



BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

For the period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

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

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 not a member of the CLT but is 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 6 times. The trustees met 5 times.

The annual Church AGM was held in November. We also held a special church meeting in September to seek approval for the appointment of a new Elder for Mission and Community. Church members gave their approval of the appointment.

During the year church members voted to join the Evangelical Alliance (EA). The church was subsequently welcomed into membership of the EA in July.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objects of Birchwood Evangelical 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 our partnership with the other two churches in Birchwood under the **Birchwood Churches Together** banner, and a number of events took place jointly. These included an Easter service in the Shopping Mall, a stall at Birchwood Carnival, a Light Party for children, and a Christmas carol service also in the Mall. We also jointly ran sessions of '**Muddy Church**' at local primary schools throughout the year.

We continued to enjoy excellent relationships with Birchwood Shopping Centre and their management team who remained highly supportive of our work in and through the Encounter Centre.

We maintained a church website www.birchwood-church.org and two Facebook pages www.facebook.com/BirchwoodCommunityChurch and www.facebook.com/EncounterCentre/ to help us communicate our faith and promote the church, our activities and events. At the end of the year we closed the Encounter Centre Facebook page and decided we would in future present Encounter Centre-related content on the Birchwood Community Church page. Development work to achieve this was anticipated to take place during 2026.

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 2025 is provided in the next section of the report under Achievements and Performance.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

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

- **Commit to Prayer** (eg carry out a prayer survey, develop prayer chains, pray regularly for our missionaries, build up our 'Prayers For' series)
- **Build our Family** (eg build up new Slow Sunday format, repeat church weekend away, hold fellowship events through the year)
- **Reach our Community** (eg intercultural outreach)

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

- Successful introduction of prayer chains
- Very enjoyable church weekend away in July and prayer day at Northwood Christian Centre in November
- We undertook intercultural outreach at Easter.

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

- Between 20-25 people regularly attended our **coffee mornings** on Tuesdays and Fridays. As a result of their engagement with us in the Encounter Centre some of them started to come to church on Sundays. We also had the pleasure of baptising one of our regulars. The coffee mornings were supported by helpers from the community, for example serving in the kitchen.
- Due to structural changes within **Birchwood Talking Point** the sessions we hosted for them on Thursdays reduced to twice a month. Subsequently Talking Point moved into the local shopping centre instead where we continued to be supportive. Opportunities to be explored in the future include the possibility of establishing a chaplaincy presence alongside Talking Point.
- The **Encounter Community Fridge**, run through Neighbourly, the national umbrella surplus food organisation, was paused whilst Aldi was closed for six months at the start of the year. However, it was re-established with the reopening of the store in June, with regular donations four days a week. We continued to be part of the Food Network across Warrington, sharing donations, both giving and

receiving food when available. Sometimes we were able to contribute our excess donations to The Bread and Butter Thing provision at Birchwood C of E Primary School.

- A **Bible study** ran on Tuesday afternoons for the Heart group, providing the opportunity to discuss matters of faith together. Conversations were often thought-provoking and people were clearly being impacted.
- We ran an **Alpha course** over 12 sessions after Easter and were joined by four or five people each week.
- **Birchwood Blokes** – one men's group for the three churches in Birchwood – continued to enjoy regular Men's Breakfasts, usually quarterly. These served as outreach opportunities whilst also encouraging those who already knew the Lord to grow in their walk with Jesus.
- Thursday mornings became established as **Games Mornings**. We found that helping people to relax and have fun together encouraged them to open up and also enabled us to share our faith with them.
- Our **Bereavement/Care and Prayer** ministry supported three people over the year and was much appreciated by those who were assisted.
- **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 engage with the community, share our faith and invite young families to various events. After the summer break we restarted with around 12 families.

A good number of families attended our church over the year, with young children of varying ages. Once again we had to merge **Sparklers** (0-4s) and **Torches** (5-11s) due to the reduced number of leaders. Over the past two years we followed Premier Next Gen material looking at the Old and New Testament, then started on Scripture Union studies from September. We held a family film night in October and our youngsters took part in a Nativity Play at the Christmas Family Carol Service. In September we included prayers for our children during the church's 'Prayers For' monthly prayer sessions (see below)

During the course of the 2024/2025 academic year 67 young people attended our **Ignite Friday night youth sessions**. These were subsequently split into two different sessions, comprising a Connections night, Small Group night, Youth Worship and Real Talk. Thirteen young people attended the first Youth Worship night. At **Fuel** we ran a youth Alpha series, as a result of which three young people who had never been involved in any church before went on to try church here at Birchwood. We took three

young people to Limitless One, an event run by the Limitless Festival team. We were delighted that the Youth for Christ Tolerance Tour was booked by Birchwood Community High School and received excellent feedback from all who took part. As part of the **Schools Ministry** we set up a Prayer Space on Wednesday lunchtimes; group sizes ranged from 7-12.

Eight **Life Groups** regularly took place during the week, meeting at different times and places. In February we started a Chinese Life Group which grew to eight regular attendees and two newcomers.

We continued our **BSL (British Sign Language)** signed services up to July when we decided on its closure. However the church member who had been providing these services was still ministering to deaf people through other wider outreach initiatives.

Heart, our art and crafts group, continued with enthusiasm, with many people simply coming to enjoy the social side of the group. Some people were able to try out watercolours, prepare crafts for the craft market and make Christmas cards.

Our Sunday evening Bible studies called **Deeper** took place on a hybrid basis, meaning in person at the Encounter Centre, plus live on Zoom. Numbers of people attending increased slightly, good numbers watched on Facebook with each session averaging over 150 views. A special session on Jehovah's Witnesses attracted a large in-person attendance and the recording had over 500 views.

Saplings, our Encounter Centre group for babies and pre-school children, thrived over the year as we welcomed new Mums and families. Increased numbers meant that sometimes we even ran short of small chairs around the snack table. We continued to invite families to church events, including the Family Carol Service.

As part of our ongoing **Prayer Programme** we held one external prayer event and in November organized another very popular prayer retreat 'Shine!' in the nearby countryside at Northwood which our young people joined for games and fireworks. We had special themes for our monthly 'Prayers For' sessions including China, Hong Kong, Students and the Encounter Centre. These proved very popular. We developed prayer chains around key events in our church and community. We sent out 44 weekly Friday prayer emails for reflection.

We ran a **student ministry**, keeping in contact with seven of our young adults attending university or college. We used Facebook, emails, WhatsApp (broadcast and chat) and post and sent regular parcels filled with treats by way of encouragement. First-year students received a personalised mug and Bible verse. Members of the Church Leadership Team and wider church family also wrote cards of encouragement. We also sent out weekly devotions.

We had our fourth year of **iCafe**, a weekly informal conversation class for non-native English speakers, with 8-10 regulars (Hong Kong people) attending during the year. We

covered a range of subjects, including themes from the Bible and had field trips to Bents, the local garden centre, RHS Bridgewater and Liverpool. We discussed world proverbs and shared our favourite food. Up to seven of the participants also began to meet regularly afterwards for a short Bible study from the Gospel of Mark.

In line with our **safeguarding** policy all our youth and children's ministry leaders completed their safeguarding training, using resources provided by 31:8. New volunteers during the year had nearly all completed their training too. We finished our triennial review of our safeguarding policy to bring it into line with new legislation, adding an appendix to cover safeguarding adults at risk. Our revised policy was shared with Warrington Borough Council who declared it to be 'robust'.

Our church **hospitality** team organized the catering for an international buffet on Easter Sunday, the church weekend away and a retirement buffet for one of the Elders. At the beginning of the year they trialled the running of two separate Slow Sundays.

The **Welcome** Team sent welcome emails to approximately 16 people/families who were first-time visitors to our services and events. Eight of these returned for subsequent services. We introduced new signs and banners to assist people with finding the location of our Sunday services.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Total incoming resources for the year amounted to £111,618. Total resources expended amounted to £122,277. Net income amounted to -£10,660 Total income increased by 3.6% in comparison with that of 2024. Expenditure increased by 25%. This was mainly due to the comparatively reduced youth work costs expended in 2024, returning to full costs in 2025. At the end of December 2024 the Trustees took the decision to increase the levels of regular mission support with effect from January 2025. The increased total expenditure in 2025 reflects this.

Including bank and cash balances brought forward at the beginning of the reporting year the balances carried forward at 31 December 2025 totalled £33,163. The Trustees kept financial expenditure under close and regular review at quarterly meetings.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees' aim has been to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds if possible which equates to three months unrestricted payments. This was sustained throughout 2025, however the reserves policy will be reviewed prior to the next report.

The Trustees regularly review the level of cash in the BCC bank account. As detailed in the 2024 report we took a number of steps which reduced cash holdings in 2025.

Approved by the Trustees on 8th April 2026 and signed on their behalf

Surinder P Chahal

Dorothy K Seed

BIRCHWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Year ended 31 December 2025			Year ended 31 December 2024
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	111141		111141	107717
Activities for generating funds	0		0	0
Investment income	0		0	0
Other incoming resources	477		477	1930
Total incoming resources	111618		111618	107717
Resources expended				
Charitable activities	86678		86678	67164
Governance costs	31653		31653	28569
Other resources expended	3946		3946	2525
Total resources expended	122277		122277	98258
Net (outgoing) resources	(10660)		(10660)	9459
Net movement in funds	(10660)		(10660)	9459
Total funds brought forward	43823		43823	34364
Total funds carried forward	33163		33163	43823

BALANCE SHEET

	At 31 December 2025 £	At 31 December 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	33,163	43,823
Profit and loss account	33,163	43,823

Approved by the Trustees on 8th April 2026 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 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 10

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: _____ 2026