



## **BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

### **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**

**For the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022**

**Registered charity: 1125230**

**Company limited by guarantee: 06501443**

## **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Birchwood Evangelical Church, more commonly known as Birchwood Community Church, is a registered charity (charity number 1125230) and a company limited by guarantee (company number 06501443).

Our principal address is:

25 Benson Road  
Birchwood  
Warrington  
WA3 7PQ

Website: [www.birchwood-church.org](http://www.birchwood-church.org)

During the period of this report the following charity trustees were responsible for managing the charity.

John Rockley  
Dorothy Seed  
Surinder Chahal  
James Towers  
Allan Stevenson  
Derek Ellison

All trustees served for the full period of the report.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The charity is governed in accordance with a Memorandum and Articles of Association and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee.

The trustees of the charity are the members of the Church Leadership Team (CLT) in office (elders and deacons), as permitted by the professional circumstances of each leadership team member or unless otherwise prevented through conflict of interest. The trustees may also invite others who are not members of the CLT to serve as a trustee. It should be noted that John Rockley is no longer a member of the CLT but remains as a trustee, by invitation of the other trustees. None of the trustees received any remuneration from the church. The members of the CLT are appointed and agreed by church members in accordance with the church constitution. The trustees are responsible for the management of the Church and approval of all expenditure. During the reporting period the CLT met 7 times. The trustees met 4 times.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The objects of Birchwood Community Church are set out in our governing document and can be summarized as follows:

- i) To advance the Christian faith in accordance with our statement of beliefs, in the area of Birchwood and beyond
- ii) To provide services and support which promote good health and relieve sickness and financial hardship.

Our vision is '**Jesus Changing Lives**' – connecting up to our Lord, connecting in with each other and connecting out into the community. Through this we aim to bring healing and meaning to people's lives and encourage belonging to Jesus and His Church family. We want as many people as possible to have the opportunity to hear about the Christian faith, to share in worship with us and to benefit from our groups, ministries and caring support.

Throughout the year we welcomed people of all ages, backgrounds, nationalities, cultures and abilities to our Sunday worship services (Birchwood Community High School), our **multi-purpose Encounter Centre** and other activities/groups/events.

We maintained a strong partnership with the other two churches in Birchwood under the Churches Together banner, and a number of events took place jointly through the year. We continued to enjoy excellent relationships with Birchwood Shopping Centre and their management team who remained highly supportive of the work we do in and through the Encounter Centre.

We maintained a church website [www.birchwood-church.org](http://www.birchwood-church.org) and two Facebook pages [www.facebook.com/BirchwoodCommunityChurch](https://www.facebook.com/BirchwoodCommunityChurch) and [www.facebook.com/EncounterCentre/](https://www.facebook.com/EncounterCentre/) to help us communicate our faith and promote church, our activities and events. We also started development work on a new website, intended for launch in 2023.

In enabling all the activities and the ministries of the church to take place the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on **public benefit** and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. More information about these activities during 2022 is provided in the next section of the report under Achievements and Performance.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

At the start of the year we set ourselves three goals for our church life, in line with our vision:

- **Come and Pray** (eg introducing prayer weekends)
- **Come and Belong** (eg re-introduction of Slow Sundays)
- **Come and See** (eg baptism services and Easter outreach)

We reviewed our progress against these at our November AGM. Here are some of the highlights:

- Prayer weekends were scheduled throughout the year. For example we held a 'Praying around the World' event which was attended by 20 people.
- We estimated that 70% of our church family were now attending life groups.
- Easter outreach had been encouraging and plans were well underway for Christmas.
- We held a baptism service in November at which 4 people gave a public testimony of how they had come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

These are some of the highlights of our **Encounter Centre** activities:

- Up to 35 people regularly attended '**Take a Break**' coffee mornings on Tuesdays and Fridays. There was always a warm and friendly atmosphere, with good conversations giving opportunities to share our faith or to pray with people.
- A number of the regulars started to attend church and were expressing faith in the Lord. Our **summer outdoor services** also provided a natural means for some of them to learn more about Birchwood Community Church. They continued to come once we restarted church in the High School after the summer break.
- We held an **Alpha Course** attended by 6 people. At the end of it several of the group made commitments or re-commitments to the Lord and expressed interest in being baptized.
- **Talking Point** was a new project for 2022, arising from an initial pilot. Taking place on Thursday mornings it was led in conjunction with the Warrington Speak Up team and the Warrington Wellbeing Service. Other partners also joined in offering advice, support and guidance to local people on how to live well. We were free to offer spiritual support and to invite people to our other Encounter Centre activities. The project was held up as a blueprint for similar work across Warrington in the future.
- We hosted the **Community Fridge**, run through Neighbourly, the national umbrella surplus food organization. We continued to build relationships with people whose initial visit was in order to pick up food. We were also able to refer people to The Bread and Butter Thing, based at the Table in Birchwood Primary School.
- The **HeART Bible Study** continued to run on Tuesday afternoons, growing back to around 15-20 regular attendees. It was an integral part HeART's activities which focus on art and crafts.
- Around 6-10 people met every Thursday afternoon for **Chat & Charity**. The group's activities included chatting over coffee, and knitting blankets and other items for refugees and others in need.
- Birchwood Blokes – one men's group for the three churches in Birchwood – put on 3 breakfasts in 2022. The largest of these, held in October, was billed as CVM (Christian Vision for Men) on Tour. Around 40 men met together for food, a quiz, chat and to hear a testimony from a guest speaker.

- **Saplings** (see further information below) continued to meet at the Encounter Centre on Mondays as another key outreach opportunity for the church. Through this connection we were able to invite young families to church events and to share our faith with them.
- We were officially registered as one of 3000 **Warm Welcome** spaces across the UK, offering free, warm and welcoming spaces for the public over the winter.
- We developed a **Grief Counselling** (Care and Prayer) ministry during the year which proved highly beneficial to those in need. We hoped to extend this ministry into 2023.

On Sunday mornings the format for our **Sparklers and Torches** children's groups was to stay together for the first part of their session and then split into 2 age-appropriate groups for further study and discussion. Leaders from both merged to create teams, operating on a rota basis, starting with two weeks on. This was a Powerpack concept for building strong relationships and providing continuity for both children and leaders. Where possible we matched the curriculum to the messages the adults were receiving in church.

We continued working with 'Churches Together in Birchwood,' hosting 3 children's parties. At Easter we assisted in the Muddy Church Experience, following the life of Jesus through a barefoot walk held at a former retail unit, which was very much enjoyed by all ages.

It was encouraging during the year that new younger faces were brought to our **youth ministry** as older ones departed for university. Our youth support worker from Warrington Youth For Christ completed her second year with us. She was able to lead on the redevelopment of our youth strategy which is based on the 4 Es: Explore, Encounter, Enjoy and Express.

We split the youth provision based upon age so young people had a space to explore faith with others at the same maturity level.

One of our young people came to **Omega** to share why he was being baptised. Some of the group subsequently attended his baptism.

**Fresh** made a strong start in the new academic year with last year's regulars returning, bringing their friends and many new faces trying it out. We easily beat last year's highest attendance.

When **Saplings** reopened in September it was a much smaller group as a number of regulars had started nursery. The same format was followed, with toys and jigsaws available for play and a craft activity, along with songs, stories and snacks. Due to the lower number of attendees we reorganised our rota and that worked well.

Over the past year we reviewed and rewrote the church **safeguarding policy**. The company 31:8 continued to handle our DBS checks and remained an invaluable source

of expertise and support. It should be noted that all adult workers in the children and youth ministries are DBS checked and interviewed before they lead in the ministries. All leaders of the appropriate ministries had updated their training by the end of the year.

This year we maintained regular contact through a Facebook Group with 8 **students** and a missionary working at OM in Belgium. This enabled us to share their good and tough times and assure them of our prayers. They also received regular parcels and letters.

We maintained 8 **Life Groups**, meeting on different days and times of the week, including the introduction of a new one for families. The Family Life Group was started as a trial for those with pre-school and primary age children. The aim was to engage as a family in worship and learn to do life together with other families. Responses were very positive and it was decided to continue the group for a further season.

We restarted our **BSL (British Sign Language)** signed services, taking place on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Our evening Bible study called **Deeper** continued to be popular over the year, evolving into a hybrid 'in person/online' pattern. All the sessions were recorded and made available online, averaging 75 views.

We introduced a number of new initiatives into our **Prayer Programme**, supported by a programme of promotional material including videos and blogs. We introduced a monthly Prayer Space, a short online pause for prayer and reflection. Once a quarter we held a Prayer Weekend, drawing together our Friday Prayer Meeting, a special prayer event on Saturday and our Sunday evening Prayer Space. Over the year we held four special prayer events and maintained prayer weeks to support all our Easter and Christmas activities.

We ran 2 courses of **Everyday English** – an 8-10 week conversational course, initially aiming to help people from Hong Kong practise their English listening and speaking skills. The second course attracted participants from other nationalities as well. Attendees on the second course enjoyed a field trip to the Manchester Christmas market.

In November we welcomed YWAM missionaries Mati and Julie Gali who work in Recife, Brazil. We heard about their urgent need for an industrial kitchen to be built alongside their Training Centre. The church family generously responded with donations totalling £8529. We learned subsequently that the **Recife kitchen project** was able to be completed.

At **Easter** the Shopping Centre provided us with an empty retail unit free of charge. We set up a Muddy Church experience, enabling people of all ages to walk through the Easter story. As 'Churches Together' we presented 'One Friday' which drew more than 100 people to listen to the story of Good Friday.

At **Christmas** we invited friends, family and community to a family carol service in Birchwood Community High School.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Total incoming resources for the year amounted to £111,567. Total resources expended amounted to £110,571. Net income amounted to £996. Income increased by around 31% compared with 2021. Some of the increase was due to restricted donations totalling £8529 for the Recife kitchen project (see above). Expenditure also increased by around 30%, of which £8529 was expended for the Recife kitchen project. In addition, increased giving and expenditure compared with that of 2021 is a reflection of a return to normal activities and costs following COVID-19, for example high school rent.

Including bank and cash balances brought forward at the beginning of the reporting year the balances carried forward at 31 December 2022 totalled £28,537. The trustees keep financial expenditure under close and regular review at quarterly meetings.

## **RESERVES POLICY**

The trustees' aim is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds if possible which equates to three months unrestricted payments. This was sustained throughout the year.

**Approved by the Trustees on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and signed on their behalf**

**Surinder P Chahal**

**Dorothy K Seed**

# BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Year ended 31 December 2022			Year ended 31 December 2021
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	99176	8529	107705	85084
Activities for generating funds	0		0	0
Investment income	0		0	0
Other incoming resources	3862		3862	139
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>103038</b>	<b>8529</b>	<b>111567</b>	<b>85223</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Charitable activities	74605	8529	83134	67313
Governance costs	23157		23157	14632
Other resources expended	4280		4280	3159
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>102042</b>	<b>8529</b>	<b>110571</b>	<b>85104</b>
<b>Net (outgoing) resources</b>	<b>996</b>		<b>996</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>996</b>		<b>996</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>27541</b>		<b>27541</b>	<b>27422</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>28537</b>		<b>28537</b>	<b>27541</b>



## BALANCE SHEET

	At 31 December 2022 £	At 31 December 2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	28,537	27,541
Profit and loss account	28,537	27,541

**Approved by the Trustees on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and signed on their behalf**

**Surinder P Chahal**

**Dorothy K Seed**

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Birchwood Evangelical Church**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2022, which are set out on pages 8 to 9.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Martin F Smith

Relevant professional qualification or body: ACA

Address: 6 Hapsford Close, Locking Stumps, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6NA

Date: \_\_\_\_ July 2023