Oak Community Church annual report to the charity commission 2018-19

The past year has seen the church continue to fulfil its aims to provide a place of worship for Christians and seekers or just much welcomed visitors attending for any other reason. A wide cross section of the local community is thoroughly represented with people of varied races, social class and ages attending in the congregation. Aside from Sunday worship and a Sunday School for under 11s and a youth group for any teenager who wishes to join, the church has continued to reach out to and serve the community in a variety of ways.

Sunday worship extends from the worship group warming up at 9.30.a.m. to everyone joining in a celebration of the Christian faith in a lively, spiritual time of worship from 10.30 to 11.15 (approximately) followed by a time of Bible teaching for adults in the main hall, for children in the Sunday school and teenagers in a separate special meeting monthly. Then a period of sharing follows until 1.p.m though the church stays open after that if necessary.

The well attended and popular teenage youth group, (now known as Elevate) not only held meetings under canvas in the grounds as well as the main building, but also had social evenings and outings and went to a Christian holiday in the May Bank Holiday. All of these events are open to any teenager seeking to find out about or actively pursuing the Christian faith regardless of their sexual orientation, race, social class, or gender.

The Mums and Toddlers group known as Little Acorns, held every Tuesday morning and run by volunteers from the church, continued to meet with up to twenty children and their mums (or dads) coming regularly throughout the school year. No compulsory charge was made but a donation of £1 per family was suggested and usually received. Little Acorns is open to all families with a toddler age child.

Bromley Borough Foodbank CIO, continued to use, rent free with electricity and gas paid for by the church, the church building and had free use of the church land for a portakabin, and a reefer. Foodbank is there three days a week five hours a day. This was in fulfilment of the church’s aim to help with the relief of poverty and to ensure that Bromley Borough Foodbank in the Crays (one of the three poorest wards in Bromley) continued to serve the local community. Over 1600 people came to collect emergency food for three days, and to receive advice on how to escape their crisis, through this outlet over the course of the year. Food hampers were also distributed to almost two hundred over Christmas as well, and Free school meal substitute packages were distributed to families referred to BBF as being in need during the Summer holidays, by local schools and surgeries. Bromley Borough Foodbank is a Trussell Trust affiliated foodbank so also links people to other charities and agencies where appropriate, to enable them to overcome the situation they are in so that the need to return is considerably reduced and they are enabled to stand on their own two feet in the future. This makes it quite distinctive from most other foodbanks in Bromley, which do not seek to address the root cause of a person being in need of free food at all.

The John 3.16. fund continued to enable the congregation to contribute to the purchase of white goods and pay for other needs of people in the local area who had not the means to buy such things themselves. These were sensitively vetted by the leaders after people had responded to invitations to apply for assistance. 10 people were assisted in this way and the fund remains in place for the coming year.

Two evenings a week the local branch of ACA (**A**dult **C**hildren of **A**lcoholics who as children had to look after alcoholic or drug dependent parents) also met in the church. Run by a local elderly lady who was herself in this situation as a child, it has proved an invaluable support group to local people.

The church is also now well known in the local community for offering affordable hire rates for children’s parties or non alcoholic social events in a safe, secure and comfortable environment.

The church also supports a number of international missionary charities and two former members of the congregation are strongly involved in running an orphanage in Mozambique. The church also makes donations to other local Christian charities.

Oak Community Church is also affiliated to Churches Together in the UK and the Evangelical Alliance of the UK and is actively involved in Churches Together in the Crays.

Thus the church, which has a congregation of about 80 in attendance each week at Sunday Worship, continues to serve both its attenders and the local community by providing a weekly place of worship, activities which meet the needs of local people, and allows other charities to use its premises to fulfil its aim to relieve the poor as well as provide a place of Christian fellowship.

As part of its aim to develop Christian disciples the church also held a weekend away in January 2019 and ran a lay preachers course, led by its pastor, Trevor Hall. A midweek meeting regularly took place most weeks for praise, Bible teaching and prayer, and the worship group used Thursdays to prepare spiritually and practically for the Sunday morning service through prayer and practice. One church member organised and ran a service in the season pf Pentecost drawing upon fellow classical musicians from Oak and other churches in the Crays, to celebrate together as Christians from different denominations in the power of the Holy Spirit, with praise and prayer and prophecy and testimony of what the Lord had done and was doing in our church and others in the community.

That is the aim of services at Oak Community church, where there is not only teaching based on the Word of God, but also a wide variety of worship styles with an opportunity in most services for anyone who is following Jesus to bring a word of prayer, a prophecy in words or tongues or pictures, and scriptural readings led by the Holy Spirit, as well as to participate in the usual way of singing and rejoicing in the Triune God, who is the one we seek to glorify as a Church seeking to serve the Lord by serving the community and worshipping through deeds as well as words and songs.

The church reached a legal agreement to transfer its assets to a new CIO of the same name in 2018-19 which has the same trustees and some new ones, so that it is effectively the same organisation, but now has a constitution and a form of government, Thus the accounts submitted represent Oak Community church both as a CIO and the former charity until the former charity is finally closed.

This report has been seen and approved as a record of the church as a charity and now a CIO by the current members and the trustees as of January 31st 2019 namely:-

Robin Ware, Vivienne Curtis, Michael Cheney, Diane Worrell, Charles Amis. Oak Community Church Charity 1086478

Robin Ware, Vivienne Curtis, Michael Cheney, Charles Amis, Samantha Marlow, Wendy May, Vanessa Steven. Oak Community Church CIO 1174870