

Introduction

Oundle Baptist Church is a registered charity, charity number 1134043 which, as stated in the Charities Act 2011, is not required to produce a full annual report, but must submit a Trustees Annual Report and Accounts, the latter of which must be independently checked. The accounts have been compiled using the cash accounting method and the information provided here is for general purposes only. The Trustees Annual Report on the activities of the church fellowship in 2022 is incorporated into the body of this report.

The trustees of the church during this year have changed and the current details are set out below.

Minister

The Rev Martin Hills was called to the pastorate in October 2016

The Trustees

The following trustees were in post at 31st December 2023

Rev Martin Hills (Minister)

Michael Brookes

Robin Croxon

David Gent as Secretary

Juliet LaMar as Treasurer

Jane McDonald

Served as trustee but resigned in the year

Ankia Clidas (resigned) 30th April 2023

Ann Scott as Treasurer until 30th September 2023

Church Office

The church office is located at 1, St Osyth's Lane, Oundle PE8 4BG in premises which were purchased to serve as a community outreach centre, shared with the church office.

All correspondence from the charity's banks is currently addressed to the treasurer at 1, St Osyth's Lane, Oundle PE8 4BG

Affiliation

The church is a full member of The Baptist Union of Great Britain and is also a member of the Evangelical Alliance

Bankers

The church maintains two accounts with Santander plc, Bridle Road, Merseyside, L30 4GB and two deposit accounts with the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8RT

Independent Examiners

The church is required to have its accounts independently examined and for this purpose it has appointed Mr Graham Darbourne of TC Group, 6 North Street, Oundle, PE8 4AL

Reserves Policy

The trustees are aware that the income of the church is heavily dependent upon voluntary giving which can be variable. The trustees continually monitor the level of giving and expenditure and seek to try to maintain reserves that would equate to approximately two months of known expenditure. The reserves at the end of 2023 are in excess of the amount but the trustees consider it prudent to maintain reserves at a higher level as the regular income of the church is heavily dependent on members who are over 70 years of age

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the church is:

Connecting to: Jesus
 Each other
 Our communities

Overview of the year

In the year 2023, the church continued meeting in-person as well as providing an online option through Zoom to allow the inclusion of not only church family who were unwell or preferred not to mix with others, but also individuals who had become part of the congregation online. We are grateful to our minister and members and friends who have provided technical support as well as participating in the services. The church also has a very active pastoral care team who assisted the minister in offering and providing pastoral support as needs arose.

Outside of Sunday worship service, OBC continued to offer many opportunities for engagement, corporate prayer, and Bible study as well as outreach to the greater Oundle community.

- The small-group network in the church called 'Connect Groups' continued to meet weekly either online via zoom and/or in-person for Bible study and prayer support.

- Breathing Space, a twice monthly gathering for prayer and reflection, was held on Sunday evenings at Oundle Methodist Church.

- Engage, a twice monthly youth club, was held on Friday evenings at Oundle Methodist.

- Stitchat, a twice monthly sewing and social gathering, was held on Tuesdays at OBC's No.1 facility.

- Walk Through the Bible, a two-day exploration course, was hosted by OBC in late April at Glapthorn Village Hall, and provided an engaging and fun overview of the Old Testament.

Our voluntary Children and Families worker, appointed in 2020, continued to be active in the community, hosting a bi-weekly 'tots' group and monthly 'Explore' children's service as well as a monthly Quest afterschool club at Laxton Junior School and a weekly Bible Heroes afterschool club at Oundle Primary School. While money was initially allocated in the 2023 budget for the hiring of a youth worker, no suitable applicants were found, and the allocation was rescinded by agreement of the charity trustees.

Our Ukrainian outreach effort, started in 2022, continued to provide support and encouragement to a large group of refugees and their sponsor families. The weekly coffee morning for hosts and/or refugees continued to be well attended and quickly outgrew the church's mission centre at No.1. Alternative premises were located in 'The Hub', where a larger room was made available by the town council for a rental of £42 per session. Oundle Cooperative kindly made a community grant of £1500, and Oundle Town Council provided a grant of £3000 for the work. Members and friends of Oundle Baptist Church also provided regular donations. Ten weeks of English lessons, run by a Ukrainian teacher as well as church volunteers, were made available and very keenly attended, with the Oundle School kindly providing the funding to pay the Ukrainian teacher. To address the lack of public transport, especially for those refugees living in rural villages, OBC made a contract with 'Volunteer Action' whose volunteer drivers were available to transport refugees to the English lessons and the weekly coffee morning. Assistance in procuring school places, local work and housing was given by volunteers as well as some professionals, who made themselves available on various Friday mornings.

In-person church members' meetings were held every other month in 2023, primarily at the Oundle Methodist Church and occasionally immediately following the Sunday worship service, to address matters arising and enable in-person voting in accordance with Baptist Union regulations. Leadership team meetings were held on second Tuesday evenings at No.1 and occasionally on Saturdays to provide longer focus days. The leaders (trustees) also held a prayer meeting for an hour each week on the 1st, 3rd, and 4th

Tuesdays, with the meeting on the 1st also open to the church family.

Finally, in spring 2023, the church undertook its first church climate survey, which enjoyed a very high level of participation. The survey was undertaken to "take the temperature" of the church on various matters including service format, mission/vision fulfilment, communication, teaching, amongst others. A special church meeting was held in June to present the analysis and results of the survey to the congregation. Further sensing sessions are planned for 2024, and a repeat survey for 2025.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Oundle Baptist Church

I report on the accounts of Oundle Baptist Church, charity number 1134043, for the year ended 31 December 2023, set out on pages 5 to 12.

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 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;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- 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 the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Graham Darbourne
TC Group
6 North Street, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4AL

Date:

Statement of Financial Activities

Year to 31st December 2023

| | Unrestricted funds | Designated funds | Total Funds 2023 | Total Funds 2022 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | | | |
| Incoming resources from generated funds (Note 1) | | 3,500 | 3,500 | 3,361 |
| Donations and legacies (Note 1,3) | 92,837 | 4,193 | 97,030 | 80,761 |
| Gift Aid (Note 1,3) | 11,033 | 904 | 11,937 | 16,746 |
| Other income | 366 | 414 | 780 | 11,272 |
| Total incoming resources | 104,236 | 9,012 | 113,247 | 106,827 |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Ministry (Note 4) | 45,056 | - | 45,056 | 45,296 |
| No 1 building (Note 9) | 6,319 | - | 6,319 | 3,506 |
| Administration (Note 8) | 17,017 | - | 17,017 | 18,553 |
| Other Ministries (Note 7) | 2,001 | - | 2,001 | 10,294 |
| Worship (Note 5) | 7,801 | - | 7,801 | 10,581 |
| Giving To Others (Note 6) | 9,107 | - | 9,107 | 12,733 |
| Disaster Fund (Notes 1 & 10) | - | 1,250 | 1,250 | 3,750 |
| Fellowship Fund (Notes 1, 11) | - | 2,400 | 2,400 | 1,512 |
| Buildings Fund | - | 5,540 | 5,540 | |
| No. 1 Roof Fund (Notes 1,12) | - | 28,332 | 28,332 | 550 |
| Ukrainian Refugee Fund (Note 14) | - | 3,735 | 3,735 | 5,476 |
| Total expenditure | 87,301 | 41,257 | 128,558 | 85,388 |
| Net income / expenditure | 16,935 | (32,245) | (15,311) | 21,439 |
| Transfers between funds | | | | |
| General fund (note 9) | 2,148 | | 2,148 | (20,104) |
| Building Fund (note 9) | | (5,743) | (5,743) | - |
| Disasters Fund | | - | - | - |
| No.1 Roof Fund (note 9) | - | 3,595 | 3,595 | 19,729 |
| Agency Fund | - | | | 375 |
| Net Movement in Funds | 2,148 | (2,148) | - | - |
| Net Income After Transfer | 19,083 | (34,393) | (15,311) | 4,080 |
| Total funds brought forward | 665,984 | 54,431 | 720,415 | 716,335 |
| Total funds carried forward | 685,067 | 20,037 | 705,104 | 720,415 |

Balance Sheet

| | | 2023 £ | 2022 £ |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed Assets | Notes | | |
| | 2 | | |
| | 7 Wentworth Drive | 340,000 | 340,000 |
| | 2 | | |
| | 1 St Osyth's Lane | 280,000 | 280,000 |
| | Total Fixed Assets | 620,000 | 620,000 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| | Santander current a/c | 30,055 | 17,857 |
| | Santander savings a/c | 33,832 | 61,798 |
| | BU Deposit a/c 1 | 10,547 | 10,341 |
| | BU Deposit a/c 2 | 10,548 | 10,341 |
| | Cash | 122 | 78 |
| | Total Current assets | 85104 | 100,415 |
| | Net Current Assets | 85,104 | 100,415 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | 705,104 | 720,415 |
| Represented by | | | |
| <i>Unrestricted</i> | | | |
| General Fund | | 685,067 | 665,984 |
| <i>Designated</i> | | | |
| Building | | 11,087 | 21,574 |
| No 1 roof | | 0 | 22,561 |
| Disasters | | 654 | 1,849 |
| Fellowship Fund | | 3,408 | 3,876 |
| <i>Restricted</i> | | | |
| Ukrainian Refugees | | 4,888 | 4,571 |
| TOTAL | | 705104 | 720,415 |

These accounts have been approved by the Trustees

Rev. Martin Hills
Minister and Trustee

Date:

Ms Juliet Lamar
Trustee

Date:

Fund Balances

| | Opening £ | Incoming £ | Outgoing £ | Transfers £ | Gains/losses £ | Closing £ |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Unrestricted Funds | | | | | | |
| General Fund | 665,984 | 104,236 | 87,301 | 2,148 | 0 | 685,067 |
| Sub-total for Unrestricted Funds | 665,984 | 104,236 | 87,301 | 2,148 | 0 | 685,067 |
| Designated and Restricted funds | | | | | | |
| Building | 21,575 | 796 | 5,540 | (5,743) | 0 | 11,087 |
| Disasters Fund | 1,848 | 56 | 1,250 | - | 0 | 654 |
| No 1 roof | 22,561 | 2,175 | 28,332 | 3,596 | 0 | 0 |
| Fellowship Fund | 3,876 | 1,931 | 2,400 | - | 0 | 3,407 |
| Ukrainian Refugees | 4,571 | 4,052 | 3,735 | - | | 4,888 |
| Sub-total designated and restricted funds | 54,431 | 9,010 | 43,390 | 2,148 | 0 | 20,036 |
| TOTAL ALL | 720,415 | 114,879 | 130,569 | 0 | 0 | 705,104 |

Report and notes to the Accounts

1. Accounting Policies

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charity SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Acts of 1993 and 2011. They have been based on a historic cost convention.

Incoming and outgoing resources have been recorded on a receipts and payments basis as at 31st December 2022.

The general fund operates to receive the general donations to the church and to meet the normal running expenses.

There are a number of designated funds as follows:

- **Disaster Fund** – this fund enables the church to make a rapid response to provide financial support in cases of national and international emergencies.
- **No 1 roof Fund** - the roof at No 1 was in need of a major repair and because of the listed status of the building this was likely to be an expensive operation. A fund was established in 2017 to help towards this expenditure. The roof has now been repaired so the fund to be closed on 31st December 2023
- **Fellowship Fund** - this fund has been available for a number of years to allow the Minister to provide funds to individuals for urgent needs within the wider church family. During the year, because of illness affecting the mobility of a member of the minister's family, the church family donated to the fellowship fund to enable a donation to be made towards mobility aids.
- **Building Fund** - In 2021 the church family decided that we should seek to find either a building to convert or land to build a church on, so the trustees established a building fund to save for such a project. As it is unlikely that we would find suitable land or a building, and upgrades to the manse were required to enable the minister's family members to access washing facilities, it was decided to use some of the funds for that project. The fund was further depleted to cover the shortfall in the roof fund and also to replace a window in the building at no.1 St Osyth's Lane.
- **Ukrainian Refugee Fund** – In 2022 it was decided to offer wraparound support to Ukrainian refugees and their host families. The fund was established by the church family and was contributed to by Oundle School, The Cooperative Community Fund and Oundle Town Council. There is now no longer any need for that service, therefore the fund will no longer be required for that purpose.

2. Property

The church owns two properties – the manse at 7 Wentworth Drive and the community building at No 1 St Osyths Lane. These are both shown in the accounts at historical cost.

3. Donations

The church is entirely dependent on voluntary giving to fund its activities. It receives no funding from any external source. A number of members make regular payments by standing order and the Trustees are grateful to them for enabling a core of funding to be available. Many of the regular donors are taxpayers and the church is able to recover tax under the Gift Aid scheme.

Additional funds come from ad hoc donations from members and friends of the church and congregation and from the cash offering that is taken up as a part of weekly worship. The Government's Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme has enabled a further sum to be received in respect of these cash offerings.

The trustees are aware that many of the regular donors are aged over 70 and we have lost a number of those members in 2023. The trustees are aware that new younger givers will be required by the church to secure financial security.

4. Ministry

Rev Martin Hills who was appointed to the ministry of the church in 2016 has continued to lead the church, and the trustees are grateful for his leadership and for the development of the vision of the church during the year. The Trustees also wish to express their thanks to his wife, Carita, for her support of Martin.

The employer's NIC payments have been covered by the government's Employment Allowance.

The church continues to pay pension contributions into the defined contributions scheme with The Baptist Union Pension Fund in respect of Martin, and he also makes contributions each month.

The church provides the Minister with funds to make payments to those who may be in need from the Fellowship Fund.

The church is responsible for the council tax, water rates and building insurance on the manse.

The expenditure under this head comprised the following:

| Ministry Expenditure | Column1 | Column2 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | 2023 | 2022 |
| | £ | £ |
| Employment Costs comprising: | | |
| Salary | 34,364 | 32217 |
| Employer's pension cost | 3,991 | 4181 |
| Expenses | | 726 |
| Manse expenditure | 4,424 | 4307 |
| Training and conferences | 425 | 2004 |
| Other expenses | 1,851 | 600 |
| MINISTER COST | 45,055 | 45296 |

5. Worship and teaching

Being able to meet together for regular worship is an essential part of being a church and is a key part of our mission statement in enabling us to connect to each other and to Jesus.

Sunday worship is in person and also available online through the zoom code.

Times of prayer were able to be in person before the service each Sunday. With few exceptions, we have been able to have a social time over coffee/tea, usually before the service. Once a month we also have 'soup Sunday' whereby we share some home-made soups and bread to fellowship together.

Most members of the church family also meet in 'connect groups' during the week for study, prayer and social times. As with Sunday services, some groups are continuing on zoom or in person depending on the weather.

The main areas of expenditure under this heading were as follows:

| Worship and Teaching Expenditure | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Equipment | 424 | 777 |
| Events | 821 | 972 |
| Premises hire | 4964 | 6,424 |
| Licences | 874 | 1,399 |
| Payments to visiting speakers | 0 | 250 |
| Refreshments | 450 | 438 |
| Resources | 268 | 321 |
| Gifts | 0 | 75 |
| TOTAL | 7801 | 10,581 |

6. Giving to Others

The church is part of the Baptist family and provides support to the two main mission works of UK Baptists at home and overseas.

The church is helping to support The Souster Trust who reach out to young people locally and at school.

The church has continued to provide regular financial support to Bethany Children's Trust for its work in Africa.

The church continues to support the work of the Leprosy Mission of which one of our members is the UK director.

Support was also given to a charity in Myanmar.

| Giving to Others | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Baptist World Mission | 1500 | 3600 |
| Baptist Home Mission | 3600 | 3600 |
| The Souster Trust | 601 | 1000 |
| Bethany Childrens' Trust | 1023 | 1700 |
| Myanmar | 1360 | 1133 |
| Leprosy Mission | 1023 | 1700 |
| TOTAL | 9107 | 12733 |

7. Other Ministries (including children and young people)

Mrs Carita Hills, our unpaid families and childrens' worker, has been building up contacts with children and families connected with the church and has started a number of initiatives. A thriving Tots group has expanded on Tuesday mornings. Carita is now engaged with two after-schools clubs each week.

The Sunday activities for children include some teaching and craft on three or four Sundays in the month and 'Explore' is held for primary school age children one Sunday a month in the sports hall of the same school where the church meet and at the same time as the service.

A youth group called 'Equip' meets regularly as well as a drop in youth outreach each week. The intended age group is for those in secondary school.

Under the heading of other ministries, we have included pastoral care which is offered to the attendees and their families of the church as well as to the wider community when needed.

| Other Ministries | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Youth expenses | 276 | 206 |
| Families and Childrens' work | 1,458 | 2,255 |
| Outreach | | 132 |
| Bereavement Care | | 302 |
| Pastoral ministry | 168 | 106 |
| TOTAL | 1,902 | 3,001 |

8. Church administration

Mrs Judith Brashaw has continued to act as church administrator and manager of No 1 during the year and had an unpaid break for four months spanning 2022 and 2023. The Trustees are very grateful to her for all her work and in particular for the assistance she has given to Rev Martin Hills. The trustees are also grateful to those who volunteered to carry out Judith's duties in her absence.

A number of members are involved in producing a range of communications though our website, social media and two publications. The Trustees are grateful for all their labours.

Judith and Ankia have been busy setting up Church Suite to update our communications system and Ankia has set up a new website which is much improved over the previous one.

The church continues to rent a storage container.

| Administration | 2023 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Administration and finance software | 875 | 856 |
| Administrator's Salary | 6,208 | 7,092 |
| Computer support | 3,174 | 2,743 |
| Equipment | 21 | 730 |
| Insurance | 1,451 | 1,466 |
| Subscriptions | 1,032 | 891 |
| Telephone | 615 | 562 |
| Professional Fees | 558 | 528 |
| Printing & Stationery | 1,870 | 2,306 |
| Rent | 948 | 864 |
| Training | 219 | 270 |

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Website | 46 | 244 |
| TOTAL | 16,895 | 18,553 |

9. No 1 Building

No.1 St Osyth's Lane provides accommodation for a number of activities of the church and for the community projects as well as providing counselling and office accommodation. Apart from part of the roof being replaced this year, a window also needed to be replaced.

| No.1 Building expenses | 2023 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Utilities | 3,103 | 1,828 |
| Cleaning | 867 | 880 |
| Repairs | 2,349 | 798 |
| TOTAL | 6,319 | 3,506 |

10. Disaster Fund

This fund exists to enable a rapid response to be made by the church to financial needs arising from major disasters. Members are then encouraged to top up the fund with donations. Wherever possible donations are routed via recognised aid agencies. During the year donations were made in reaction to worldwide disasters through the following agencies.

| Recipient | Cause | 2023 |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | | £ |
| British Red Cross | Earthquake in Morocco | 500 |
| Christian Aid | Earthquake in Turkey | 500 |
| DEC | Kakhovka dam collapse | 250 |
| TOTAL | | 1,250 |

11. Fellowship Fund

The fellowship Fund has been in existence for many years to provide funds for the minister to help those in the fellowship, or further afield, when in need. The sum of £1931.25, including a special appeal to gift money to a member of the minister's family to purchase mobility aids, was received into this fund during the year and £2,400 for the afore-mentioned cause as well as members of the fellowship in need.

12. No. 1 Roof Fund

This fund was created some years ago to provide for the replacement of the roof at No.1. The roof part was replaced in 2023 at a cost of £28,332 and there is therefore no need to continue with the fund beyond 2023.

13. Building Fund

In 2021 the church family decided that we should seek to find either a building to convert or land to build a church on, so the trustees established a building fund to save for such a project. As it is unlikely that we would find suitable land or a building, and upgrades to the manse were required to enable the minister's family members to access washing facilities, it was decided to use some of the funds for that project. The fund was further depleted to cover the shortfall in the roof fund and also to replace a window in the building at no.1 St Osyth's Lane. A total of £796 was received into this fund and expenditure of £ 5,540 incurred. At a church meeting it was also decided to transfer a further £5,743 to make up the shortfall of £3,596 in the roof fund and £2,148 to the general fund to cover the cost of replacing the window at no.1.

14. Ukraine Wraparound Support Fund

The church family made a decision to support local people who kindly decided to host refugee families from Ukraine and started a fund for this purpose. Many volunteers are involved in meeting the families at our weekly coffee mornings held for that purpose. Transport was also paid in some cases to enable our Ukrainian guests to attend some of the sessions. On some Saturday afternoons, by the courtesy of Oundle library providing the premises, fun sessions were held for the children of refugees as opportunities to progress their learning of the English language. Because of the efforts of mainly Carolyn Gent, funding was successfully sought from Oundle Coop, Oundle School and Oundle Town Council. Gifts were given to hosts and guests where money was needed to settle the guests in to the host accommodation as well as when independent housing was found for the refugees. Many gifts of bicycles, furniture, household items were given by the community as well as from the grants that Carolyn procured. Robin and Janet Croxon have taken responsibility for the Friday coffee mornings where not only do the guests get an opportunity to chat in their own language with each other, but also to receive help with job applications, benefits, housing etc. There appears to be no further need for this service as hosts and guests are now independent due to settling over time, and through information which has been garnered, are aware of rights and privileges available to them. The church extends its thanks to the army of volunteers who made the events possible. A total of £4,052 was donated and £3,735 was spent.

15. Reserves

At 31 December 2023 the total current assets of the church amounted to £85,104 of which £20,037 represents designated and restricted funds. The balance available for the general fund is £65,072 which is higher than would be necessary to meet the reserves policy. The trustees consider it prudent to hold this level of reserves as there is continued concern as to future levels of income give the age profile of the church.