

Annual Report for 2024

Registered Charity Number 1131765

Address:

Kirkley Park Road

Lowestoft

Suffolk

NR33 0LQ

Trustees:

I Davies

C Emerson

J Peacock (Church Secretary)

J Read

L Scott

A Smith (Church Treasurer)

I Hughes (Appointed January 2025)

T Stratton (Appointed January 2025)

Bankers:

CAF Bank Limited

The trustees present their Annual Report and financial statements for 2024.

Charitable Objectives

The Charity is governed by a constitution which states that “The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.”

Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity is governed in accordance with a Constitution dated 21st March 2009, (revised in 2019 and 2020), a copy of which is available to all members of the Charity.

Members are admitted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution by vote of the Church Meeting on the basis of their public profession of Christian faith by Believers Baptism, or following other modes of baptism to renew their public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Our list of members is reviewed yearly as part of our Constitutional review schedule.

Members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the charitable objective.

In accordance with the Constitution, the members appoint Deacons, who together with the Minister are collectively known as the Diaconate and are the Charity’s Trustees. Two of the Deacons are appointed to be Treasurer and Secretary. The Diaconate is responsible for the day to day running of the church’s work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the Charity. The Diaconate meet twice a month. One meeting as diaconate only and the other together with paid staff members. (Pioneer Chaplain, Whitton Coordinator, Children & Families Worker, Youth Specialist)

Relevant matters may be submitted to the Church Meeting by the Trustees for guidance, or may be raised by members in the Church Meeting for further consideration by the Trustees. Though the Constitution permits decisions to be made at Church Meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

A meeting of the Church members is held about 4 times a year and has the responsibility for the overall policy of the church. One of the meetings incorporates the constitutional annual Church Members Meeting to receive the annual accounts and report, to appoint an Independent Examiner and to consider other appropriate matters. During 2024 these meetings took place in January, April, July and October. The members appoint the Trustees, who together with the Minister, Church Secretary and Treasurer (who are also appointed by the Members), are responsible for the day to day running of the church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. Relevant matters may be submitted to the Church meeting by the Trustees for guidance, or may be raised by members in Church meeting for further consideration by the Trustees. Though the Constitution permits decisions to be made at Church meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

Objectives and Activities (and provision of Public Benefit)

In order to achieve the principal objective which is set out above, the Church provides a variety of activities both to its membership and to the public community. The aim is to show the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed and to bring people into a closer relationship with Him as living Lord. We do this across both of our sites, at London Road and our Community Hub, Whitton Life.

Central to the work and witness of the Church is the provision of regular public services of Christian worship which take place each Sunday at 10.30 am at London Road, with teaching from these services made publicly available via our website. Provision for children (Kidz Church) on Sunday mornings during the service is available for all services apart from when an All-Age service is held. Communion Services are held on the first Sunday morning of each month.

Our Wild Church Community meet monthly on a Sunday morning outside. They are a group who together explore spirituality, meditation, and seek to experience God as well as enjoying food and nature.

All our services are advertised on the website and our social media platforms.

The Church seeks to be a friendly and welcoming community and anybody is free to attend any of these services.

The Church runs a series of small homegroups for the growth of faith and discipleship.

During the week the Church is responsible for;

Knit & Natter Group: at Whitton Life on Tuesday mornings

Little Fishes: a toddler group at London Road Wednesday morning and afternoon.

Lunch Box: a lunch group for local retired folk on Wednesday lunch times

Family Coffee: at Whitton Life on Thursday mornings

Whitton Life Café: Thursday lunch times

MOTB (Message On The Ball) Youth Football: Thursday evenings at local pitches

After School Club: at Whitton Life on Friday afternoons

Pulse: Youth Group on Friday evenings at London Road

The Chaplaincy Collective: supported and led by our Pioneer Chaplain, this group includes others from different churches across Lowestoft who together provide a town centre chaplaincy that looks after the emotional, spiritual and practical needs of individuals through love and care based on a Christian worldview.

These groups have the purpose of building links with and supporting our community as well as demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ.

The Church is pleased to be able to make its facilities available to school group visits and for assemblies, also for hire by other local and national charitable organisations that this year have ranged from the University of the Third Age, to Al Anon and the Suffolk Music Service.

The Church continues to operate systems to ensure that all people working with children and adults at risk are appropriately vetted with regard to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Church has read the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and is satisfied that the activities outlined above clearly demonstrate that the charity is providing a benefit to the public.

Achievements and Performance

The Church does not measure the success of its programmes only in numbers, including financial numbers, but also in less tangible areas like fellowship and encouragement. The Trustees recognise that these are difficult to measure, but believe that 2024 was a positive year in the life of the church.

We had 113 members at the end of the year. During 2024 we were delighted to celebrate 4 Baptisms.

Our work with Children and Families continues to be very popular, with both Little Fishes sessions full and our Kidz Church well attended. Summer holiday family mornings were held again this year along with a Pumpkin Heroes Day in October. All were well attended.

Our Youth work started the year well, however our Youth Specialist left in April which caused some difficulties. It was decided in April that MOTB would close. Fortunately, volunteers stepped up to ensure most other groups continued, although on a less frequent basis. The membership agreed to seek a replacement Youth leader. This process has been started.

Our Chaplaincy work has included attending both Latitude Festival and First Light Festival and involved working alongside other local churches. Wild Church services continue to draw those more comfortable in a less 'churchy and formal' setting into creative acts of worship. In the Autumn we were delighted to celebrate the ordination of our Pioneer Chaplain and have committed to support her during her probationary period (3 years)

Our Whitton Life Hub continues to be very popular with local residents. In addition to the regular activities, we have also served many families through the FISH scheme (Food in School Holidays) and have enjoyed contact with the families. We have also hosted events for other organisations including Citizens Advice, Housing Support Officers and an event with East Suffolk Council Impact. We continue to work closely with other agencies and local education settings.

Financial Review

The Church continues to raise the funds which it needs to carry on its activities from within its own membership and congregation. No wider public appeal was made for funds during the year.

Income received in 2024 was £215,731 (2023 £187,522) which was £32,731 over the budget figure of £183,000. This includes £25,000 received from The Peter Hinsley Grant towards our Children's and Youth work. Income for our budgeted general expenditure, excluding the above donation, was £190,731, £7731 above budget.

Expenditure during the year totalled £170,211 (2023 £188,073).

The balance of income and expenditure of non-restricted/designated transactions was a of £45,520, which would have been a surplus of £25,020 without the receipt of the above donation.

Four claims were made for Gift Aid Refunds during the year.

Many of our fixed rate energy tariffs came to an end during the year with increased costs for the new fixed tariffs.

The church has increased its deposits, because of the above donation and also a reduced spending on salaries following our Youth Specialist's departure.

We continue to make grants to local, national and international Christian organisations and societies with Christian aims and other charities with objectives compatible with the Church's own charitable purpose. Unrestricted mission payments totalled £18,050, 9.5% of our unrestricted income (2023: £17,916, 9.6%).

The Church is heavily dependent on its membership working as volunteers in all aspects of the Church's activities, many of which run with little or no impact on the church's expenditure, but nevertheless contribute substantially to the achievement of the Church's objectives. We offer our deep heartfelt thanks to all who serve in this way their service is invaluable and is very much appreciated.

Early in the year the Trustees were concerned regarding finances of the Church, these concerns were shared with the membership. Many members responded by increasing their regular donations and the Trustees made a commitment to reducing the expenditure on the running costs wherever possible.

During the year, we purchased credit card readers for the Church and Whitton and set up accounts with Sum Up and Dona so that donations and purchases could be made by credit or debit card. Xero accounts package was purchased with the plan to transfer the accounts from spreadsheets to a more professional accounting system.

Trustees have assessed the major risks facing the Church and are satisfied that there are policies in place to minimise these risks. The three major risks are:

The loss of income generally due to the number of members reducing and the increase in household costs which may affect giving – managed by increasing the amount of reserves.

The loss of several higher donors – managed by holding reserves

The destruction of the church building, e.g. by fire – managed by insurance.

Having considered the relevant risks of changes in income and expenditure, the Trustees have established a Reserves Policy of six months of the budgeted expenditure for the following year. Our budget for 2024 was set at £183,000, (2023 £180,660) to reflect the reality of our economic situation. These figures included an allowance for a part time youth worker.

The church is satisfied that we have sufficient reserves at the end of the year, together with ongoing income anticipated, to enable the Church to function effectively in the coming year. As at 31 December 2024, the church held total reserves of £183,476 of which £25,000 were restricted and £1509 designated. Reserves that were neither restricted nor designated amounted to £156,967.

The church is a participating employer within the Defined Benefit section of the Baptist Pension scheme and has been making ongoing deficit payments to cover the costs of past service of its employees within the scheme under a recovery plan. This recovery plan has now reached its goal and no further payments are planned.

The financial results for the year are set out in the accompanying financial statements.

Plans for future periods

Future plans for 2025 include us continuing on our journey to recruit a new Youth Specialist.

We also hope to continue to build on our relationship with local agencies as we seek to serve our community especially with our activities at Whitton Life.

We plan to review and update some of our sound equipment at London Road.

Finances are challenging but, with prudence, we believe the financial basis of our church remains strong. Approved by the Diaconate of London Road Baptist Church on 6th October 2025 and signed on their behalf by

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Lou Webber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev Lou Webber

LRBC Church Accounts for the Year 1st January - 31st December 2024

	2024	2023
<u>Assets at the start of year</u>		
Staffing Fund	18,398	13608
Maintenance Fund	102	1456
Mission Funds	39,131	32887
Legacy/Capital Fund	80,325	80325
Youth Minister Fund	0	10230
Total	137956	138506

<u>Income</u>	2024	2023
Legacies/Capital Gifts	15000	0
Peter Hinsley Grant	25000	0
Grant Benefact Trust	0	1150
Weekly Offerings	38,323	39634
Gift Aided Offerings	85,154	81514
Income tax recovered on gift aids	24,294	24300
Other income (Lettings etc.)	9,375	15821
Directed Income	12,629	20516
Interest Received	5,956	4587
	215731	Total 187522

<u>Expenditure</u>	2024	2023
Property	34205	49901
Admin	8181	8304
Staffing	93122	90778
Capital Fund	2300	0
Wider Mission	18050	17916
Mission Training	0	3887
Local Mission	14353	17287
	170211	Total 188073

Total Cash Assets at start of year	137956	138506
Plus Income	215731	187522
Less Expenditure	170211	188073
Cash Assets carried forward	183476	137955

Non Monetary Assets

Insurance Values 2024		
Church buildings	4,790,259	
Church contents	178,474	
Manse	386,374	
Manse Contents	25000	
Minibus	0	
Whitton Life Centre	417,971	
Whitton Life Contents	102,214	
Total	5,900,292	

<u>Expenditure</u>		2024	2023
Property			
Property upkeep		9,953	11324
Church utilities		7,694	8652
Insurance		3,998	3930
Manse Maintenance		3,650	6556
Whitton Life utilities		8,747	5261
Minibus		163	1144
Manse refurbishment		0	13034
Total		34205	49901
Administration			
General Admin		6,925	6292
Computer Costs		439	1248
Bank Charges		60	61
Affiliations		757	703
Total		8181	8304
Staffing			
Salaries		82,608	68874
Staff support		2,764	6874
Youth Minister Fund		0	10230
Internal Mission Fund		7750	4800
Total		93122	90778
Capital			
New Railings		2,300	0
Total		2,300	0
External Mission			
Ukraine Refugees		0	796
Leprosy Mission		500	0
TWAM		500	750
BMS Appeal (Ukraine 2022)		0	0
BMS Birthday Scheme		450	420
BMS		7,800	6700
Home Mission		7,800	6700
Open Doors		500	500
BMS (Lebanon)		500	0
BMS Appeal (Syria)		0	1050
Christian Aid Gaza Appeal		0	1000
Total		18050	17916
Mission/ Training			
Ministry Training E Day		0	3638
Ministry Training J Dorling		0	249
Total			3887
Local Mission		14353	17287
Total Expenditure		£ 170,211	£ 188,073

Independent Examiners report

Report of the Independent Examiner(s) to the Trustees of LONDON ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH
On the accounts for the year ended 31/12/24

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church 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 the 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

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of [*insert named of applicable listed body*], which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts 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 come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by or on behalf of the Examiner 

Date 10/6/25

Name R GOLDSPIK

Relevant Professional Qualification(s) or body (if any) ACCA (Part)

Address 34 HOLYSTONE WAY
LOWESTOFT NR33 8FP