

WOOLWICH COMMUNITY CHURCH

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the

Trustees of the Church

For the year ended 31 May 2023

**Chair of Trustees**

**Tania Smith**

**Bank:**

Barclays Bank, Woolwich

**Independent Examiner:** Ms. Sue

Peach

**Charity Number:**

1157291

WOOLWICH COMMUNITY CHURCH

**(REG. CHARITY TO 1157291)**

**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JUNE 2022 TO 31ST MAY 2023**

**Woolwich Community Church (“WCC”)**

The Church is a registered charity which operates principally in the Woolwich area of South East London within the borough of Royal Greenwich. Our membership is mostly drawn from the SE18 area and other parts of London.

The Church is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is registered with the Charity Commissioners. The Church's governing document is its Constitution. WCC is affiliated with the Pioneer network of Churches, a member of the Evangelical Alliance.

WCC's principal registered address as a Charity is **112 Ancona Road SE18 1AD**.

**The Aims and Objectives of the Church are as set out in our Constitution - namely: -**

- the advancement of the Christian faith for the public benefit as set out in the Basis of Faith statement of the Evangelical Alliance UK,
- to seek new followers and converts,
- to provide a place of Christian worship,
- to raise awareness and understanding of Christian belief and practice through instruction, and the study of the bible,
- and to undertake Missionary and outreach work in the local community and further afield including overseas - particularly amongst people affected by poverty or natural disaster.

**Management by the Church Trustees**

The Church has an active Board of Trustees who provide the overall management of the Charity in terms of governance, financial oversight, review of decision making and risk management. The Trustees have a broad range of skills and experience which include those of legal, financial, human resources, planning and administration. There has been a number of changes to the trustees. Three new trustees have joined the team – Richard Stringer, Tosin Oloyede and Elizabeth West. Neena Samuel – who acted as our Secretary, has stepped down from her role and no longer serves as a Trustee.

The Church has the following Trustees: -

Tania Smith	Chair of the Trustees #
Richard Stringer	Trustee
Tosin Oloyede	Trustee
Olushola Laguda	Trustee
Petruta Nila	Trustee and Finance Officer
Shan Rogbeer	Trustee
Elizabeth West	Trustee

The Charity can have up to ten trustees. New trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees, as mentioned above. Each trustee is appointed for a specific time period.

The Trustees generally meet quarterly unless there are urgent matters requiring additional meetings; then they meet sooner. In line with the Church's constitution some trustee decisions are agreed using electronic communication i.e. email.

The Trustees also approve documents and policies that impact on the operation and governance of the charity including Child and Adult Protection (Safeguarding), Health and Safety, Covid-19 Government Guidelines and Finance and Reserves policies.

*(# At the time of writing, 2024, our Chair of Trustees is Elizabeth West, who took on the role from Tania Smith in August 2023).*

### **Church Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team (“TLT”) provides spiritual ministry and strategic and operational leadership of the Church. TLT consists of the Pastor of the Church, Pastor Kelly Cotterell, and other members of the congregation. From time-to-time church members who are not part of TLT attend TLT meetings for individual items for discussion.

### **The location of WCC, the building and beyond**

The Church used the new building at the Woolwich Common Community Centre as its main location for church services and meetings. The use of this building is in partnership with Greenwich Council. As we moved to the new Community building, we no longer had an office. *(At the time of writing, in 2024, WCC is due to move again, to a new meeting place at the Woolwich Central Baptist Church building in Simmons road, near to Woolwich central square).*

The Church also uses other buildings and Churches as needed for outreach and services. During the year, the WCC Men's Group ("the Ministry of Transformation" or "MOT") met at Avery Hill Christian Fellowship and the women spent time at the Ashburnham retreat in Sussex.

Members of the congregation meet in house groups on a fortnightly basis and there are also other prayer meetings and Sunday fellowship gatherings in members' homes.

We are now a hybrid church in that we are no longer limited to meeting in a physical space. WCC continues to develop an online presence both for the benefit of church members and also to provide ongoing support to the local community. New equipment was purchased during the year to ensure the consistent provision of online services of a good technical quality. We record our Sunday services, which are held from 10.30 till 12.00. The services can be readily accessed online, either to be watched live or viewed later. Additionally, the church runs prayer sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday mornings from 7- 8 am, via ZOOM. Many members of the congregation have used and have been enriched by this daily prayer resource. The early morning prayer zooms are open, friends of members are welcome to join in, and do so.

As the Church is growing and developing we considered moving to another larger facility. The Building Finding Group sought the views of church members on their visions and uses for a new building. Finding a new building continued to be a commitment and a major focus of prayer for the Church, and the Trustees were keen to ensure that any potential project could be managed within the resources available. *(As mentioned above, at the time of writing in 2024, WCC is due to move to a permanent home at Woolwich Central Baptist Church in the centre of town).* In February 2023, the church was able to purchase a new shed to deal with the immediate challenges from lack of storage space at the new community centre.

## **A Welcoming Environment**

Our Church is charismatic and evangelical, and our services are lively. The members are from a diverse ethnic mix, which reflects the church's location. There is a wide age range from babies to people of 80 and over. The Church is locally based, and the majority of the congregation live in the general area.

The Church aims to provide a completely open and welcoming environment to newcomers and visitors at all of our activities. At present, numbers vary from week to week - the average attending each Sunday morning is around 65 -75, out of a total membership of around 100. We have a significant turnover of membership due to the

nature of the area and for this reason members place considerable importance on the greeting of new people as they come through the door.

The Trustees are aware of the responsibilities of the church for the safeguarding of both children and adults and continue to review our policies and procedures according to best practice. With the increase of the church's online presence the Trustees were also active in reviewing the church's technical infrastructure as well as the need for social media protocols.

### **Website and emails**

Church members' details are held in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) requirements.

### **Pioneer**

Although Woolwich Community Church is a wholly independent organisation, we have continued to develop our links with the Pioneer Church Network and come under their overall umbrella. The Pioneer network is a Federation of Churches which provides a relational network that connects, inspires, and equips Churches in the UK. Linking with the Pioneer Network provides us with far greater resources and support. We have known many of the Pioneer leadership team for many years, since the days when we were part of Ichthus Christian Fellowship and we believe that this linkage is beneficial to our work in WCC.

In addition, the Leadership Team meets and maintains relationships with Greenwich Evangelical Leaders, and iNet. WCC is a member with iNeT, which is a small mission agency working alongside multiple churches.

### **Main Activities During the Year 2022 – 2023.**

WCC is a very active church and we hold a wide range of activities.

As well as regular Sunday morning services, there are house groups, bible studies, training days, prayer meetings and a meeting for newcomers. The mens group ("Ministry of Transformation" or "MOT") was launched in November 2022 to deal with issues impacting the mental, spiritual and physical health of men. Meetings and workshops were held on a monthly basis at Avery Hill Christian Fellowship, chaired by Steve Jameson, who is a psychotherapist. These workshops were beneficial to see men growing spiritually. Ministry of Transformation continues to meet, via ZOOM, every Sunday from 16.00.

We undertake children and youth work and our youth service continued to grow in numbers. As new young men joined it was agreed that there was a need for adult male mentors to attend Sunday sessions to provide encouragement and support.

Some members of the Church have a prison ministry and lead a restorative justice course (“Sycamore Tree”, a course devised by Prison Fellowship) in a local prison, HMP Thameside. Additionally, members undertake prison visits and also provide ongoing contact and support to those men when they are released. In some cases, ongoing pastoral contact and support may continue for several years.

Some of our members help with Greenwich Night Shelter for street sleepers during the winter months. At present, two members of the congregation are still regular volunteers.

The Church maintains a Pastoral Fund which is available to those experiencing financial hardship, who can be either church members or non-members. Decisions on the allocation of these funds are made by our Leadership Team and the gifts are made on a strictly confidential basis. The Pastoral Fund is a Restricted Fund and is accounted for separately within the Church's accounts. WCC also supports the Greenwich churches foodbank through collecting food.

The open evangelism in Woolwich town centre was relaunched, and was a success. At each of these Saturday evangelism sessions, a number of people are spoken to and prayed for.

In the Summer of 2022, WCC made use of the good weather by holding church barbeques in Charlton Park and these were joyful events. On occasion during the gatherings, we were able to engage with other people in the park, starting conversations with them and sometimes praying with them.

WCC emphasises the need for corporate prayer and In October 2022, we allocated a week of prayer and fasting, with the participation of the majority of the congregation.

In May of 2023, the extended Leadership Team, including spouses, spent one week in South of France to strengthen relationships within the team and to discuss the vision for the church. The group was based with a missionary couple that is being supported by WCC.

## **The Trustees**

The Leadership Team had been searching for new members to join the governance team at WCC and in September 2022, we welcomed Richard Stringer, Tosin Oloyede and Elizabeth West as trustees.

## **Employees**

The Church has a full-time paid pastor (Kelly Cotterell) and a part time administrator (Verena Foster). All staff are managed by Pastor Kelly.

## **Workplace Pension**

The Church has provided a Workplace Pension for its employees since August 2017 in compliance with the Workplace Pensions regulations. The pension provider is NEST, under a scheme which is used by many charities and similar organisations.

## **Volunteers**

All the work of the church beyond the contribution of the paid employees is done by volunteers. Volunteers provide their time welcoming and stewarding, worship leading, maintaining the website, and setting up and maintaining the P.A. systems and sound desk. Volunteers also make teas and coffees and refreshments, undertake children and youth work, give time providing administration, lead services and other meetings, oversee and organise finance and set up and clear away everything each Sunday. The Church could not function without volunteers and the Leadership Team and Trustees are very grateful for all their work.

## **Financial Review**

The church had a financial surplus of £31,844 within the year, higher than the previous year due to increased one-off donations. The balance from the previous year of £164,946 means that the Church carried forward a bank balance of £196,791 into the new year.

The Church's main source of funds is from its congregation members with occasional gifts from others. Many members give a regular gift using the principle of tithing (one tenth of their income). Members are encouraged to use the Gift Aid scheme for their giving which will allow the Church to reclaim tax paid on that gift income from HMRC. Gift Aid claims are made quarterly.

Most of the church's income is applied to provide salaries for employees, and hall hire charges. Further details are provided within the accounts.

The Church had a current account with Barclays Bank. In view of the very low returns available on deposit accounts, around 0.5% during the relevant period, the Church did not place funds in a deposit or investment account. This policy is subject to review should the interest rates increase.

The Church's insurances are provided via Kingdom Bank and these have been renewed for 2023/2024.

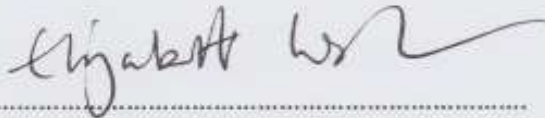
The Church has an agreed Reserves policy based on an assessment of the main risks to its financial stability. The assessment allows for risks due to a reduction in giving by Church Members, unexpected expenditure, and temporary cash flow issues. The policy also allows for the Church's position of renting property rather than owning which reduces the risk of unexpected high levels of property and maintenance related expenditure.

The policy effectively allows for a reserve to cover one month's gift income from members, plus an amount (£1,000) for unexpected expenditure which could not be deferred. The policy will be reviewed as required and the required balance compared to the free actual funds available. The reserves policy is subject to review if there are changes in circumstances, for example, if the church were to go ahead and acquire a new property.

**Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



Signature

Elizabeth West

Chair of Trustees

Date: 29 03 24

20/03/24