



## TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

### **Staffing**

The Point has an excellent and committed staff team, all the staff team members are given the most appropriate support through the year and the Trustees would like to thank them on behalf of the whole church family.

As a result of the pandemic in 2020 nearly all staff work was conducted from home from mid-March onwards and meetings were held online using Zoom. As a result, an additional weekly staff pastoral meeting was introduced to ensure staff were receiving the necessary support. The church continued to allocate significant time and resource to our annual staff reviews with the objective of giving support, encouragement and agreeing objectives for 2020-21.

In 2020 The Trustees agreed that a new Head of Operations role was required on a 3 day a week basis. Interviews took place in December 2020 and James Allen was appointed to start in January 2021.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding continues to be a priority at The Point. The Trustees are very grateful to Sarah Emmanuel as she continues to do an excellent job as Safeguarding Officer. Sarah leads The Point's Safeguarding Team comprising herself, the Vicar, Associate Vicar, Katy Trigg (Safeguarding Trustee), Liz Styles (Children's Pastor), Michael Holt (Youth Pastor) and Ellie Zaragoza. This team ensures that training, safer recruitment, record keeping, policies and procedures are all up to date. Sarah is introduced to the church regularly as the person to contact with any concerns (or anyone else on the team), and her details are clearly displayed on our Welcome Desk and on the church website. The annual NSPCC P.A.N.T.S presentation was held (helping children to keep themselves safe) in June 2020. The Vicar and the Associate Vicar undertook the Church of England level C2 Safeguarding training with the diocese.

### **Finances**

The Point's overall aim is to ensure that it has the resources and hence finances in place to deliver the vision to be "A transforming presence throughout Mid Sussex". The vast majority of The Point's income in 2020 (around 95%) was through the church members giving. The Point also received £12.5k of grant funding comprising £10k from the Joseph Rank Trust, £2.5k from the Grant Foundation. In addition, in line with other businesses, the Point received a £10k COVID grant from Mid Sussex District Council. Members of the church also gave very generously to a fellowship fund set-up to support those in financial need as a result of the pandemic. The church also supported a fellowship fund to support Church for Urban Mission in Nairobi, one of the churches mission partners, again the funding was used to support those affected by the pandemic. In total £23k (including gift aid) was raised to support these funds. Rental costs were

significantly lower in 2020 due to the pandemic which meant the Point did not need to hire premises for Sunday gatherings between April and December.

### **Mission opportunities**

The Point's work in local schools has been seriously affected by the pandemic in 2020. Schools were closed for the summer term and no visitors were allowed in when they reopened. Nevertheless, the church-maintained contact, offering support to teachers and providing video assemblies and lessons as requested by several schools. There are now at least 6 church members serving as school governors at local schools helping to support head teachers and their schools through the pandemic.

It has been a tough year for our Mission Partners, as it has for all charities, but The Trustees are delighted that the church has been able to keep up its regular "financial commitment the church's 5 regular mission partners": Off the Fence, Befriended, Hope, Centre for Urban Mission (Nairobi) and Hope House Haiti. The church has had regular updates from all Mission Partners and holding church on YouTube has enabled the mission partner in Nairobi to join on a regular basis. Befriended have offered a vital service during lockdown offering telephone befriending to those who have been particularly isolated in lockdown, and also delivering 150 "Cream Teas in a Box" for Silver Sunday in October and "Christmas in a Box" at Christmas. Gail and Stuart Millar head up Befriended and many volunteers from The Point are involved in these simple acts of kindness that make a huge difference to many individuals.

### **Small Groups**

The Church held four Leadership Evenings in the Spring of 2020 (the last of which had to be postponed due to lockdown) led by Will Kemp, Archie Coates, Mike Pilavachi and Jim and Dom Partridge. This series was aimed at reinvigorating the church's mid-week small groups. The sessions were well attended and a good sense of fresh vision for groups that grow and multiply was shared. In April 2020 the church worked hard to ensure that everyone who wanted to be was connected with a Small Group for support and connection while Sunday meetings cannot take place. Two new small groups were formed making a total of 12. This worked well and around 75% of the adult membership of the church are now connected to a small group.

A number of courses were run online using Zoom which have been very successful. The final two sessions of the spring Alpha course were completed online. More than 20 people completed the Alpha course which began on Zoom in May and a small group also attended in Autumn 2020. 75 people attended the Bible Course on Zoom in October/November which demonstrated how effective and accessible online courses can be. Simon Shorey led both these courses and has pioneered the transition to using Zoom in this way.

### **Church Response to Pandemic**

2020 presented huge challenges to all churches due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Government and Church of England Guidelines instructed all churches to cease from public gathered Sunday services from mid-March 2020. The Point immediately began broadcasting Sunday services on YouTube. The volunteer tech team led by Mark Steel, Matt Freestone and Cameron McBain enabled hosting of services live from home and show pre-recorded songs, talks and interviews. Although church gatherings were allowed again after a few weeks (with restrictions: facemasks, social distancing, no singing, etc) The Point were not able to find premises. Schools were closed to outside groups. So, the church focussed on its online provision. Sunday services continued on

YouTube, attracting on average 80-100 households watching live every Sunday and upwards of 400 total views. There are now over 300 people subscribed to The Point YouTube channel. Liz Styles and Michael Holt worked hard to enable Children's and Youth ministry to be delivered via YouTube, Zoom and packs of resources have been posted to families on a regular basis. Small groups have been meeting on Zoom and outside when possible. Pastoral support has been offered to many by phone calls and walks when allowed. John and Janine Naudé have established a new pastoral team to support those needing extra support.

Although it has been very challenging, it has also been a very creative time and the church has been able to do some very imaginative things that have really encouraged the church (e.g. Faith at a Distance – videos of Faith Fallon visiting families on their doorstep; youth lock down challenges; interviews with interesting people around the world and The Point church members on the front line, health workers and teachers etc). Worship Pastor Stuart Barbour and his worship team recorded on average two new songs every week for our Sunday broadcast. In Autumn 2020 a teaching series was completed based on the book "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" with small group study material all delivered online.

The Point was only able to meet in-person 3 times in 2020 during lockdown: once in October at The Macs Farm for an all-together service, on Christmas Eve for midnight Communion at the Garden Sage Café, and up on the South Downs on Christmas Day. A wonderful "Baptism on the Beach" was held in September for two church members who came to faith on Alpha. In spite of all the restrictions, the church family have remained very united, committed and connected. Some people have found it very difficult to connect online but The Trustees are not aware of any who have left or dropped out altogether because the church has not been meeting. However, there are a number of new families and individuals who have joined the church during this season. Nevertheless, the Trustees are very aware that watching a YouTube service for an hour on a Sunday morning is very different to being a committed member of the church, growing in faith and discipleship. It remains to be seen what the long-term effects will be on people's faith, sense of belonging and the church more widely.

### **Health and safety**

The Health & Safety Committee meets annually, and Health and Safety is on the agenda at both Operational Leadership Team and Trustees meetings. Organisers of all events including youth and children's activities are required to complete risk assessments, which are kept under review. First Aiders are also in place each Sunday when the church meets in person and additional members trained as necessary.