1,252	1,322,709	-	1,323,961	1,324,645
Investments	444,987	16,586	128,583	590,156	547,110
Net assets	134,853	29,647	463	164,963	161,429
	581,092	1,368,942	129,046	2,079,080	2,033,184
Prior year					
Tangible assets	1,936	1,322,709	-	1,324,645	1,324,537
Investments	410,442	15,477	121,191	547,110	493,993
Net assets	131,319	29,647	463	161,429	255,322
	543,697	1,367,833	121,654	2,033,184	2,073,852

Treasurer's Report

Our thanks go to Natasha Drennan for offering to become our treasurer in the autumn of 2015. She introduced the web based accountancy system, Xero, which organises money in and out quite simply. We greatly appreciate all Natasha did for our community and we wish Natasha and Darren all the very best for their new life together.

2017 has seen much additional form filling for all financial institutions, as we have to comply with quite rigorous rules designed to end money laundering routes via charities. Clarifying all our signatories for various accounts has been time consuming but we are hopefully almost now finished with this essential but tedious task. Confusion about signatories meant we were unable to access two savings accounts during this year but we avoided the need to cash in any investments by accepting two short term loans from our minister.

Our church income stems primarily from our lettings, ably managed by Jenny Moy our warden. Additional income comes from donations and our investments are currently invested for long term growth rather than income. Our main costs, as in most organisations, are staff salaries and pensions and we were pleased to be able to offer Gitana Kleitane, our loyal cleaner, a staff position at the start of 2017, after many years of self-employment. It was also a pleasure to again be able to offer staff a 4% pay increase, in line with our national Unitarian guidance on ministers' stipends.

We ended 2017 with a net income of £45,896 including gains on investments of £41,750. That compares to net expenditure of £40,668 in 2016 after adding gains on investments of £51,849.

We are fortunate to have the resources to afford the luxury of professional musicians every Sunday, partly funded through interest from The Stock Bequest, a restricted fund specifically for music. We are happy to augment this because high quality music enhances the worship experience and strengthens our hymn singing. Margaret's monthly singing workshops are a worthwhile investment, improving our singing and encouraging people to attend specifically on those Sundays. Another worthwhile luxury is the provision of filter coffee and high quality savoury and sweet biscuits, fairly traded whenever possible. Printing occasional colour copies of our newsletter is a further luxury but we're pleased to report that every colour edition has so far been partly sponsored by individual members, to whom we are grateful.

We are also grateful for the generous giving by members, friends and visitors, which we gift aid via the new gift aid scheme. As treasurer I would of course be glad for the church to receive even more donations in the weekly services and by standing order and one off gifts. We encourage everyone who pays sufficient tax to consider filling in an individual gift aid form, which allows us to claim money from the HMRC on all your contributions to church funds.

Our thanks as always go to the very professional team at LFF of Tonbridge who produce and examine our accounts and especially to Colleen Wendell who manages our church payroll so efficiently.

I was appointed as treasurer in December 2017, although I have been helping in an unofficial capacity since June. I am pleased to say that I have found our finances in good heart.

Juliet Edwards
Congregational Treasurer

Chairperson of the Congregation's Report

I was honoured to be asked to take on the role of Chair of the Congregation as of December last year. Having served for a couple of years on the Church Management Committee, I was well aware of the talents of fellow members and staff that would make my job relatively easy. Indeed I feel part of a well-oiled machine.

With that in mind, a vote of thanks is due to a number of important individuals. Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor as Chair, Juliet, who, far from stepping back, has actually stepped up: to take on the difficult job of Treasurer.

Thanks are also due to our indefatigable and multi-skilled Outreach Officer Jane for her many administrative and organisational feats, and to our Warden Jenny who continues to greet every issue from bookings to building repairs with quiet competence and a cheerful calm. Sarah our wonderful Minister of course remains front and centre of our spiritual and community life here at Essex Church.

A big thank you to Harold for arranging for us to have wonderful music every Sunday, and to Margaret, Benji, Lucy, Peter, Sandra and guest musicians various for their part in this. Thank you to Nadia and Jen who have provided excellent Children's Group leadership. We must not forget in this list someone special who works behind the scenes Gitana, our cleaner, who keeps the place spotless.

I would like to give a special thank you to Brian for the multiple jobs he has undertaken on the fabric and contents of our building as well as his work on the committee. Speaking of which, I am delighted to welcome Bobby, who has joined the Church Management Committee this year.

As well as the fine folk named, there are many others too numerous to mention individually who have made invaluable contributions to the smooth and effective running of the church. I refer of course to all the members of the congregation who have volunteered for stewarding, greeting and coffee making duties every Sunday.

As a relative newcomer to my role I will leave it to other contributors to this report to outline the numerous events, engagement groups and religious education programmes undertaken here at Essex Church during the past year. 2017 was in fact a very special year being the fortieth birthday of our present and much loved Essex Church. Considering the strength of our leadership and support teams and looking around the many new faces that have joined our congregation this year, I am confident that our faith based community is set fair to continue to grow, develop and prosper in the months and years to come.

Roy Clark
Chair of the Congregation

Minister's Report

2017 will stay with me as a year of great contrasts. Many happy events took place here at church and in the lives of congregation members but our wider community witnessed some dreadful events that must be noted. Situated just a mile away from us, the burnt out shell of Grenfell Tower, where 71 people died and many more were injured in a fire last June, reminds us of our duty to care for one another and to ensure our society looks after everyone properly, with dignity and respect. Several terror attacks in London and Manchester reminded us that our society is affected by events the world over. As a favourite hymn line says, *'Our world is one world, what touches one affects us all'*. Let that thought be at the centre of all we do and let us keep asking the question – how best can we use our church resources, of people and a building and finance?

The winter brought the deaths of members Barbara Ballantyne and Peggy Dunnett, who had achieved so much in so many fields during their long lives. They are greatly missed, as are the church members who moved away from London during the year. It's a pleasure to hear people's news from afar. In March we were delighted to conduct the wedding ceremony here at church for our treasurer Natasha and partner Darren, who then returned to Canada. We wish them well in their life together. They expressed their gratitude to Jeannene Powell as celebrant.

At the core of church life is our Sunday service and I am grateful to Jane Blackall and Jeannene for working so enthusiastically with me on thematic ministry. It has helped to bring greater depth to our worship and has engaged more congregation members in worship preparation and delivery. Everyone is invited to contribute ideas, suggestions for music and readings, and bring their own thoughts on the theme to our monthly conversations and to our newsletter. I am as always hugely grateful to Jane for her work as our Outreach Officer and for all the many organisational and publicity tasks she efficiently keeps up with. I know we are all delighted at the completion of her (First Class!) degree and that she has now been accepted for ministry training. Her interest in training and small group work brought us acclaim in June when we hosted our London District Quarterly meeting and Jane and Fred Langridge gave a comprehensive and well received workshop on how to improve our welcome to LGBTQ+ people.

Essex Church has always taken an active part in District and National Unitarian activities and I am grateful to our management committee who accept that some of my working life happens away from our church, as I continue to serve as chair of our Interview Panel and member of our Ministry Strategy Group. In a small movement such as ours we need people to be involved nationally as well as locally. One memorable national event was the London Pride march, notable both for the turnout of over 40 Unitarians in colourful attire and for the fact that it was hours before we marched anywhere! But some excellent conversations were held and information leaflets distributed. I

would encourage all of us in the year ahead to have more conversations about our faith and to tell people about Kensington Unitarians and the issues that matter to us. We were also reminded that we are an international movement, particularly when a group Of Czech Unitarians from Prague made Kensington their first stop on an ambitious tour of Britain. There is now an open invitation for us to visit their historic congregation.

During the year we enjoyed various outings, including a congregation trip to a late night Prom and visits to Southend and Lewisham Unitarians. I was fortunate to take part in the week-long visit to Findhorn, an inspiring spiritual community in north east Scotland, along with 16 other Unitarians, as part of the Findhorn Unitarian Network. My work life was enhanced by membership of a ministers' covenant group and a London District ministers' support group, where we encourage one another to reflect on our working practices and experiences. In 2017 we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the opening of our current church building and we can be justifiably proud of the good state of repair that the church is now in. It's hard now to remember the old heaters that used to click their way through every service and might or might not bother to switch on at all. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Jenny Moy our warden, Gitana Kleitane, our so-very-capable cleaner, and Arda Ohanessian, who ably covered the warden's role when Jenny took a break last summer. It pleased both Jenny and me to discover that our lettings and heating system could be managed from the South of France, thanks to the Internet. It is impressive to see how many different groups use our building. We must bear in mind the toll that this can take both on the fabric of the building and on staff. It may also be worthwhile considering again how we might give our user groups a greater sense of who we Unitarians are and encourage a greater sense of 'ownership' of our building within our own congregation and within groups who rent our space. We are all merely custodians of everything we seemingly possess here on planet earth. How then shall we best take care of our church and our wider environment?

Worship remains at the core of our community life and I must thank all who help Sunday mornings to run smoothly – our so very professional musicians ably organised by trustee Harold Lorenzelli, our children's leaders Nadia and Giuliano Crippa and Jen Hazel and all the many volunteers who tackle the regular and occasional tasks that need attention. Thanks also go to all those who quietly connect with others and provide support for people facing challenges. Sharing life's joys and sorrows is a vital part of community building and pastoral care remains a central part of ministry. I'm grateful to all those who have invited me to walk alongside them during the last year and I look forward to us all working together in the year ahead, co-creating our Kensington Unitarians community for the greater good of all.

Rev. Sarah Tinker
Minister with Kensington Unitarians

Warden's Report

Following a resurfacing of the roof and installation of a new heating system last summer, this year was relatively quiet in terms of major work on the building. However, we did troubleshoot some minor issues with both of last year's projects. We'd identified a continuing issue with water penetration in a few places after heavy rain and called Classic Roofing back to consult on what might be happening. They identified the coping stones on the parapet as a potential vulnerability, despite the new waterproof membrane with which they covered the whole roof and gutters last year. This is because the coping stones bridge the inner and outer brick walls and therefore represent a route for rainwater saturating the outer bricks to transfer moisture across to the inner leaf. They have therefore returned to extend the waterproof membrane down to well below the coping stones on the outer wall. We think this has helped to some extent, though sadly making the building 100% watertight is still a work in progress.

Similarly, in last year's report, I mentioned that a drawback of the new heating system was that the only way to provide users with any controllability was to give them the passcode to the whole system. After consulting with a heating control system engineer, we decided the most economical fix was to install a boost button beside the thermostats in the Hall and Church. If pressed this brings the heating on full for half an hour in the church, or fifteen minutes in the Hall. The boost button shows a red light whenever the heating is on - either to reach a programmed target, or because it has been pressed - so users can see clearly whether it's already on, they've successfully turned it on, or they need to turn it on again. The heating is so efficient at full power that 30 minutes is generally enough to bring even the church space to a good temperature, no matter how cold it is to start with. This new system seems to be working well so far and probably saves energy overall - as users can request a lower target temperature, knowing they have an easy way to increase it, if needed.

Lloyd Williamson nursery school lease part of our basement and there has been an issue with water penetration in one of the rooms. Classic Roofing felt this could be caused by water draining into the wall from the bridge to the garden. We therefore resurfaced the bridge in an effort to resolve the problem. Lloyd Williamson have been very good tenants and their 15 year lease is due for renewal next year. We hope they will stay with us.

Sadly another long-standing hirer, Beit Klal Synagogue, left us in 2017. They'd originally planned to leave in February, but ended up staying till June because of water damage at their new premises. Beit Klal were originally set up to provide a welcoming spiritual home for LGBT, feminist, patrilineal, single or secular Jews, and Jews with non-Jewish partners. Their inclusive and experimental approach to religion felt very akin to Unitarianism and I'm glad to say they're not breaking the connection completely - and will continue to celebrate some of their larger annual festivals here. Two other classes that had been running here for several years - one yoga and one Pilates - also terminated their bookings in 2017 due to low numbers. Overall, total lettings income was down slightly on 2016. However we already have a few new bookings in prospect for 2018 and hope income will return to 2016 levels next year.

Some other small achievements around the building were: replacing the boarding over the pipes running alongside the warden's flat (mentioned as an aspiration in my 2014 report!); replacing the locks on the gates to these side passages, re-laying the back garden paving and rehanging the library curtains. We now plan to also replace the blinds - which are looking shabby in comparison. Brian is taking the lead on this and has also started polishing the frames of our much loved chairs - getting very satisfying results. We were glad to have Jackie Danks' professional help with our garden for another year. Our quiet outdoor space is loved by birds and people.

Jenny Moy
Essex Church Warden

Outreach Officer's Report

Once again in 2017 I have been working to keep our newsletter, website, and podcasts lively and up-to-date. I've also produced most of our posters, flyers, orders-of-service and other printed materials. I continue to coordinate the volunteer rotas, signing up people to help with stewarding, coffee-making and greeting on Sundays, and I would like to express my appreciation to all those who regularly sign up to help with these tasks. Twenty-eight different people helped out at least once last year (and let me award a gold star to last year's most prolific volunteer who took on *nineteen* duties altogether!) Volunteering in this way is a small but significant way to 'give something back' in support of the community and – if you're not already a regular volunteer – I would encourage you to think about signing up for the first time to help share the load. If you're not sure what any of the tasks entail we have written 'job descriptions' to tell you what's required – none of the roles are especially onerous – and we can pair you up with a 'buddy' to show you the ropes the first time you do it. Thanks too to all those who regularly write articles for the newsletter. I am always interested in hearing from new people who would like to share their stories of how they came to the church or to Unitarianism, their thoughts on religious and spiritual matters, recommendations of books connected to our Unitarian values, or articles about good causes you are connected to.

Another aspect of my role is coordinating the congregational programme of events, including the Sunday services. This was the first full year of 'Thematic Ministry'. At Sarah's suggestion, a small team of leaders (Sarah, Jeannene Powell, and I) got together to select a theme for each month of the year, to focus on and explore from a range of different angles in worship. In 2017 our themes were 'Understanding', 'Wisdom', 'Good and Evil', 'Transformation', 'Connection', 'Courage and Resilience', 'Identity', 'Triumph and Disaster', 'Purpose and Mission', 'Generosity', 'The Unknown', and 'Hospitality'. This approach has allowed us to explore these themes more deeply together and it seems to have been well-received by the congregation. In addition to the three of us on the 'Thematic Ministry Team' (Sarah, Jeannene, and I), a number of other people have been involved in leading worship during the year, including our own Tristan Jovanović and Harold Lorenzelli who each led services, and Roy Clark and Heidi Ferid who co-led worship with Sarah. We were also visited by Alex Gowing-Cumber of Inclusive Church. Thanks too for all those who have given readings in our services in the past year.

'Heart and Soul' has become an important part of our programme of worship here at Essex Church, as a more intimate and contemplative gathering, and one which is accessible to people who can't make it to church on Sunday mornings. Sessions are led by a number of different members of the congregation on a wide variety of themes whilst following a regular format which centres on an extended time of prayer. Thanks to all those who led or co-led 'Heart and Soul' with

me and Sarah during the year including Jeannene Powell, Melody Chapman, Roy Clark, and Brian Ellis. Our monthly inclusive communion services have also continued throughout 2017, led by a small but committed band of volunteers, including Sue Smith, Tristan Jovanović, Sarah Tinker, Mark Franklin-Bowen and myself. Margaret Marshall continues to offer her popular 'Finding Your Voice' singing workshops once a month. Sonya Leite continues to offer Nia Dance classes year-round on Wednesday lunchtimes and once a month after the service on Sunday afternoons. In the autumn, Corrina Dolso offered a short run of 'Singing for the Spirit' evenings, teaching us chants from a range of traditions.

One new addition to our programme for 2017 which I am particularly proud of initiating was the introduction of our quarterly LGBTQ+ Inclusive Tea Dances, a joint venture with Rachel Sparks Dance, which have been splendid occasions. During the year Rachel has taught us social foxtrot, rumba, and waltz for complete beginners – all with gender-neutral partnering, so anyone can lead and anyone can follow, regardless of gender – and we've learned a few line-dances along the way too. Many thanks to all our helpers, particularly Varinder Dhaliwal and Rae Cooksey who have made everybody feel so welcome, and Jane Sparks who has made lots of delicious cakes for the tea stall (raising funds for charity: Diversity Role Models). Another popular innovation for 2017, initiated by Sarah in connection with the Thematic Ministry programme, was the introduction of a 'Sunday Conversation' after the last service of each month where we can explore the monthly theme.

We have also had a number of one-off and occasional activities throughout the year. We held a 'Year Compass' afternoon for reflection, looking back and looking forward at the turn of the year, and this was so well-received that we will repeat it. In June we hosted a training day for the local district: 'Working on our Welcome: Improving our Hospitality to LGBTQ+ People' led by myself and Quaker activist Fred Langridge, with the hope of improving Unitarian awareness of how to be better allies to people across the whole LGBTQ+ spectrum, and not resting on our laurels or being complacent in regard to inclusion. We were glad to welcome back Veronica Needa's Playback Theatre to perform on several occasions during the year. Although our Creativity Group stopped meeting regularly, Sue Smith has galvanised members near and far to work on an embroidery project, and together they have produced splendid wall-hangings to add to our display at the front of our church. Sarah, Carole Grace and Brian Ellis offered a poetry evening in the summer which was well-received. There were several shared congregational lunches throughout the year, including one to mark the 40th anniversary of the opening of our church building in July, and we are particularly grateful to all those who brought food, helped set it up and clear away.

On a personal note, my studies at Heythrop College concluded in 2017, and I was awarded a first-class degree (BA Philosophy, Religion and Ethics) in the autumn. Thanks to Sarah, and the committee, for their support and flexibility while I disappeared into dissertation writing over the summer months, and to everyone who encouraged me along the way.

Jane Blackall
Outreach Officer (Arts and Education)

Church Music Report

The church continues to offer a wide selection of music both vocal and instrumental to support the morning services. We are lucky to be able to draw on a talented and committed number of individuals. Our goal is to enhance the experience of those who come to worship at Essex Church and are, as always, open to suggestions for music which reflects the liberal ethos of the church.

Harold Lorenzelli
Church Music Coordinator

Minutes of the Essex Church AGM – 25th June 2017

1. Opening Words: were spoken by Roy Clark, Heidi Ferid, and Sarah Tinker.

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

In attendance: Carolyn Appleby, Gina Bayley, Eliz Beel, Jane Blackall (*minutes*), Melody Chapman, Roy Clark, Maureen Cummings, Juliet Edwards (*chairperson*), Brian Ellis, Heidi Ferid, Carole Grace, John Hands, Rebecca Hope, Bobby Rebeiro, Redwood, Toran Shaw, Rev. Sarah Tinker (*minister*), Liz Tuckwell, Erica Zaiser

Apologies: Antony Bunsee, Niall Doherty, Gill Hague, Howard Hague, Jill Inskip, Jenny Moy, Stephanie Saville, Sue Smith

3. Review of 2016 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

Sarah explained that our treasurer, Natasha Drennan, is absent because she recently moved back to Canada. We are looking into reducing the role to make it more manageable for the next person to take over from her. We spent a lot of money on building work during 2016 and ran at a loss for the year but it is a sign of our overall financial health that we could spend so much on various important works around the building. Juliet pointed out that we did this without digging in to our reserves. Sarah commented that the accounts are set out in a particular way in the annual report due to the requirements of charity law. Gina commented that it is money well spent as the church looks beautiful. Sarah added that it would now be warm in winter. Carolyn asked whether the roof is now fixed. Sarah reported that there are still some issues and that the company who did the work are coming back in the summer to address these issues which they rightly accept are still their responsibility.

b. Chairperson of Congregation's Report

Juliet noted that her report had referred appreciatively to the new monthly themed ministry, also the monthly communions, and Heart and Soul, which have now become regular fixtures of the church programme. She reflected on the fact that the activities offered by the church have changed over the years, mentioning that we no longer have a regular book group or creativity group, and that we have moved towards offering more worship and workshops on spiritual themes. Sarah commented that it is nice when people have ideas about activities we can offer at church and back this by saying 'and I would like to help run the activity'.

c. Minister's Report

Sarah remarked that she had enjoyed writing her report and remembering small moments which were highlights during the year. She commented that there had been lots of laughter even during difficult times. Sarah reflected that she has one of the best jobs, but that it can also be a lonely job, and it is best when we are all ministering together. She commented that the report shows that our resources are being well used and there's still potential for us to do more.

d. Warden's Report

Juliet commented that Jenny's report was 'a work of art'. Sarah noted that in summer the building becomes much quieter when many classes and groups take a break.

e. Outreach Officer's Report

Jane expressed her thanks to everyone who volunteers at the church and encouraged more people to step up and take on a share of the work that needs to be done. She reminded people that if they were uncertain about the various roles (stewarding, coffee, greeting) we would be able to pair them up with someone to show them the ropes on their first time. Sarah encouraged people to 'get stuck in quickly' as a volunteer even when they are relatively new to the congregation so that you connect with other people and you begin to get a sense of 'ownership' of the church.

f. Church Music Report

Juliet expressed her gratitude for the music and particularly for the choir's support of our congregational singing each week. Sarah expressed thanks to Harold who coordinates the music for us in every single service and does this as a volunteer.

5. Acceptance of 2016 Reports and Accounts

Juliet Edwards proposed and Heidi Ferid seconded acceptance of the report and accounts. This was agreed unanimously.

Sarah encouraged anyone with financial acumen to go through the accounts carefully and get involved in a conversation with the committee about the church finances. The accountant has offered to come and talk us all through them in detail if that was wanted. Heidi commented that she feels we are being sensible in prioritising care of the fabric of the church building at the moment. She went on to say that people matter most but this building holds us all and is our spiritual home. Sarah commented that the building is also an advertisement for us as hundreds of people come through our doors every week for other activities.

6. Election of Management Committee Members

The list of committee members going forward for re-election was: Gina Bayley, Roy Clark, Juliet Edwards, Brian Ellis, Heidi Ferid, and Harold Lorenzelli. Maureen Cummings proposed and John Hands seconded that these six members should be re-elected en-bloc and this was agreed unanimously.

Carolyn queried the fact that the annual report lists the church trustees and management committee separately. Sarah explained that we have a system that we need to change. Historically we had two separate bodies, trustees and committee, but due to recent changes to charity law the committee are counted as trustees anyway in the eyes of the Charity Commission. We need to take steps to formally blend the two. Juliet reminded everybody that if anyone is interested in joining the church committee in the coming year then they should talk to Sarah in the first instance to find out more about what is involved.

7. Any Other Business

Sarah reminded everyone that they don't have to wait until the AGM each year to ask questions of the committee or make comments or suggestions. The committee actively welcome congregational involvement year-round.

Liz asked about the existence of other committee officers in addition to the Outreach Officer. Sarah clarified that 'Outreach Officer' is Jane's paid role. Roy commented that all of the church's paid staff are technically officers: Sarah, Jenny, Jane and Gitana. Liz explained that she was thinking of voluntary officers. Bobby asked who the committee are as he is a new member and does not know all the names. Jane said she would include photographs of all the committee members with the committee news in the next newsletter. Melody commented that it was a marvel that the church operates on 3 ½ staff and that other churches seemed to have many more. Sarah noted that our congregation is almost unique amongst UK Unitarian churches to have this many staff and other ministers are envious of her good fortune in having a staff team here at Essex Church. Sarah commented that in a sense we are running a business here but we are trying to do it in a humane and ethical way.

Carolyn asked if the nursery is listed in the accounts. Sarah explained that we get approximately one third of our income from renting the basement space to the nursery school. Their long-term lease comes to an end in summer 2018 and this is a risk for the congregation as it would be a big blow to lose one third of our income so suddenly if they chose not to renew. Maureen asked if we have any input into the nursery. Sarah confirmed that we have no input into the nursery's decision making or activities but we are 'good neighbours' to one another.

Bobby asked if any money is spent on raising the profile of the church in the local area. Sarah said it is known to be extremely difficult to reach people in this way. However, she is particularly keen to take note of the queries of people who are new to the congregation, who may spot various 'blind-spots' that those of us who have been here for a long time have developed. Toran commented that he is an online marketer. Sarah reported that a lot of our new visitors are checking out the website and particularly the podcast before they come. Jane encouraged congregation members to like and follow our church Facebook page and to share content (particularly links to the podcast) from this page with friends online. She expressed the opinion that many people who might actually be interested in what we have to offer are at the same time quite anti-religious, so we have a great hurdle of resistance to get over, and one way to show what we're about is to share particular quality materials. Sarah suggested getting together a small group in the coming year to look at issues of marketing, publicity, and online presence.

8. Closing Words and Votes of Thanks

Juliet expressed her thanks to the congregation, first of all, saying 'if there is no congregation there is no church', and thanking all the volunteers who contribute in so many different ways. Juliet thanked Jane for all that she does. Juliet thanked Sarah for all she does, with such a light touch, and for including our youngsters so well in the life of the church. Sarah thanked Juliet for being a great chairperson and for temporarily helping with the treasurer's tasks as well. Sarah also thanked everyone who turns up on Sunday morning and joked that she 'dreads the day when everyone stays in bed and waits for the podcast instead'. Sarah commented that listeners in the US email her if the podcast is not up online at the usual time. Melody commented that she uses the website a lot and appreciated the updated photographs. The closing words of the meeting were read by Gina.

Minutes taken by Jane Blackall

