

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

With a Mission at Boughton Aluph



Ashford Baptist Church

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

2023

Legal and Administrative Information

(as at 31 December 2023)

Ministers	Rev Lorna Clark Sylvester and Rev Rob Sylvester (Appointed 01 06 2015)
Secretary	Helen Wilson (Re-Elected 01 01 23 – 4th Year)
Treasurer	Samuel Deans (Elected 17 05 23. Resigned 14 11 23)
Assistant Treasurer	Vacant
Book Keeper	Lynn Oliver
Youth, Families and Community Worker	Louisa Ley (Appointed 15 05 23)
Children's Worker and Administrator	Rachael Cox (Appointed 30 05 23)
Deacons	Helen Wilson (Elected 01 01 18) Laxmiprasad (Daniel) Rai (Elected 01 01 21) Man Kumar (John) Sunwar (Elected 01 01 21) Rachel Phipps (Elected 01 01 22. Resigned 06 11 23) Jamie Phipps (Elected 01 01 22. Resigned 06 11 23) Quentin Ma (Elected 01 01 23) Stephen Ley (Elected 01 01 23. Resigned 20 11 13) Sammy Deans (Elected 17 05 23. Resigned 14 11 12)

The Deacons and Ministers together comprise the Managing Trustees of the Church

Registered Charity Number	1130593	
Principal Address	Ashford Baptist Church Saint John’s Lane Ashford, Kent TN23 1PS	
Governing Document	Church Constitution adopted on 20 03 2008 (amended on 06 07 22)	
Independent Examiner	Katherine Reka FCCA Office 43, Cobalt Building 1600 Eureka Park Lower Pemberton Ashford Kent TN25 4BF	
Bankers	HSBC Bank plc 39 High Street Ashford, Kent TN24 8TG	Lloyds Bank 81 High Street Ashford, Kent TN24 8SS



Ministers' Annual Report 2023

Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3;13-14

The year 2023 was the second full year back in the church building for face-to-face worship.... we thank God for his faithfulness throughout the year, another extraordinary time, in the everyday life of the family of God here at ABC.

The year began as it ended in 2022 with more and more friends from the Home Office being accommodated at the Holiday Inn, Kennington, coming to us for welcome, worship and belonging. Families and individuals from all over the world finding a home, and safety among us. Iranian and Albanian asylum seekers joined us, as well as others. The church response was amazingly generously with time, resources, kindness, welcome and hospitality. We received much from our new friends, in terms of new perspectives on faith, friendship and knowing that as "we did it for one of the least of these, we did it for Jesus" [Matthew 25]. Some of our new friends came to faith others confirmed their faith sharing in baptism and coming into church membership, many too becoming involved in the team and ministry at ABC, sharing moving testimonies of the countries and conditions they had fled from.

We have a permanent reminder of our new friends in the painting in the sanctuary that Maryam did, of Jesus and the Woman at the Well in John 4, the lectern hanging that Negar made for the church and the Iranian Old Testament book that Haleh, Negar, and Zeynab made, by our Iranian believer friends. Also, others contributed to the sharing of Iranian music in worship, with Asma and her son Arsan and Denisa sharing in the worship team - others in welcoming and hospitality, serving in their new home.

During 2023 the other significant movement of families and individuals from the majority world, also came to work in Ashford and brought their faith and experience of God to ABC. Again, bringing significant growth and variety to ABC. We are blessed that many in ABC who have been at the church for a long time saw this growth in the church as an answer to their prayers for new people and children to re energise us. Colossians 2;2-4 [MSG] -we want God to weave us together - Paul to *the Colossians I want you woven into a tapestry of love, into a truly multi-cultural community of God.*

For some years we had been exploring the possibility of employing staff workers and had been unable to find the right resource. Because of the increased numbers of families, children, and youth, we felt an urgent need to resource this and appointed two part-time staff workers from within the church, to minister in the area of children's work and admin, youth, community and refugees, on a 3-year contract.

In terms of Sundays, we were enriched by the contribution of many throughout the year - in Sunday groups for children and youth, welcoming, hospitality, worship, and technology. Preaching included the early church, Acts of the apostles, and the Psalms in all their variety - with baptisms, dedications and many coming into church membership.

Our Nepalese Community continued their worship Sunday by Sunday and their regular 2pm Service time, as well as serving within the morning congregation. Boughton Chapel with their community lunches, coffee mornings and outreaches, engaged locally, as well as a monthly communion service on a Sunday. Our Minister Rob continued to chair CTA; having close relationships with the other churches in Ashford, ministering and worshipping together, with an emerging ministry of chaplains to the Outlet shopping centre beginning.

The changes continued in the late summer as we said goodbye to Phil Martin and Jane Martin leader of the music group and worship leader, respectively. They had played a huge part in the life of the church through the music and worship, and technology and now were moving on. Alison O'Donnel has taken on the leadership of the music group.

In terms of the fabric of the church, whilst we still await the completion of the building project, refurb continued with a gift day and generous giving, so that there is now a fund for new lighter chairs and tables and perhaps new flooring too - all helpful with the different type of services we do and the multi-use of the worship space.

We continued to think about our community and remaining safe and to that end, all those working with families, children, and vulnerable adults, continued to train with SEBA to have DBS. We showed the Level 1 Safeguarding Training Video within the Sunday service again for everyone to see. Additionally, we restricted our livestreaming of services to community members only.

So, we look back with wonder and awe, much thankfulness for one another and for Our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an unchanging loving God, steadfast and active in times of change for all of us at ABC.

Rev Lorna Sylvester-Minister March 2024 [on behalf of Lorna and Rob Sylvester joint ministers]



Church Secretary's Report 2023

Reflecting back over our church life this past year, it has been a busy year and has flown by for me. God has continued to bless us with more children and young people. It has been a privilege to welcome many new people from other parts of the country and the world, including refugees and asylum seekers, and to see them settle into the life of the church and become members. We have also experienced others moving away.

We have celebrated 7 baptisms and 2 dedications.

We were pleased to employ a part-time Administrator and Children's Worker and a Family, Youth and Community Worker in May 2023. Handing over the daily administration has been a blessing for me. We have seen our children's and youth work flourish, for which we give thanks.

This year, we have again focused on community and fellowship events to enable us to get to know one another. This has included newcomers' lunches, curry evening, bluebell walk followed by afternoon tea and scones, BBQs, the paddle sport event in Hythe, coffee mornings and afternoons, Tearfund Quiz, and a Christmas Lunch and other events.

Our café church style service has become a regular event.

We enjoyed welcoming Joy Ransom from BMS, in October, as she retired from her work in Nepal and Peter and Andrea Frizelle and family, for an extended stay from mid-December to January. Peter had opportunity to share more about his work in Guatemala.

Our Senior Support Team has provided themed lunches and talks every quarter; the inclusion of communion has been a blessing to many.

The Wednesday Women's Life Group has grown over the past year with a regular attendance of 18. We give thanks to those who have shared in the teaching. Our evening Life Groups have continued.

Our Nepalese Fellowship continue to worship on Sunday afternoons.

We give thanks for the ongoing commitment of the Music Group/Worship Team, and especially for those who have stepped up in helping to lead worship, following Jane and Phil Martin leaving. The church's involvement in the Family, Food and Fun Project (funded by Ashford Together) has continued during the school holidays when able. It has been encouraging to open the church to the community of Ashford. We give thanks for all those involved and pray that funding will continue.

We know there are many people who work in the background of church life, for which we give thanks: - our Sunday School Teachers, our Refreshment and Stewarding Teams, PA and Sound Desk Teams (assisting with livestreaming), communion servers, maintenance, cleaning, and security and others.

I give thanks to those who have supported me. During this past year the leadership team have sought God's continued guidance and presence. As we came to the end of 2023, I look to the verses in Psalm 37: Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this".

Helen Wilson

1 March 2024

SAFEGUARDING REPORT for 2023

Safeguarding involves a range of activities aimed at promoting every person's fundamental right to be safe. These include:

- making and maintaining safe environments for all,
- having processes to follow should something go wrong, and
- providing support for everyone involved.

2023 has been a very busy year of highs and lows. March 18th was one of the highs. We had a happy and productive training day here at ABC which was led by the SEBA Safeguarding Lead, Wendy Mann. She visited earlier in the year to give encouragement as we welcomed in the surge of new children including those from the Holiday Inn and was very complimentary on the way the children's and young people's workers had adapted and adjusted. She was impressed with the knowledge she found here on the training day and the team spirit she found among us.

One of the lows came when this wise and warm woman completed her life on earth and was taken quite suddenly. It felt like losing a friend of the church. 2023 ended without a replacement in place which proved tricky when a few complicated matters came along.

As stated in our policy we work with outside agencies when the need arises. This year we have had the support of the police, the probation service, the London Baptist Association Safeguarding Lead; the BU Safeguarding department and our SEBA Regional Minister.

The Code of Behaviour which we began to work on last year was finally agreed by the members and is displayed for us all on the Safeguarding notice board. We note that this is good practice for us all not just our team of workers.

In May the BU had provided some updates to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which were helpful. Whilst our church statement of intent about Safeguarding is displayed on the notice board, the whole policy is comprehensive and quite lengthy so access via the BU website is accessible to us all. www.baptist.org.uk/safeguarding

In December the Safeguarding Team set to work to review our policy and practice using the BU Safeguarding Audit Tool. This proved to be a big task so completion was planned for the New Year.

The church is blessed to have a strong safeguarding team and we are all very grateful for our conscientious team of workers and helpers.

Margaret Woollven and Quentin Ma



Boughton Chapel Annual Report – 2023

We continue to grow the Lunch Club and we are pleased that 3 new people from the village are now coming. For the Coffee Morning, we have added in a light lunch, and we have an average of 16 people coming along.

We had the wall between the vestry and passageway removed, to make it into a useable room which is a much better use of space and has made it a lot lighter.

Also, a new fire door has been fitted between the kitchen and the new room.

We have continued to have a monthly communion service led by Lorna and once by Dayo which has been a great blessing to us.

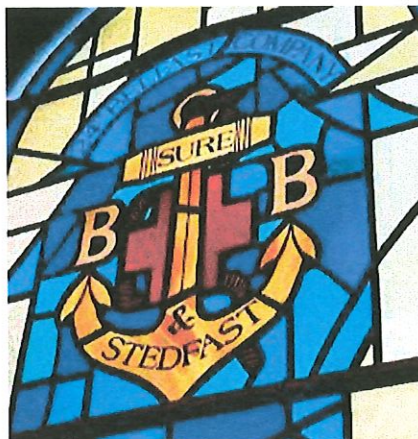
We are small in number but have a heart to serve God in this place.

Yours in God's service

Heidi and Alan Law

24 February 2024

Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association Annual Report – 2023



The 2022/23 season was the first full year of having Girls in the company, we feel really blessed that the girls can continue in Brigades and it has enriched the company evening. Numbers steadily grew over the year with two non-church affiliated youth members volunteering to help in the Anchors and Juniors section for their D of E service award.

Numbers in 2022/23

Anchor Boys 3 two church family children and one non-church family

Anchor Girls 3 two church family children and one attending another church with her family

Junior Boys 6 four church family children and one attending another church with her family

Junior Girls 2 one attending another church with her family and one non-church

Company Boys 2 two from a non-church family

Company Girls 2 one church family child and one attending another church with her family

Senior Boys 3 three boys from non-church family

Senior Girls 3 three girls from non-church family

Total Children 24



Highlights of the year

Cycle ride for company and seniors



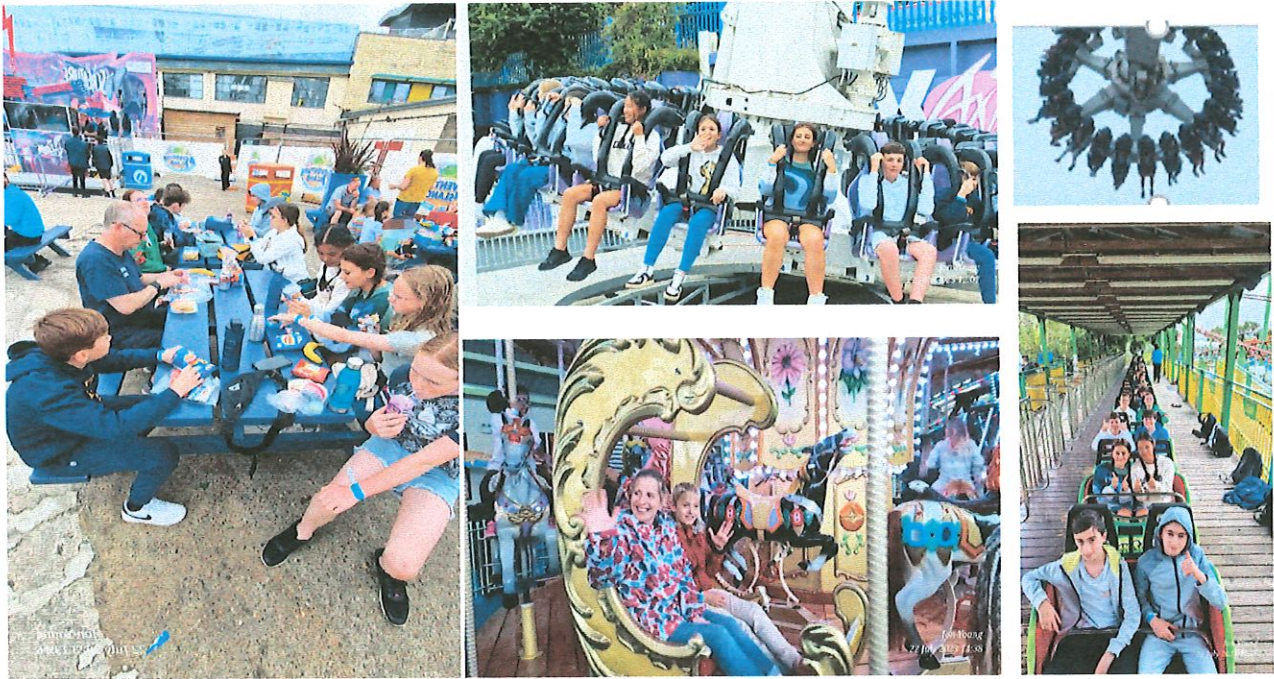
We took a church service



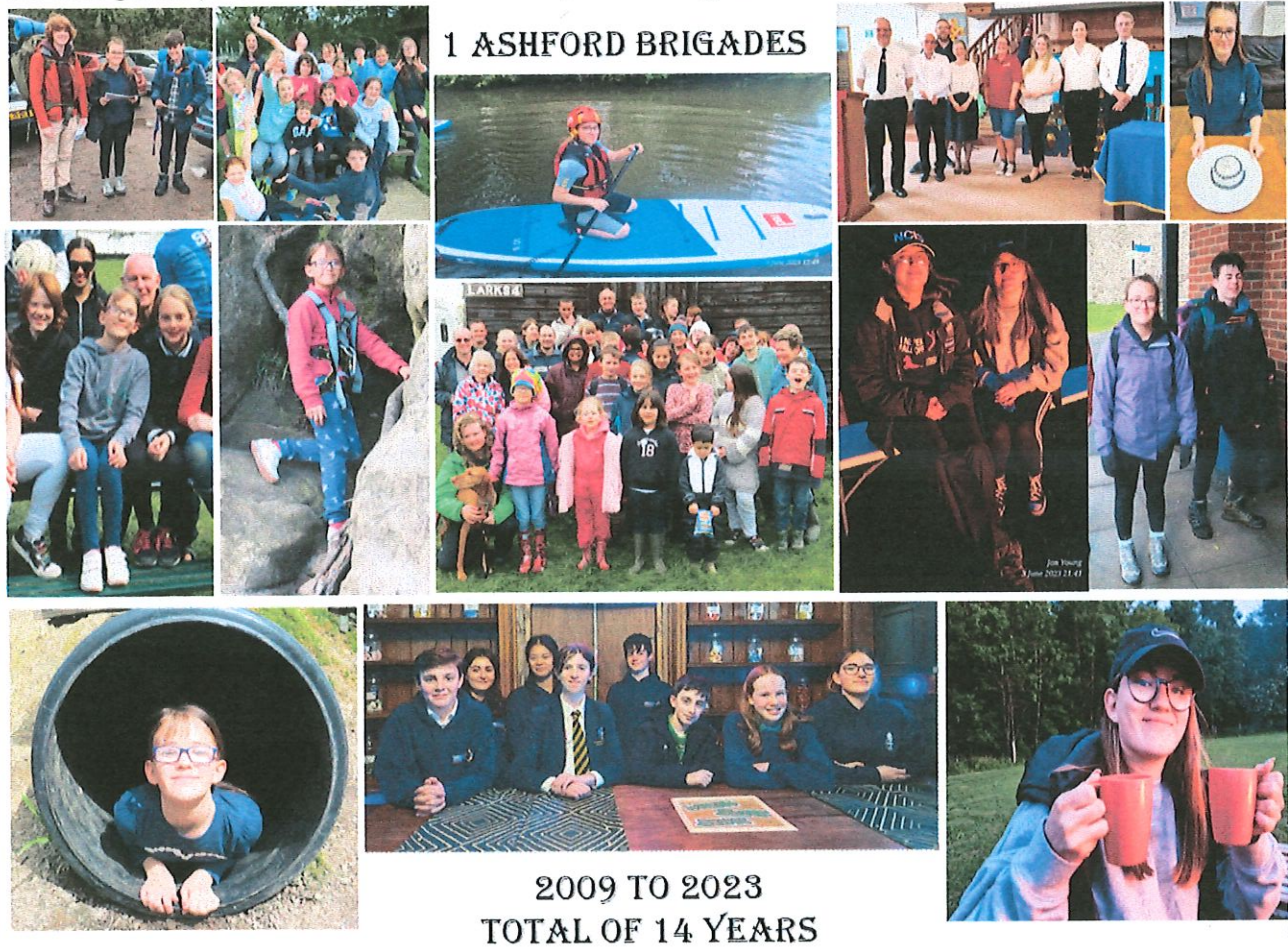
We had a joint Junior, Company and Seniors Camp



Whole company day trip to Adventure Island in Southend



We said goodbye to Ashleigh Cole after 14 years in Brigades



We continued to run our normal classwork throughout the year.

These included arts, crafts, sports, Christian faith and we paid our respects to the late Queen Elizabeth II by laying some thank you messages and flowers at Ashford Memorial Gardens.

We lost 2 leaders during the year, James Wilson took some time out to concentrate on his education and Liz Oliver left due to work commitments.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my BB helpers/Leaders for their support over 2022 and 2023 session.

Mark Humphries, Liz Oliver, Nicola Oliver, Rachael Cox, Tracy Smith, James Wilson, Jon Young, Vicky Cole, Sarah Deans and Sammy Deans.

Finally please pray that through all our activities we will be a witness to the love of God and bring our young people to making a commitment to follow our Lord and saviour.

Regards

Simon White Captain 1st Ashford Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association. 6th March 2023

Review – Youth, Community and Families work. May-Dec 2023

YOUTH

The Youth provision has witnessed a significant increase in participation among individuals aged 11-17. This rise can be attributed to both new families joining the church and an influx of refugee youth. Consequently, there has been a notable impact on overall attendance across various programmes such as the Youth Club, Sunday Groups, and events.

From May to December, there has been a noticeable trend of young people attending multiple provisions. For example, the Youth Club has experienced a substantial increase, with attendance rising from an average of 10 to 36 young individuals.

A pivotal moment occurred during the Youth Fireworks Night on November 3rd, which served as a catalyst for unity between church-affiliated and non-affiliated youth. Many young attendees from the church, as well as regulars from the Youth Club—formerly distinct groups—participated alongside numerous refugee youth. This event facilitated significant interaction and the formation of new friendships.

Moreover, the rise in attendance has also led to greater gender diversity, as there was previously a disproportionate number of male attendees. Now, more girls are actively participating in the programmes offered.

A considerable portion of the youth attending the Sunday group identify as Christians and possess a fundamental understanding of the Bible. They are also comfortable openly discussing their faith and engaging in prayer.

As the year draws to a close, a few young individuals have begun serving within the church alongside adults or their parents.

While there has been some interest from new individuals in taking on leadership or helper roles within the youth provision, there remains a requirement for an additional leader in the Sunday Group.

Additionally, it's worth noting that the involvement of young people in serving within the church demonstrates a growing sense of responsibility and commitment to their faith community. This

engagement not only provides them with valuable opportunities for personal growth and development but also strengthens the bond between the youth and the broader church body.

Furthermore, the willingness of new individuals to step forward as leaders or helpers signifies a positive trend towards community engagement and support for youth activities. However, the ongoing need for an additional leader in the Sunday Group highlights the importance of continued recruitment efforts and the nurturing of leadership skills among the youth themselves.

What we have been praying for since May 2023:

- Young individuals would forge friendships with each other, leading to a crossover between various provisions.
- There is an increase in the attendance of girls at the Youth Group.
- Efforts are being made to cultivate more leaders.
- Young people are expected to deepen their faith.
- Young people would feel integrated into the church community, engaging in service activities or shadowing adults in various capacities.

PRAYERS GOING FORWARD into 2024

1. Spiritual Growth and Baptism: Pray that they continue to deepen their relationship with God, grow in their understanding of faith, and experience spiritual maturity. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." - 2 Peter 3:18

2. Emotional Health: Pray for their emotional resilience, inner peace, and the ability to cope with any challenges or struggles they may face. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6-7

3. Physical Health: Pray for their physical well-being, safety, and protection from illness or harm. "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." - Psalm 91:4

4. Academic Success, Wisdom, and Love for God: Pray for their academic endeavors, that they may excel in their studies, gain wisdom, and develop a love for learning, rooted in their love for God. "For wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul." - Proverbs 2:10. Pray also that they develop a deep love for God and His Word, finding delight in studying and applying Scripture to their lives. "I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word." - Psalm 119:16.

5. Relationships: Pray for healthy friendships and positive influences in their lives, as well as guidance in their interactions with peers, family members, and authority figures. "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm." - Proverbs 13:20

6. Discernment: Pray that they have clarity and discernment in making decisions, especially regarding important life choices and peer pressure. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6

7. Purpose and Calling: Pray that they discover and pursue their God-given talents, passions, and purpose in life, and that they find fulfillment in serving others and making a positive impact in the world. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." - Ephesians 2:10

8. Protection from Negative Influences: Pray for protection from negative influences such as substance abuse, unhealthy relationships, and harmful media or social pressures. "The Lord is my

rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." - Psalm 18:2

9. Opportunities for Growth: Pray that they encounter opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, mentorship, and leadership development within the church and community. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." - Hebrews 10:24

10. Boldness and Confidence: Pray that they have the courage and confidence to live out their faith boldly, share their beliefs with others, and be a light in their schools, neighborhoods, and social circles. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." - 2 Timothy 1:7

COMMUNITY

It has been a bustling year for us with a notable influx of new faces joining our church community. Keeping up with the plethora of new names and individuals has presented its challenges. Among these newcomers, there has been a significant presence of individuals from abroad, particularly from North African countries, many of whom work at the local hospital. However, due to the demands of their shift patterns, forging connections with them has proven to be a bit challenging as their attendance at church tends to be irregular.

Additionally, there is a core group of refugees who faithfully attend our church, and towards the latter part of the year, we welcomed a new wave of South American refugees who have started participating in activities and occasionally attending church, albeit sporadically.

Spring brought about some exciting outings for our congregation, including a delightful bluebell walk and a visit to the rare breeds centre, both of which were well-attended and enjoyed by all. Easter was a vibrant and bustling time with an Easter egg hunt that attracted new visitors, further enriching our community. The Easter services were well-attended, culminating in a joyous celebration with Big Praise.

Moreover, our prayer day was a notable success, drawing in a good number of participants. It was held within the church premises, featuring various prayer stations that provided individuals with the opportunity to sit, reflect, and find solace in the tranquility of prayer and stillness.

During the summer, we hosted a series of fantastic events, with Paddlesport emerging as the highlight, drawing in a large crowd and leaving a lasting impression on all who attended. The allure of paddlesport attracted many to try their hand at it, while everyone relished in the camaraderie and delicious BBQ fare offered. Another standout event was the Church BBQ, which brought together a vibrant gathering of individuals for an evening of fellowship, conversation, and delectable food.

While weekly opportunities for young people and children to meet didn't garner massive attendance, the church still served as a welcoming space for gatherings when needed. Interestingly, a particularly well-attended day coincided with rainy weather, prompting us to organise arts and crafts activities for the children indoors. It was during this event that we had the pleasure of meeting and connecting with new individuals. Through this initial encounter, they have since become regular attendees, enriching our community with their presence and participation. We orchestrated a couple of delightful picnics in the park, which garnered enthusiastic participation, despite the occasional challenge of enduring scorching hot days. These gatherings provided moments of joy and relaxation for attendees to bask in the beauty of nature while fostering bonds of fellowship and camaraderie.

Throughout the season transition into autumn, our church community remained active and engaged in various uplifting activities.

As autumn unfolded, we ushered in the Love Your Church weekend, a special occasion dedicated to rallying support for our beloved church. People from all walks of life came together to show their love and commitment, participating wholeheartedly in a myriad of activities. The Sunday bring-and-share lunch was a highlight, where laughter and conversation flowed freely, and the atmosphere brimmed with warmth and community spirit. Moreover, our gift day initiative proved to be a resounding success, with the generous contributions of £18,000 raised for the acquisition of new tables and chairs, enhancing our church's facilities for future gatherings and events. In embracing the season's spirit, we hosted the Light Party as an alternative celebration to Halloween, offering a wholesome and enjoyable experience for children and adults alike. The event saw a delightful turnout, with both church members and visitors joining in the festivities, spreading joy and laughter throughout the evening.

Amidst our regular schedule, Chit Chat continued to be a cherished occasion for our community, providing a relaxed setting for individuals to come together over steaming cups of coffee or tea. Beyond the beverages, attendees relished in the opportunity to engage in friendly banter, share stories, and foster meaningful connections. The availability of games such as pool and table tennis added an extra layer of enjoyment to the gatherings, further enhancing the sense of camaraderie and belonging.

A highlight of our autumn programme was the much-anticipated Bible journaling workshop, where participants delved into the art of creative expression through studying the word. The workshop was full and proved to be immensely enriching for those in attendance, as they learned to intertwine their faith with artistic exploration. Additionally, a dedicated craft table for children provided a platform for parents to engage in the workshop while their little ones were entertained with creative activities.

In our commitment to nurturing spiritual growth and family bonds, we also facilitated the Parenting for Faith course. This invaluable programme empowered parents and caregivers with the tools and insights to openly share their faith with their children, guiding them into a deeper relationship with Jesus and establishing firm spiritual foundations for their journey of faith. Through these initiatives and events, our church community thrived, fostering a culture of love, unity, and spiritual growth among its members.

We also participated in Tearfund's The Big Quiz night, which proved to be immensely popular among our community. Individuals brought along snacks and drinks, forming teams to compete against each other in a lively quiz session. The event was a great success, raising £140 for Tearfund's charitable efforts.

As we approached the Christmas season, Chit Chat organised a craft session for the children. However, it was disheartening to see that only refugees attended, with no other church members joining in. Despite this, we pressed on with our festive celebrations. We held a Christingle service, symbolising the light of Christ, and followed it up with the ever-popular Carols by Candlelight service. After the services, we enjoyed delicious food and festive fun together, embracing the joy and warmth of the season in fellowship with one another.

Prayers during this season

- Participating in various events and activities fosters fellowship and camaraderie among members of the community.
- Engaging in fellowship encourages the development of lasting friendships as individuals connect with one another in shared experiences and mutual interests.
- These interactions provide opportunities for individuals to deepen their faith through meaningful conversations, shared reflections, and collective worship.
- As we come together in prayer and support one another in our spiritual journeys, we cultivate a strong sense of unity and solidarity, transforming into a vibrant and prayerful community.

Praying for ABC going forward

- 1. Spiritual Growth:** Deepen our relationship with God and experience spiritual transformation.
- 2. Unity and Harmony:** Promote unity, understanding, and love within the church community.
- 3. Leadership and Guidance:** Grant wisdom, discernment, and strength to church leaders and volunteers. Pray for the ministerial position that God would have his hand firmly on this.
- 4. Healing and Comfort:** Provide healing and comfort to the sick, suffering, and grieving.
- 5. Outreach and Mission:** Open doors for sharing the gospel and serving others.
- 6. Increased Giving:** Bless our giving, increase the giving to enable us to sustain and expand ministries and missions.
- 7. Sustenance During Ministerial Vacancy:** Provide guidance and sustenance during this period without ministers.
- 8. Protection and Safety:** Keep the church and its members safe, both physically and spiritually.
- 9. Families and Relationships:** Bless marriages, families, and relationships within the church.
- 10. Social Justice and Compassion:** Advocate for justice, equality, and compassion in society.
- 11. Gratitude and Thanksgiving:** Express gratitude for God's blessings and faithfulness.

Louisa Ley

28th February 2024

Children's Worker and Administrator's Report (May to December 2023)

I was delighted to be offered the post of Children's Worker and Administrator and I commenced employment at the end of May.

As the church had been without a paid Administrator for some time, initially, my time was spent concentrating on the admin side of the role, tidying up files and emails, and taking over responsibility for the general admin of the church from Helen, including weekly sheets, rotas etc.

As a Children's Worker, it has been wonderful to see an increased number of families with children attending our Sunday services and it is a blessing to welcome families from all over the world, with different cultures and gifts.

Our Sunday Club groups and creche continues to grow in numbers. The team of leaders and helpers has increased and all are dedicated, willing and enthusiastic people who have a desire to support and encourage children as they commence their walk in Faith. There is, however, still a need for additional volunteers, particularly as it has become apparent that the youngest Sunday School group (children aged 3 to 7) now needs to be split into two. Whilst this is a wonderful problem to have, it is a problem, and we would ask the congregation to include this in their prayers.

In addition to Sunday Club and creche, ABC also offers families and children in our community the opportunity to attend Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association and Family, Food and Fun.

In the autumn, Louisa and myself hosted a Parenting for Faith course run by BRF Ministries. The course was helpful and informative and, because it was delivered via Zoom, parents and carers were able to attend without having to organise babysitters.

I have enjoyed assisting Helen and Louisa with the organisation of several church events including the Easter Egg Trail, Paddle Sports, Church Picnic, Church BBQ's, Love your Church weekends, monthly Chit Chats and the Light Party. These events have been well attended and have provided an opportunity for people to get to know one another better. Louisa and I have also led two Café Church services over the summer, and we are pleased to have been given the opportunity to lead some more in 2024.

My ongoing prayer request for the families and children in our church is that they will find a real connection to God and their relationship with Him will deepen. I also pray that our families will unite and support one another, and that new families will come to ABC and feel welcomed.

My prayer for myself is that I will be a true servant of God and that everything I do will be for his glory, and not mine. I pray that people will find me warm and welcoming and that God will give me the confidence to inspire and nurture others. I thank God for the people He has placed around me to help me, to guide me and to prop me up when needed.

It is a blessing to be involved in a church with such a diverse community and I would like to thank you for your advice, prayers and support.

Rachael Cox

15 March 2024

Trustees Responsibilities

Under the Charities Act 1993 the Trustees are required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the financial year and the incoming resources and application of resources in the year. In preparing the statement the Trustees are required to:-

1. Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
2. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
3. State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practices have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the statement of accounts.
4. Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its operations.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity at that time and to enable the Trustees to ensure that any statement of account prepared by them complies with the regulations under Section 42(1) of the Charities Act 1992. They are also responsible for safe-guarding the assets of the trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Approval:

This report was approved by the deacons on 10 September 2024 and signed on their behalf.

Signed: Helen M Wilson

Signed: Qm

Name: HELEN M WILSON

Name: Quentin Ma

Church Secretary:

Deacon:

Date: 21. 10. 24

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

(Registered Charity No 1130593)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Church for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 2 to 9.

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 Trust'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:

- * the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- * the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- * the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirement concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Signed by:

Signed: E23410F7FFA249E...

Name: Katherine Reka FCCA

Address: Office 43, The Cobalt Building
1600 Eureka Park
Lower Pemberton
Ashford
Kent
TN25 4BF

Date: 10th September 2024

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

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(Registered Charity No 1130593)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	Restricted	Unrestricted		
		Funds	Funds	Total	2022
		£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources					
General fund donations		2,824	13,803	16,626	19,558
Special Donations		18,409	0	18,409	902
Covenants & Gift Aid	13,548	<u> </u>	<u>93,181</u>	<u>106,729</u>	
	34,781		106,984	141,765	
Activity Income		4,141	0	4,141	1,462
Investment Income		2,798	2,579	5,377	2,335
Legacies, donations and fund raising		0	475	475	792
Other Income		<u>1,575</u>	<u>1,285</u>	<u>2,860</u>	
Total Incoming resources from charitable activities		<u>43,295</u>	<u>111,323</u>	<u>154,618</u>	
Resources Expended					
Direct charitable expenditure	2	38,998	127,902	166,900	144,872

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

Management and Administration 3
38,998

0 Total Resources expended

17,240
145,142

17,240
184,140

114,461
134,921

665
140,175

10,058
154,930

Net (outgoing)/incoming Resources

4,297

-33,819

-29,522

-14,755

Other recognised gains/losses

0

0

0

0

Net Movement in Funds

4,297

-33,819

-29,522

-14,755

Reconciliation of Funds Fund

Balances brought forward as 1
January 2023

115,563

214,614

330,177

344,932

Transfers between funds

-1,641

1,141

-500

0

Fund balances carried forward

7

£118,219

£181,936

£299,655

£330,177

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

at 31 December 2023

The notes on pages 4 to 9 form part of these Financial Statements

(Registered Charity No 1130593)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

			298,482		327,527
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>					
Creditors	6		50		0
<u>REPRESENTED BY:</u>			<u>£300,155</u>		£330,177
Restricted Funds			118,219		115,563
	Note		<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>
		£	£	£	£
<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>					
Tangible Assets	4		1,723		2,650
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>					
Debtors	5		3,240		2,838
Income Tax recoverable	5		4,744		5,227
Cash at bank and in hand	12		290,498		319,462
			<u>181,936</u>		<u>214,614</u>
Unrestricted Funds			£300,155		£330,177

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

The notes on pages 4 to 9 form part of these Financial Statements

Page 3

{Registered Charity No 1130593}

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

1) ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared to give a true and fair view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS102) published on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and Charities Act 2011.

Ashford Baptist Church constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
Fund Accounting

General Funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted Funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Income

Non-covenanted donations and other income are brought into income in the year during which they are received, with the exception of donations given for a specific purpose which are carried forward as deferred income and matched with the relevant expenditure.
Legacies are credited to the income and expenditure account in the year in which they are received.

Expenditure

Specific items of expenditure that relate to either direct charitable expenditure or other expenditure are attributed to the appropriate category.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided to write off the cost of the asset over its estimated useful economic life.

Assets are depreciated at the following rates :

Motor Vehicles	at	20 % on Cost
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	at	15 % on Written Down Value
Computer Equipment	at	33.3 % on Cost

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its useful life.
Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £1,000.

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
(Registered Charity No 1130593)

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2) <u>DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE</u>	Restricted	Unrestricted		
	Funds	Funds	Total	2022
	£	£	£	£
Ministers (incl Pensions)	0	48,543	48,543	45,176
Youth, Families & Community Worker	0	10,929	10,929	0
Children's Worker	0	5,158	5,158	0
Travel	0	1,482	1,482	938
Mission Giving - HM & BMS	840	11,823	12,663	13,260
Mission Giving - Other	12,644	3,500	16,144	15,404
Mission Activities	0	1,201	1,201	280
Youth & Children's Work	868	1,298	2,167	1,333
Music & PA	0	922	922	1,854
Catering & Hospitality	992	3,048	4,039	3,449
Whole Church Events	0	677	677	0
Other Ministry	0	745	745	1,030
Cleaning	0	9,008	9,008	9,069
Heating & Lighting	5,786	5,747	11,533	5,448
Repairs & Maintenance	2,187	3,345	5,531	4,836
insurances	511	4,280	4,791	3,841
Water	157	782	939	428
Manse Costs (council tax, water etc)	0	8,700	8,700	4,317
Pension Deficiency Contributions	0	12	12	2,192

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ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

Charge for the period

As at 31st December 2023

NET BOOK VALUE

As at 31st December 2023

As at 31st December 2022

The Trustees own the following freehold properties: premises at Station Road/St John's Lane, Ashford; the Manse at 23 Magazine Road, Ashford; and leasehold land and buildings at Boughton Aluph Chapel. The original value of the buildings and the costs of improvements to them until 2023 have not been included in the Balance Sheet because, in the opinion of the Trustees, the cost of professionally valuing these assets to include a value in the accounts outweighs the benefits to the users of the accounts. They are insured for £5,066,564 (2022: £4,778,973) which is an estimate of their replacement cost.

5)	<u>DEBTORS</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	Prepayments	1,736	1,061
	Other Debtors	1,504	1,776
		<u>3,240</u>	<u>2,838</u>
	Income Tax Recoverable (Gift Aid due for Oct-Dec)	4,744	5,227
		<u>11,224</u>	<u>10,903</u>

6)	<u>CREDITORS 2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	Creditors	50
		<u>50</u>

7)	<u>MOVEMENTS ON RESTRICTED FUNDS</u>	Balances at			Transfers	Balances at
		31/12/2022	Income	Expenditure	between funds	31/12/2023
RF1	L.Wilson	0	3,503	3,503	0	0
RF2	P.Frizelle	0	5,396	5,396	0	0
RF3	Lite Bite	1,121	0	209	0	912
RF4	Coffee Morning	3,517	107	67	0	3,557
RF5	Luncheon Club	4,013	0	0	0	4,013
RF6	Fellowship Fund	2,098	2,625	2,680	-500	1,543
RF7	Other Mission Giving	0	1,470	1,065	0	405
RF8	Gift Days etc	0	16,939	0	0	16,939
RF10	Boughton Chapel	7,878	7,083	10,267	0	4,694
RF11	Boys Brigade	1,789	2,463	948	0	3,304
RF12	Girls Brigade	0	0	0	0	0
RF13	Youth Camp	1,141	0	0	-1,141	0
RF14	Brook Fund	94,006	3,710	14,864	0	82,852
		<u>£115,563</u>	<u>£43,295</u>	<u>£38,998</u>	<u>-£1,641</u>	<u>£118,219</u>

Balances at	Transfers	Balances at
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ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

	31/12/2021	Income	Expenditure	between funds	31/12/2022
RF1 L.Wilson	0	6,756	6,756	0	0
RF2 P.Frizelle	0	3,836	3,836	0	0
RF3 Lite Bite	1,121	0	0	0	1,121
RF4 Coffee Morning	3,462	55	0	0	3,517
RF5 Luncheon Club	4,013	0	0	0	4,013
RF6 Fellowship Fund	798	1,800	500	0	2,098
RF7 Other Mission Giving	0	902	902	0	0
RF8 Gift Days etc	0	0	0	0	0
RF10 Boughton Chapel	7,538	4,930	4,590	0	7,878
RF11 Boys Brigade	635	779	1,161	1,536	1,789
RF12 Girls Brigade	1,536	0	0	-1,536	0
RF13 Youth Camp	1,141	0	0	0	1,141
RF14 Brook Fund	136,088	2,031	44,113	0	94,006

	£156,332	£21,089	£61,859	£0	£115,563
8) REMUNERATION	The average number of employees during the year was 3 (2022: 2)				

	2023	2022
Salaries	69,787	45,176
Social Security Costs	0	0
	<u>69,787</u>	<u>45,176</u>

Members of the Diaconate are not employees and received no remuneration during the year.

Some church members received payments for the reimbursement of expenditure incurred in relation to the activities of the Church.

The Church is heavily reliant upon volunteers who give their time and skills, which cannot be valued.

9) **FUTURE COMMITMENTS** There were no contractual commitments at 31st December 2023 (2022: Nil).

10) REPAIRS, RENEWALS AND EQUIPMENT	2023	2022
Church refurbishment - Station Road	14,864	25,791
General church maintenance	1,536	2,582
General manse maintenance	943	1,536
Manse roof and chimney repair	2,500	0
Boughton Chapel	2,187	1,067
Fire safety	463	404
Pest control	300	293
	<u>23,838</u>	<u>30,627</u>

11) **SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS**

Donations and subscriptions > £100	2023	2022
P Frizelle	8,896	6,836
L Wilson	3,503	7,006
Pastoral Support	2,680	500
Subscriptions	715	737
Harvest Appeal	689	605
Care4Calais (carol service)	366	0
BB Fees	0	587

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

	KRAN (carol service)	0	177
	Red Cross	0	160
	Gifts to mission workers	0	150
	Ukraine	0	120
Donations < £100		10	0
		<u>16,849</u>	<u>16,878</u>
Contributions to BMS and Home Mission			
	BMS	6,332	6,630
	Home Mission	6,332	6,630
		<u>12,663</u>	<u>13,260</u>
Total Subscriptions and Donations		<u>29,512</u>	<u>30,138</u>

ASHFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

12) CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

		<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
HSBC Current		1,035	4,970
HSBC Savings		168,482	179,039
Lloyds		30,000	30,000
Boughton		4,588	7,787
BB		3,304	1,790
Youth Camp		0	1,141
Unbanked offerings and activity income		196	657
ABC Petty Cash	40		72
	207,646		225,456
Brook		82,853	94,006
Total		290,498	319,462
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