

GRAVESEND METHODIST CHURCH - UPDATE ON CHURCH MATTERS

Finance

Following a recent Zoom meeting of the Church Finance Team, it has become apparent that we shall end this current church financial year on 31st August with a deficit in our funds.

It is forecast that we shall have a deficit of £3500 for this year, and as we head into the next financial year from 1st September there are no signs of improvement.

We have ongoing considerable bills to pay to keep the church going – Gas, Electric, Water, Insurance, circuit assessment etc.

We currently have no income from bookings of the building and purely rely on our members for our income – normally via the weekly collection bag (envelopes or cash) with some members paying by standing order/direct debit.

During this period of closure some members have been giving by standing order or one off payments – some who put cash into the collecting bag weekly have hopefully (and it would be lovely to think so!) been putting their cash aside until we return.

As we are not sure when that will be yet, we are encouraging people to make a payment to help us cover this shortfall by either sending a cheque (payable to Gravesend Methodist Church), making a one off donation direct to our bank, or setting up a standing order.

If you currently do one of these – Thank you, it is much appreciated.

If you do not yet do one of these actions could we please ask you to give it your prayerful consideration.

Our bank details for setting up a standing order, or for making regular payments to the church are: HSBC Bank. Sort Code 40-05-30. CFB Deposit A/C 84594010. Reference No. 00968010

When making a payment, either to the bank or by cheque, please can you reference it with your name and (if applicable) your envelope number.

A standing order form is attached for your convenience.

If you wish to send a cheque, please can you send it to Sheila Allison, our Senior Steward.

Her address is: 61 Regents Court, West Street, Gravesend DA11 0BT

Email : sheila_allison@btinternet.com

It would be very helpful if you could also notify her of any payments made to the bank account.

Opening for services etc.

Although the government are now allowing churches to open and hold services, there are many restrictions involved, including completing mandatory risk assessments, calculating the number of people who may use a church to comply with distancing guidelines, providing sanitisers, stewards, one way systems, ventilation and sanitising surfaces after use. Church in these circumstances would not be church as we know it as we cannot have any physical contact between people, nor books, singing, moving around, refreshments and suggested restrictions on the length of time services should run for. In view of all these factors, including the use of the Wesley Hall by the Daytime Hub, we are not going to have services or other activities (apart from the online initiatives) for the foreseeable future. Bearing in mind the advanced age of a good proportion of our congregation, we need to protect them too by not opening too soon and putting them at unnecessary risk. We can still worship together (sitting in the comfort of our own homes) via the circuit online Sunday service (or for those not online by following the printed copies of the service) – which can be viewed later at your convenience – and the Meopham Fellowship group continues online too.

Daytime Hub

This has continued throughout lockdown (at local and central government request) and has been providing laundry, clothing, breakfasts and the ingredients for meals at other times for our homeless guests who have been put in guest houses with the minimum of facilities. This will continue throughout the summer but will be open only on Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings during the school holidays. However, even our dedicated volunteers need a break and the hub will close completely between 17 – 21 August incl. We must say a very big thank you to Vicki Clarke - Community Centre Manager - and the band of volunteers who have kept this going, plus Foodbank, local shops, councillors, our M.P., and the governments advisor on homelessness, all of which have been involved. You can find more about what has been going on and how you can become involved or make financial donations to the Hub by visiting Facebook - Daytime Hub Methodist church.

Church Building Project

Building staff are gradually returning to work after lockdown but some suppliers are either still in lockdown or running on minimum staffing, leading to uncertainties over deliveries. Recent works have included completing stone work, glazing the new porch, starting external works for new walls/paving etc., completing the porch ceiling and continuing with decorations, electrical works and plumbing. In view of uncertainty over deliveries the completion date is presently unclear, but it is hoped that it will be completed by early September.

Property matters

We have premises needing continuing maintenance and we are getting on with matters where we can. Our rented property – 3 Wilfred Street – recently became vacant which necessitated some internal and external decorations and repairs via both DIY and contractors. Those have been completed and a new tenant moved in a few weeks ago. Whilst carrying out repairs it became obvious that the flat roof over the accessible toilet/ store/ corridor area was in a poor condition and could soon start letting in water. As a result, we are in the process of getting quotations for its repair with the aim of completing works before the weather changes. We have a number of slipped slates which need replacement and we have just discovered pigeons living in the tower gaining access via broken netting/windows. Regular annual maintenance of heating systems etc. is taking place along with other essential repairs. A Quinquennial Inspection and Insurance Inspection are due shortly so we have plenty on the property front to be keeping us busy. All this costs money so your continued financial support is essential please.

The information above hopefully explains what has been happening at our church since lockdown began.

As you will now have read, work continues on a number of fronts, explains what is planned in the near future and shows how you can continue to support the church financially.

Please continue to keep the church, and our members and friends in your prayers. Thank you.

Gravesend Methodist Church – 30th July 2020