

**Oundle Baptist Church  
Accounts and Trustees Report  
Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

## **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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Rev Martin Hills (Minister)

David Gent as Secretary

Juliet LaMar as Treasurer

Jane McDonald

Served as trustee but retired on 16 | November 2024 after completing 3 years of service

Michael Brookes

Robin Croxon

## **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 a deposit account 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, The Old Town Hall, Market Place, Oundle, PE8 4BA.

### **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 2024 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 2024, 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.
- In 2024 the monthly 'Beathing Space' event held at Oundle Methodist Church came to an end and we are looking at new ways to involve the church family in prayer and reflection.
- Engage, a twice monthly youth club, continued to run on Friday evenings at Oundle Methodist. We have seen numbers grow from 2 to 14 young people in the year.
- Stitchat, a twice monthly sewing and social gathering, continued to run on Mondays at OBC's No.1 facility.
- A Jigsaw exchange club was also piloted at No.1 during 2024 alongside Stitchat but low levels of support saw the pilot come to an end.
- Between January and March we ran a 'Bereavement Journey Group' with 12 participants. The group was held at St Peter's Church and was run in conjunction with a team from St Peters.
- Walk Through the Bible, a two-day exploration course, was hosted by OBC in mid-March at Oundle Primary School, providing an engaging and fun overview of the Old Testament and was followed by a shared meal and evening entertainment.

Our voluntary Children and Families worker, appointed in 2020, continued to be active in the community, hosting a weekly 'tots' group and term time after school clubs in both Laxton Junior School 'Quest Club' and Oundle Primary School 'Bible Heroes'. She was also heavily involved in the provision of activities for the children attending the church services week by week.

Our Ukrainian outreach effort, started in 2022, continued to provide support and encouragement to a large group of refugees and their sponsor families. As the year progressed it became obvious that the drop-in facility and immediate support needs had changed and the group disbanded but online support is still available as needed.

In-person church members' meetings were held every bi-monthly in 2024, 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 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, with the meeting on the 1st also open to the church family.



## 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 2024.

### 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  
The Old Town Hall, Market Place, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4BA

Date: 8/5/2025

## Statement of Financial Activities

Year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
<b>Income</b>				
Incoming resources from generated funds (Note 1)				3,500
Donations and legacies (Note 1,3)	80,760	6,644	87,404	97,030
Gift Aid (Note 1,3)	13,104	277	13,381	11,937
Other income	1,727	0	1,727	780
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>95,591</b>	<b>6,921</b>	<b>102,512</b>	<b>113,247</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Ministry (Note 4)	49,076	-	49,076	45,056
No 1 building (Note 9)	5,102	-	5,102	6,319
Administration (Note 8)	20,844	-	20,844	17,017
Other Ministries (Note 7)	3,784	-	3,784	2,001
Worship (Note 5)	9,048	-	9,048	7,801
Giving To Others (Note 6)	10,438	-	10,438	9,107
Disaster Fund (Notes 1 & 10)	-	1,000	1,000	1,250
Fellowship Fund (Notes 1 & 11)	-	1,593	1,593	2,400
Buildings Fund (Notes 1 & 12)	-	8,695	8,695	5,540
No. 1 Roof Fund (Notes 1 & 12)	-	0	0	28,332
Ukrainian Refugee Fund (Notes 1 & 14)	-	299	299	3,735
Equipment Fund (Notes 1&14)		8,345	8,345	-
Agency Fund (Notes 1 & 15)		2,350	2,350	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>98,292</b>	<b>22,282</b>	<b>120,573</b>	<b>128,558</b>
<b>Net income / expenditure</b>	<b>(2,701)</b>	<b>(15,361)</b>	<b>(18,061)</b>	<b>(15,311)</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>				
<b>General fund (note 14)</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>		<b>(9,000)</b>	
<b>Disasters Fund</b>		<b>4,589</b>	<b>4,589</b>	
<b>Ukraine Fund</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,589)</b>	<b>(4,589)</b>	
<b>Equipment Fund</b>		<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net Income After Transfer</b>	<b>(11,701)</b>	<b>(6,361)</b>	<b>(18,061)</b>	<b>(15,311)</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>685,067</b>	<b>20,036</b>	<b>705,104</b>	<b>720,415</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>673,336</b>	<b>13,676</b>	<b>687,042</b>	<b>705,104.</b>

## Balance Sheet

		2024 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>Notes</b>		
	2	7 Wentworth Drive	340,000
	2	1 St Osyth's Lane	280,000
		<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>620,000</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
		Santander current a/c	2,340
		Santander savings a/c	42,287
		BU Deposit a/c 1	10,547
		BU Deposit a/c 2	10,548
		BU Deposit 3mth	22,367
		Cash	48
		<b>Total Current assets</b>	<b>85,104</b>
		<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>67,042</b>

<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>687,042</b>	<b>705,104</b>
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### Represented by

#### Unrestricted

General Fund

673,366	685,067
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#### Designated

Building

2,392	11,087
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Disasters

6,001	654
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Equipment Fund

1,655	0
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Fellowship Fund

3,371	3,408
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#### Restricted

Ukrainian Refugees

0	4,888
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Agency Fund

257	
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#### TOTAL

<b>687,042</b>	<b>705,104</b>
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These accounts have been approved by the Trustees

Rev. Martin Hills  
Minister and Trustee



Date: 4/5/2025

Ms Juliet Lamar  
Treasurer and Trustee



Date: 8 May 2025

## Fund Balances

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Closing
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>						
General Fund	685,067	95,591	98,292	(9,000)	(11,701)	673,366
<b>Sub-total for Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>685,067</b>	<b>95,591</b>	<b>98,292</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>	<b>(11,701)</b>	<b>673,366</b>
<b>Designated and Restricted funds</b>						
Building	11,087	0	8,695		(8,695)	2,392
Disasters Fund	654	1,758	1,000	4,589	5,348	6,001
Fellowship Fund	3,408	1,556	1,593		(37)	3,371
Ukrainian Refugees	4,888		299	(4,589)	(4,888)	0
Equipment Fund	0	1,000	8345	9,000	1,655	1655
Agency Fund	0	2,606	2,350		256	256
<b>Sub-total designated and restricted funds</b>	<b>20,037</b>	<b>6,920</b>	<b>22,282</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>(6,361)</b>	<b>13,676</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL</b>	<b>705,104</b>	<b>102,512</b>	<b>120,574</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(18,062)</b>	<b>687,042</b>

## 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

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.
- **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.
- **Building Fund** – This fund is available to meet the costs of work on the two buildings owned by the church
- **Ukrainian Refugee Fund** – This fund was established to help finance support work for Ukrainian refugees who had settled in the area. That work has now been concluded and the church members agreed at a meeting on 17 November 2024 that the balance of funds should be transferred to the Disaster Fund to enable the church to respond to other situations.
- **Equipment Fund** – it was agreed that funds should be made available to fund the purchase of new sound equipment to enhance the worship at Oundle Primary School and the trustees therefore set aside £9,000 from the surplus accruing in 2023 for that purpose. In addition to the purchase of sound equipment the fund has also been used to purchase a new printer for the church office.
- **Agency Fund** – from time to time members make donations to the church which are to be passed on to other charities. These pass into a restricted fund in accordance with HMRC guidance on Gift Aid. Where appropriate Gift Aid or GASDs is claimed on the donation and this is also passed on to the recipient charity.

### 2. Property

The church owns two properties – the manse at 7 Wentworth Drive and the community building at No 1 St Osyth's 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. A card machine was purchased in this year and this enables contactless payments to be made at Sunday services and other gatherings. The

Government's Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) has enabled a further sum to be received in respect of both the cash offerings and contactless payments of £30 or less.

The trustees are aware that many of the regular donors are aged over 70 and future income is by no means certain. 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. During the work further work was done at the manse and this has been dealt with through the Buildings Fund (see note 12)

The expenditure under this head comprised the following:

<b>Ministry Expenditure</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Employment Costs comprising:		
Salary	37,182	34,364
Employer's pension cost	4,479	3,991
Expenses	1,349	
Manse expenditure	4,434	4,424
Training and conferences	1,032	425
Other expenses	600	1,851
<b>MINISTER COST</b>	<b>49,076</b>	<b>45,055</b>

#### **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. We meet each week at Oundle Primary School and we are grateful to the Head Teacher for making this facility available. Services are mainly conducted by our minister, but other members have been encouraged to take services. The services are usually aimed at all ages but separate activities are held for children on a regular basis.

Sunday worship is in person and also available online through Zoom.

Times of prayer are held 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.

It is necessary to set up the hall before the service and set down afterwards. We are very grateful for the people who do this.

For some time we have encountered problems in making the PA and av system in the hall work satisfactorily. A decision was taken at the start of the year to make funds available to purchase the equipment necessary to resolve the problems and this has now been done (Note 14). We are grateful to the small team that has put this equipment together and to those who run it each week.

Most members of the church family also meet in 'connect groups' during the week for study, prayer and social times

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

<b>Worship and Teaching Expenditure</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Premises hire	6,449	4964
Events	687	821
Equipment	180	424
Licences	840	874
Refreshments	467	450
Resources	425	268
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,048</b>	<b>7801</b>

## **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.

In addition to the sums budgeted for giving in 2024 the church made additional payments to the charities to make up for the shortfall in payments in 2023.

<b>Giving to Others</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Baptist World Mission	2,530	1500
Baptist Home Mission	2,630	3600
The Souster Trust	740	601
Bethany Childrens' Trust	1,484	1023
Myanmar	1,570	1360
Leprosy Mission	1,484	1023
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,438</b>	<b>9107</b>

## **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.

During the year, a monthly event called Explore was held on Sunday mornings in the school gym. This has now been discontinued. A family Nativity service was well attended and over 40 Ad vent calendars were distributed to families in December.

A youth group called 'Equip' meets regularly at No 1 on a Tuesday evening for study and discussion. In addition a fortnightly youth club – 'Engage' runs at the Methodist Church premises. Attendances at this event aimed at those in secondary school have been encouraging.

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.

<b>Other Ministries</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Youth expenses	1,194	276
Families and Childrens' work	2,300	1,458
Pastoral ministry	290	168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>1,902</b>

## **8. Church administration**

Mrs Judith Brashaw has continued to act as church administrator and manager of No 1 during the year. The Trustees are very grateful to her for all her work and in particular for the assistance she has given to Rev Martin Hills.

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

During the year the contract for our photocopier was terminated with some additional termination costs and a new printer was purchased (see note 14)



The church continued to rent a storage container during the year but notice has now been given to terminate this rental.

<b>Administration</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Administration and finance software	1,278	921
Administrator's Salary	8,950	6,208
Computer support	3,275	3,174
Equipment	0	21
Insurance	1,534	1,451
Subscriptions	414	1,032
Telephone	661	615
Professional Fees	582	558
Printing & Stationery	2,695	1,870
Rent	1,354	948
Training	100	219
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,843</b>	<b>16,895</b>

## 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.

<b>No.1 Building expenses</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Utilities	2,830	3,103
Cleaning	870	867
Repairs	1,145	2,349
Sundries	184	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,029</b>	<b>6,319</b>

## 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.

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>2024</b>
For the One	Myanmar disaster	£500
Leprosy Mission	Nepal landslide	£500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£1,000</b>

At a church members' meeting on 17 November 2024 it was agreed that the funds remaining in the Ukraine Wraparound project should be transferred to the Disasters Fund.

### **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. Payments are made at the discretion of the Minister and Trustees.

### **12. Buildings Fund**

The Buildings Fund exists to provide funds for significant building work at the two properties owned by the church. During 2024 the boiler at the manse was replaced at a cost of £3,640 and substantial decking work costing £4,572 was done to improve access to the property for the Minister's disabled son. Electrical work at No 1 cost £482

### **13. Ukraine Wraparound Support Fund**

Immediately after the outbreak of the Ukraine war, the church began a project to provide support for Ukrainian refugees who had come to the town and surrounding villages. This has proved to be very successful and a number of families have been helped. Weekly gatherings of the refugees and their hosts were held but these stopped in 2023. During 2024 help has been provided in one situation and those involved in the project felt that the time had come for the project to be closed down. The project still had funds of £4,589.50 and the church agreed at a members' meeting on 17 November 2024 that these funds should be transferred into the Disasters Fund so that they could continue to be available to meet urgent situations where relief was needed.

### **14. Equipment Fund**

For some time the worship experience at Oundle Primary School has been hampered by a lack of adequate sound and AV equipment. Early in 2024 it was decided to use some of the surplus obtained in 2023 to fund the purchase of equipment that would remove the problems that had been encountered. The sum of £9,000 was set aside for this purpose. A small team has researched and resourced the acquisition of the equipment and we are grateful to them for their patient work. The new system is now running and the congregation has noticed the improvement. In total, £7,250 has been spent on this equipment.

Also during the year, it became clear that the deal the church had with DEOS Group for the supply of a photocopier was no longer economic. Following advice from OCS (UK) Ltd our computer advisers, a high quality printer was purchased at a cost of £1,094.34 and this has also been charged to this fund.

### **15. Agency Fund**

For many years the church has operated a restricted fund, known as the Agency Fund through which members can make donations to other charities. This is a restricted fund and operates in accordance with the guidance produced by HMRC and so gift aid can be claimed where appropriate and that gift aid is also passed on to the relevant charity. At the end of the year there was an item which had still to be paid over and so this fund appears in the accounts.

## **16. Reserves**

At 31 December 2024 the total current assets of the church amounted to £67,042 of which £13,676 represents designated and restricted funds. The balance available for the general fund is £53,366 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.