

Seven Sowers Benefice (*Beercrocombe, with Curry Mallet, Hatch Beauchamp, Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine, Stoke St Mary (with Thurlbear) and West Hatch*)

ANNUAL REPORT for 2020

The Seven Sowers Charitable Trust was set up in 2004 with the purpose of having a fund to finance Benefice-wide projects to advance the Christian faith, and to receive donations on which Gift Aid could be claimed.

The Trustees during 2020 have been:

Foundation Trustees:

Alison Horsey (Treasurer) and Clive Hayward (Secretary) serving for periods of three years (AGM 2017 to AGM 2020).

Clive retired at the 2020 AGM, when Sue McKen became Secretary and a Foundation Trustee appointed for three years from AGM 2020-AGM 2023, Alison Horsey was also re-appointed for the same time frame.

Trustees:

Lizzie Frazer and Julie Pope serving for a period of one year at a time until AGM 2020 when they were both re-appointed for two years (AGM 2020 - AGM 2022).

The office of Chairperson has been vacant since Rev'd Paul Reynolds retired in October 2018. During 2020 the role was taken on by one of the Trustees.

The trustees will invite Rev'd Joanna Porter to take on the role of Chair when she takes up her post as Rector in the Benefice in 2021.

Adrian Stone is Independent Examiner of the accounts.

The Trust has met, only as necessary through the year to administer the funds, to confirm arrangements for financing the Children's Worker and make provision for future Trustees. The meetings have comprised the AGM via zoom in July 2020, together with several email exchanges to agree other matters.

A Special Resolution was passed during the year to modify the 2004 Constitution:

- increasing the number of permitted ordinary trustees from two to three and their length of term from one year to two years,
- reducing the number of ordinary meetings required from two to one per year, and
- permitting meetings via online digital methods when required.

The main project of 2020 has again been to provide funds to employ our Benefice Children's Worker and we were also able to secure a grant from the Diocese to fund a new post of Administration Assistant (part time, assisting with the ever increasing Benefice Clergy/Reader Admin, 4 hours per week).

Our Children's Worker Holly Stevens commenced a year's Maternity Leave in February 2019. Ruth Tucker and Julie Kimber were employed jointly in a job-share to stand in for Holly until her return in February 2020, after the safe arrival of baby George.

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From January to mid-March 2020 the Children's Workers, assisted by Rev'd Christabel Ager and committed volunteers, continued to build on the work done in previous years:

- Messy Church continued to be held monthly in Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall on Saturday afternoons from January to March 2020. Attendance still fluctuated, but generally increased, with 10 regular families and 15 families having visited in total.
- Thurlbear School & Curry Mallet Schools continued with Open the Book, the team of volunteers acting out a bible story each week during assembly, with thanks to our willing and able team.
- The Children's workers assisted at the weekly "Stoke Tots", helped immensely with craft work preparation by a group of Stoke ladies. Invaluable.
- Julie led the monthly Worship for All services at Stoke St Mary Church in January and February.
- Julie/Holly organised HBK (the weekly children's group meeting in Hatch Beauchamp village Hall most term time Thursday evenings)
- Ruth/Holly organised Sunday Gang - meeting monthly in West Hatch village hall whilst the united benefice service took place in church, joining the church service for communion and refreshments.
- Ruth/Holly went into our three church schools every fortnight, leading an assembly or generally helping out.

Unfortunately from mid-March 2020, the lockdowns and restrictions resulting from the covid-19 pandemic put a stop to our above normal activities. The Trustees and Churchwardens took the decision to place Holly on furlough mid-April 2020. From 1st March 2020 Julie Kimber (previously standing in for Holly Feb 19- Feb 20) was re-employed as our newly created 4 hours per week Benefice Admin Assistant. With lockdown also initially reducing Julie's admin work, she was able to cover some children's work (over the internet or phone) using some of her 4 hours per week from her admin role, and using her knowledge of the children and families gained from her year with us as Children's worker – God does provide.

Holly was Furloughed until for 4 ½ months from mid-April 2020 to 31st August 2020.

Although pupils returned to school September 2020, visitors, including Holly, clergy, readers and the OTB team, were not allowed into schools, so Holly's work became via zoom and other electronic /remote communication. OTB filmed stories for the schools to use in assemblies, and Holly also filmed talks for collective worship in our schools.

Church services resumed mid-August 2020, but it was not felt appropriate to restart our benefice children's groups as young children in particular do not find it easy to socially distance. Similarly the Church Summer Holiday Clubs usually held in Hatch Beauchamp/Curry Mallet and Thurlbear did not take place due to Covid-19 restrictions, nor did the informal & interactive All Age Celebration United Sunday services which previously had been held 2 or 3 times a year. That service is specifically designed for families with young children church members of every age are encouraged to attend too, the service being specifically planned to engage everyone of all ages and stages in their Christian belief.

A Saturday afternoon Zoom Christmas Messy Church was held in December with 8 families taking part, using craft materials delivered to them from the Benefice. It worked well and zoom will be used again if Covid restrictions mean meeting in person at messy church is not allowed or it is difficult for small children to keep within the Rules.

Holly was also able to lead two crib services at Stoke St Mary Church (two to enable enough space for the socially distanced congregation).

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All these initiatives involve teams of volunteers, and we are very blessed to have so many willing and able people in our Benefice.

The trust is able to support training our volunteers who are involved with Children's work when necessary.

Stoke St Mary PCC are the Children's Workers' and Admin Assistant's nominated employer. "Stewardship", a Christian charity recommended by the Diocese, administers their salaries for a reasonable monthly fee. The Children's Workers' salaries are paid from our Youth and Children's work fund, as are their travel expenses (excluding miles between home and the benefice boundary) and they are also reimbursed for the resources they purchase.

In addition to the Children's Workers expenses the Trust purchased Scripture Union's "It's Your Move" booklets for Year 6 primary school leavers (£112) (included in "Other Costs".)

During the year DBS requirements for Trustees was considered and it was subsequently agreed they did not need to be covered as the role of Trustee does not directly involve them with the work with young people. All but Julie Pope have been checked by the Diocese because of other roles they hold in the benefice (eg Open The Book team, PCC members).

A Financial Control Review as required by Charity Commission, to be carried out by Alison and Julie, was still outstanding at Christmas 2020, due to health issues and Covid restrictions, but will be carried out in 2021 as soon as covid restrictions allow.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2020

The Accounts are shown on Page 7 and are split into 3 categories:

Unrestricted General Funds - money received has not had a restriction placed on its use by the donor.

Restricted Youth Work Fund - money received has been donated for the purpose of financing Youth and Children's Work within our Sevens Sowers benefice.

Restricted Bath & Wells Admin Assistant Fund – By February 2020 the Benefice had advertised several times for a Rector (the post vacant since Oct 2018) without success, and meanwhile Christabel, latterly assisted by Stephen, had been leading the Benefice and dealing with all that entails. In recognition of their hard work, and the fact that all seven churches had paid their Parish Share throughout this time, in March 2020 the Diocese granted seed-funding to cover the first year's cost of employing a Benefice Admin Assistant 4 hours per week. At 31 Dec 2020 there was just under 2 months of the initial £2,000 grant left £263. So from March 2021 the PCC's will be funding the post, the cost split between them in the same way as clergy expenses (and in the same way as they share the cost of the Children's Worker), i.e. in the ratio of their Parish Shares.

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General Fund As in previous years, the deficit on HBK and Messy Church has been covered by a transfer of funds from the Restricted Children's Work Fund (2020 £353, 2019 £176). The deficit for 2020 seems high because it includes £186 hall hire and resources incurred in the previous year (2019). The £189 income tax recovered on General Fund arises mostly from a donor who asked for the gift aid on their donation to the Children's Work Fund to go to the General Fund, hence the gift aid on General Fund does not have the expected matching donation income in General Fund.

The restricted Youth Work Fund shows a £1,703 surplus for the year (2019 a £6,376 deficit). Most of the £8,000 difference is Holly's Maternity Pay paid in 2019, of which the Statutory part (£5,900) should have been reimbursed to us by HMRC in 2020, but due to HMRC being snowed under with Furlough and benefit claims arising during the pandemic, the SMP still remains a debtor and should be recoverable in 2021.

The Government Furlough grant claimed on Holly's salary from mid-April to 31st August 2020 amounts to £3,244. In the past the PCC's have contributed £3,000 per year to the Children's Workers' pay, but the Churchwardens and Trustees of Seven Sowers this year agreed that the PCC's did not need to contribute for the academic year 2020-21 as the Furlough money was just over £3,000 and the PCC's have lost some regular income in this Covid year due to cancelling fund raising events and church services.

As in recent years, the downward trend in standing order donations and gift aid reclaimed continues.

The Youthwork Fund Standing Order Donations pattern (including gift aid) has been:

2020 £10,335 **2019** £10,528 **2018** £12,143 **2017** £13,023 **2016** £13,144

The loss of donors is down to some moving away, others passing away or others whose Children have now grown up. The regular donations currently expected for 2020 (most of which are via standing orders) amount to £10,200 including gift aid. The normal costs of this fund (namely 20 hours per week of Children's work, plus mileage & resources) are around £13,500 so with the £3,000 annual PCC support costs should just about be covered, unless more donors are lost in 2021.

We need to bear in mind that we will inevitably lose more donors over time, and if we wish to ensure the future receipts cover the outgoings we will need to embark on an appeal for Funds at some point in the next year or so (our last appeal was Pay for a Day in 2016). Including the SMP refund at the end of 2020 we have just over £24,000 reserves, which could be used to top up annual shortfalls, but the trustees believe some reserves are necessary to ensure we can fulfil all our payroll obligations, and to help fund any other Children/Youth projects.

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Conclusion

With the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions, 2020 has not been as busy as a normal year for the Children's Workers, but Holly and our clergy team, PCC's and volunteers have adjusted to the new normal and have embraced these new ways of working as the year has gone on.

The Children's Worker acts as an enabler so that our clergy and our volunteers can take these projects on, and we are fortunate to have employed Julie and Ruth to fill the gap whilst Holly was on maternity, and that Holly was able to return in 2020. The children's workers have continued to dedicate time to spend in the schools, getting to know the pupils and staff and knowing their needs, abilities and limitations; this work clearly shows God's love in action to our children and families in a relevant and understandable way.

The trustees would like to thank our Associate Minister Revd Christabel Ager for line managing the Children's Workers, whilst at the same time fulfilling her other Benefice duties so well without a full time Rector in post. With Ruth and Julie both being new to the role in 2019 and job sharing also being new to us, and their appointment only being short term, and with the effects of the pandemic in 2020 there was again more for the line manager to coordinate in 2020. Christabel coped fantastically with grace, love and gentleness helped no doubt by her strong faith and the power of prayer.

We also thank Clive Hayward for his long and faithful service: he has been our Trust Secretary since the Trust's formation in 2004, fulfilling his role very efficiently and greatly facilitating the running of the Trust. We shall miss him, but wish him well in his retirement.

The trustees are very grateful to John Pugh who was instrumental in obtaining the Diocese funding for the Admin Assistant post, and also researched, co-ordinated and dealt with the claims for the Furlough funding for the Children's Worker.

We are, as always, very grateful to all those who have already donated either with one off donations, or by a standing order – our work has been supported by young and old, regular church goers and not so regular church goers, and it has been heart-warming to see so many joining together in one unifying mission, to tell of God's love and to show God's love to children and their families.

We are hoping our current donors will continue to support the post, and if you have not yet supported this work but would like to, then please see www.sevensowers.org.uk for details of how to donate.

We are very blessed to have received the financial support, and to benefit from our Children's Workers' presence with us in our group of small rural parishes. May God continue to bless this work. We thank Julie, Ruth and Holly for their work with us.

On behalf of the Trustees of Seven Sowers Charitable Trust

Signed: Sue McKen

Position: Secretary

Date: 16th March 2021

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The Seven Sowers Charitable Trust**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Seven Sowers Charitable Trust for the year ended 31st December 2020 which are set out on page 7.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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 which gives me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.

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.



Mr Adrian Stone
Slade Cottage,
Curland,
Taunton.
TA3 5SA

Date: 6 FEBRUARY 2021

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st December 2020

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted		
	General	Youth Work	Bath & Wells	Total	Total
	Fund	Fund	Admin Assist	2020	2019
	£	£		£	£
RECEIPTS					
Beercrocombe	-	-	-	-	231
Curry Mallet	-	-	-	-	490
Hatch Beauchamp	-	-	-	-	404
Orchard Portman	-	-	-	-	346
Staple Fitzpaine	-	-	-	-	490
Stoke St Mary	-	-	-	-	750
West Hatch	-	-	-	-	288
Total Received from PCC's	-	-	-	-	2,999
JRS Furlough Grant	-	3,244	-	3,244	-
Diocese admin assistant grant	-	-	2,000	2,000	-
Donations - standing orders	-	8,493	-	8,493	8,666
Donations - one offs	-	20	-	20	12
Income tax recovered	189	1,842	-	2,031	2,220
Interest Received	-	67	-	67	152
HBK donations	122	-	-	122	371
Messy Church donations	32	-	-	32	157
Children's Holiday Clubs donations	-	-	-	-	45
Total Receipts	£343	£13,666	£2,000	£16,009	£14,622
PAYMENTS					
CSF worker salary and pension contHS	-	(8,990)	-	(8,990)	(3,466)
HS recoverable SMP due to us mid 2020	-	-	-	-	(5,988)
JK & RT	-	(1,805)	-	(1,805)	(9,037)
CSF worker mileage	-	(147)	-	(147)	(547)
Admin assistant wages	-	-	(1,667)	(1,667)	-
Payroll admin fee	-	(476)	(70)	(546)	(574)
HBK resources & hall	(279)	-	-	(279)	(583)
Messy Church resources & hall	(228)	-	-	(228)	(327)
Holiday Club costs	-	-	-	-	(37)
Other costs	-	(192)	-	(192)	(345)
Training & DBS for Children's Workers	-	-	-	-	(103)
Total Payments	(£507)	(£11,610)	(£1,737)	(£13,854)	(£21,007)
Net costs of Messy Ch & HBK to Rest'd Fund	£353	(£353)	-	-	-
TOTAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	189	1,703	263	2,155	(6,385)
Bank current & deposit accounts at 1 January	2,021	13,943	-	15,964	22,349
Bank curr & dep accs at 31st Dec	£2,210	£15,646	£263	£18,119	£15,964

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted		
	General	Youth Work	Bath & Wells	Total	Total
	Fund	Fund	Admin Assist	31/12/20	31/12/19
	£	£		£	£
Monetary Assets					
Lloyds Current account	2,210	1,621	-	3,831	3,696
Lloyds Deposit account	-	5,664	263	5,927	3,972
Skipton Deposit account	-	8,361	-	8,361	8,296
Total Cash	£2,210	£15,646	£263	£18,119	£15,964
Other Debtors					
Gift Aid Tax Recoverable - Qtr to Dec	-	395	-	395	407
SMP, plus SMP comp'n, less Ni'ee	-	5,832	-	5,832	5,931
	-	£6,227	-	£6,227	£6,338
Creditors					
Messy Church & HBK hall hire and costs	-	-	-	-	(186)
CSF workers' expts Sep - Dec	-	(£113)	-	(£113)	(79)
	-	(£113)	-	(£113)	(£265)

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on 16th March 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Sue McKen