



Annual Report 2021

The Trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for September 2020 - August 2021.

Main Events 2020-21

This last year has been overshadowed by the continuing global Pandemic which has affected all aspects of church life.

As it has been the fourth year in the ministry of Revd Kevin Price it is sobering to note that a high proportion of his ministry at Wellspring (¾) has now been undertaken against this backdrop, and its influence will continue as we emerge from the Pandemic. During the last three months Kevin took Sabbatical leave from his duties as minister of Wellspring.

Once it became possible for gathered worship to re-start in 2020 a decision was made to aim for September once the necessary Covid-19 Risk Assessment, cleaning, and safety procedures were in place, so we were grateful for the expertise of one of our Trustees in compiling a thorough Risk Assessment document, updated as required. For two months gathered worship took place on Sunday mornings in our chapel until the country was subjected to further Lockdown restrictions from November. As it was recognised that some of our members might not be able to join gathered worship, online resources continued to be made available; and for those without internet access printed worship material, often accompanied by recorded CDs, was distributed. We are most grateful for the team of worship leaders and technical specialists who made this possible.

Although gathered worship became permissible again in December, many churches chose to delay re-opening for Sunday worship for several months until the Spring and this was a route chosen by Wellspring (not least because our building was closed for redevelopment in December). During this period new online ventures began such as *Coffee Church* - a time of prayerful chat on a Sunday morning and existing modes developed e.g. live worship on Zoom with recorded music /video, and complete video presentations for a series of *Climate Sundays*. Other online activities included *Prayer Zone*, supported by a faithful group of regulars; Trustees' Meetings and last year's Annual Congregational Meeting. Whilst grateful for the scope of digital technology, it was recognised that seeing each other 'in-person' was deeply missed, as were the 'lighter moments' that occur when gathered together.

Conscious of the limitations of Covid-19 and anticipating at least nine months without access to our building, Trustees began to explore other options for gathered worship. It was felt we should look within our Methodist Circuit and as our nearest neighbours, Cromford Methodist Church, have a large worship space with capacity to support an increased congregation whilst compliant with Covid-secure protocols, a fruitful conversation ensued with an agreement to share in Sunday worship. Rather appropriately our first shared service was Easter Sunday and a comfortable arrangement has continued with responsibilities for leading shared between our two churches, but with little demarcation and encouraging examples of working together.

With our building closed, our prominent road frontage offered an opportunity to install seasonal displays for the encouragement of passers-by. So once again we are able to mark Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost in dramatic and visual ways, together with the usual Well Dressing weekend with some mini individual displays on our front steps, all of which was much appreciated by the local community.

Wellspring has continued to embrace the concept of *EcoChurch* through the co-ordination of Paul Heppleston. '*Creation Season*' was used as a time to explore 'eco' themes from a Biblical perspective. During Lent we shared in a series of online Bible study / discussion groups exploring environmental issues co-ordinated by Churches Together. This initiative has led to an integrated approach to events and activities aimed at raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging responsive action. Also over this last year many improvements have been made to our cemetery, now known as '*North End Cemetery*', and it was a joy to hold an open air service there at the end of June.

Our combined *Girls' Brigade / Boys' Brigade* has continued, briefly meeting back in our building when open during the autumn but then continuing with a weekly chat on Zoom. During the summer months it became possible to meet up on a Tuesday evening again, based in a local play park. A small but committed group of families enjoy being part of what we offer and give us a source of hope for the future growth of this work.

As Lockdown restrictions eased, small groups began meeting at Waltham House restaurant for coffee on Saturday mornings at the initiative of two of our members; this has grown in popularity and is serving us well whilst the completion of building works is awaited. Our 'pop-up' cake shop one Saturday morning in August proved very popular in the town.

Our church and minister are fully committed to *Churches Together in Wirksworth and District* taking an active part in seasonal and civic events where these have been possible. No school assemblies have been led by local clergy but will re-commence in the autumn term.

All other Wellspring groups have been unable to meet during this time and these together with the cycle of 'regular' and 'one off' community events that were so much part of church life have been greatly missed during Lockdown.

The *Charities Plant Stall* run by one of our members, Peter Slack has been very popular in the community for many years, but sadly has now ceased trading. We are most grateful to Peter for the significant donations to many local charitable causes during this time, including Wellspring's Annexe project.

Once again we were able to support the *Link to Hope* Christmas appeal with a good number of shoeboxes packed with gifts.

Kevin was very appreciative of the chance to take postponed Sabbatical leave last summer and despite working within some Covid-19 restrictions was able to focus on reading; compiling a personal 'hymnody'; visiting and learning from churches who had undertaken major building projects; and completed the Peak Pilgrimage walk of 35 miles.

With regard to accessibility, when car sharing became possible, lifts to Sunday morning worship were arranged for those who needed transport; and some form of monthly gathered worship at a Wirksworth venue considered whilst we are out of our building.

All people working with children and vulnerable adults have received appropriate training, through the Methodist Safeguarding Scheme, with regard to the government's Disclosure and Barring Service. The church has read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and is satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the charity is providing a benefit to the public.

Recognising the increasing importance of digital communication our Wellspring Facebook page and re-designed website have been a source of information and inspiration through the year. Further information is available here: www.wellspringchurchwirksworth.co.uk.

Looking to the Future - Achievements and Performance

The Church does not measure success only in numbers, in terms of people or finance, but also in less tangible areas like fellowship and encouragement. 2020-21 has been a positive year in terms of growing relationships, commitment and caring, for members and others in the community, particularly during Lockdown with our minister integral to this. We are conscious that new initiatives have had an impact and Wellspring is clearly known and accepted in the town.

The Trustees are grateful for the trust and support offered by the congregation and continue to work hard to encourage the church in seeking to fulfil our focus of ministry in terms of Worship, Pastoral Care, Reaching Out and Property.

We are well aware that churches are *people* not *buildings* yet an outstanding achievement of this last year has been the commencement of building works for our long awaited Annexe and associated refurbishment of our existing building. Preliminary works began in December and the main structure is quite advanced, although serious delays have been encountered due to unforeseen complications, shortages of building materials and the impact of the Pandemic. Whilst at the outset the project was adequately financed by funding secured through the sale of Baptist property, and generous grants from Methodist and other sources, together with the sacrificial giving of our own members, projected costs have risen significantly. With most grant options now exhausted we are having to address this shortfall to meet our financial obligations as the building is completed, and this is likely to include requesting small loans from members or from a commercial source such as Methodist Chapel Aid. This does not dampen the excitement felt as the building nears completion and we plan to use this wonderful resource in the mission of our church.

During the last year and despite Lockdown congregational numbers have remained stable with a few new attenders. There have been no new members or transfers. At 31 August 2021, the membership stood at 53. Trustees believe that outreach should be a primary focus of our ministry in the coming years.

Financial Review

We have been operating financially as Wellspring for seven years now and supporting a minister, Kevin, for just over four years.

Our treasurer reports that during the period of this report, we have only had access to our premises eight times and have met in Cromford on twenty two Sundays. Whilst this has had a big effect on Sunday offerings, people have supported us loyally through regular bank and envelope payments. Personal giving has increased by over £3,000 compared with the last full year before the pandemic – and this is over and above the many generous donations we have received towards the annexe fund. Income at social events and from lettings has, unsurprisingly, fallen to zero.

In terms of expenditure, we are beginning to spend less on maintaining the chapel and the manse as we gradually catch up on repairs. However, the question of whether to pay for the existing lift to be repaired remains undecided. In April, Kevin reduced his working hours by one day per week. This has led to a reduction of almost £2,000 in ministerial costs over the half year. We continue to donate £45 per month to disaster appeals and other worthy causes.

A major appeal to members in October 2020, together with Gift Aid, saw over £39,000 contributed to the Annexe Fund, to which Sue Watts's Garden Marathon added a further £1,349. This summer marked the end of business for Peter Slack's Charities Plant Stalls. Totalled over recent years, the Annexe Fund has benefited from his and Tracey's enterprise to the extent of £11,529, with a similar amount going to other local charities.

Our grateful thanks are due to Rob in his role as Treasurer; to Barbara in her supporting role; and to Mike Sharpe for examining the accounts.

Income & Expenditure summary

<u>General Fund Receipts</u>	£	Notes	Last year
Offertory	33,195	Loose cash + envelopes + payments via bank	29,427
Tax recovered	6,278	Gift Aid + GASDS, <i>excluding</i> on annexe donations	6,426
Interest	0	(see below for interest received on annexe monies)	0
Lettings & funerals	0	no lettings, no income from funerals	2,595
Coffee, Easy Meals, Memory Café, Beanies	0	no meetings	1,983
Other social events	0	no events	1,296
Donations	175	towards flowers (see below for <i>annexe</i> donations)	2,830
Sundry receipts	0		309
Drawn down from Baptist investments	0		10,000
Total General Fund income	39,648		54,866

<u>General Fund Payments</u>	£	Notes	Last year
Ministerial	25,162	stipend + PAYE + pension + expenses	27,560
Manse running costs	2,314	Council Tax, water, broadband, 25% of gas & electricity	2,428
Circuit assessment	5,213	Mid-Derbyshire Methodist Circuit	5,110
Baptist affiliations	2,140	BMS, HMF, BUGB subs	2,234
Preachers	0	fees & expenses	77
Officiating at funerals	0	minister, organist, steward	1,120
Donations from funds	812	flowers, architect gift, Cromford MC + various charities	303
Chapel repairs and maintenance	417	gas service, lift diagnosis	1,338
Manse maintenance	840	kitchen plumbing, door lock, roof, gutters, gas check	538
Cemetery maintenance	1,619	up to 20 July	1,834
Chapel running costs	1,958	builders' use of gas, electricity, water, + broadband	1,951
Insurances	1,348	chapel, manse, employee, public liability. <i>Not</i> annexe	1,321
Admin & Worship	1,356	<i>Roots</i> , payroll, online, stamps. (Circuit paid CCLI, <i>Zoom</i>)	1,118
Supplies & cleaning	199	upholstery shampoo, legionella tests	640
Sundry payments	48	storage boxes	220
Total General Fund expenditure	43,426		47,791
General Fund shortfall this year	-3,779		Surplus last year 7,075

General Fund balance at 31/08/2021 : £ 10,888
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<u>ANNEXE FUND</u>		Notes	Last year
Personal donations	39,253	including £4,133 Gift Aid+GASDS	8,133
Fund-raising events	1,850	garden marathon (£1349), sale of apples + gates	1,222
Grants received during the year	219,292	from ten charities	25,183
Proceeds of chapel & cottage sale	321,881	Baptist investments, incl. interest	0
Other interest	290	NS&I + CFB accounts	805
Total received into annexe fund this year	582,567		35,343
Payments from our* annexe funds this year	363,506	builder, architect, other professionals, extra insurances	10,104

* Two other invoices (£23,534) have been paid *directly* by our grant donors.

Monies passed on to external organisations

The amounts below are *extra* to the figures above.

Destination	Receivd	Paid	Notes	Last Year
Derby Refuge Advice Centre	210	210	Harvest collection	
BMS World Mission	25	25	personal donation	
	235	235		994

Status

The Charity is a Methodist/Baptist Local Ecumenical Partnership, governed by a Constitution approved by Churches Together for Derbyshire, as Sponsoring Body, and by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Methodist Church of Great Britain. It is exempted from registration under Section 30 (2) (b) of the Charities Act 2011.

The church has read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and is satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the charity is providing a benefit to the public.

Charitable Object

The principal purpose of the charity is the advancement of the Christian faith, including the advancement of education, community service and such other general charitable purposes in such parts of the United Kingdom and the world as the Church shall determine.

The Church occupies premises at 49 St John Street, Wirksworth, which are held by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, on Trusts which are entirely compatible with the above object.

Organisational Structure and Decision-making processes

Members of the Church are accepted in accordance with the Constitution which requires them to be or to have been publicly baptised as believers or confirmed as believers, professing their faith in Jesus Christ.

In accordance with the Constitution, the members appoint six of their number as Trustees, who together with the Minister and up to four co-opted Trustees are responsible for the day to day running of the church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are appointed by the Trustees.

Members Meetings take place four times per year to review the life and witness of the church; consider topics relevant to its witness; receive reports covering all aspects of its life; consider matters brought to the meetings by the Trustees; and generally help the church's life, work and vision. Out of necessity some were held online during this last year and in-person meetings resumed for May onwards.

The Trustees have made an assessment of the major risks facing the church, and are satisfied that there are policies in place to minimise these risks.

Leadership

Minister: Revd Kevin Price

Trustees: David Butlin (until Nov 2020) Jenny Few, Paul Heppleston (until Nov 2020) David Hughes, Ingrid Keith, John Proctor (until Nov 2020), Alison Proctor, Sue Watts, Barbara Wilson

Secretary: Barbara Wilson

Treasurer: Rob Few