

ALNWICK BAPTIST CHURCH

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

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ALNWICK BAPTIST CHURCH TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

For the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025



1. Statutory information

Alnwick Baptist Church at Lisburn Street, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1UR was entered on the Register of Charities on 9 September 2011 with a new Charity Register Number of 1143745. The financial year runs from April to March.

The governing documents are a property Trust Deed (dated 1 July 1976), for which the current holding or Church Trustees are Mr Alastair Conn, Mr Brian Friend, Mr William McDonald and Mr Ian Simpson, and the Church Constitution (agreed 10 March 2011).

The mission statement of Alnwick Baptist Church is "To encourage people to accept and celebrate Jesus in their lives and to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to following Him."

The Church banks with Lloyds Bank, Alnwick. The independent examiner is Mrs Jane Harvey FCA, of Greaves Grindle, Alnwick.

2. Trustees and governance

The Charity Trustees who served during the year were:

Rev Caroline Friend (Co-Minister)
Rev Chris Friend (Co-Minister)
Mr Russell Lee (Church Secretary)
Dr Margaret Andrew (Church Treasurer)
Mr David Archer *from 10 July 2024*
Mrs Gillian Curry
Mr Richard Evans *from 10 July 2024*
Mr Jonathan Friend *from 6 November 2024*
Mrs Julie Hammond
Dr Carol Jagger
Miss Susan Prince (Safeguarding Lead)
Mr Ian Simpson
Dr Ian Smith *retired 6 November 2024*
Rev Karen Smith

Charity Trustee appointment process:

- Names are brought before the Church through the existing Elders. If a nominee is willing to be appointed, they are asked to confirm they are not disqualified from acting as a Trustee.
- A quorum of 40% of Church Members is required at the Church Meeting, and confirmation is by secret ballot, with at least two-thirds of the Members (present and voting) in favour of the appointment.
- There is an induction process for each new Charity Trustee appointment which makes use of the Charity Commission's published guidance and regulation of charities.
- Elders must be Church Members, hold the doctrinal beliefs as stated for the minister in the Church Constitution, and have been baptised as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Elders serve for three years and may be re-appointed.
- Deacons must be Church Members, and the majority of the Diaconate been baptised as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Deacons serve for three years and may be re-appointed.
- Elders and Deacons are encouraged to read the Baptist Union of Great Britain Guidelines and its other resources relating to their responsibilities and positions.
- Elders and Deacons are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit", and they have regard to this in their administration of the Church.

As Charity Trustees, the Elders and Deacons met jointly in person five times during the year for normal Church business. Separately, the Elders and the Deacons met regularly to deal with all the affairs of the Church: spiritual, pastoral and practical.

3. Charitable objective

Alnwick Baptist Church ("ABC") is governed by a Church Constitution and a property Trust Deed, and as a charity is an unincorporated charitable association.

The Constitution states the principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination, to include the advancement of education, community service and other such general charitable purposes, in such parts of the United Kingdom and the world as the Church shall determine. The objectives of the Elders and Deacons are to ensure Church life, and work within the local area, help to fulfill that mission, both locally and more widely.

4. Organisational structure and decision making process

The members of the Church are accepted in accordance with the Trust Deed and the Church Constitution, which require them to acknowledge the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures; salvation only by repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and to have made a personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church Members' Meeting normally occurs three times in each year, and has responsibility for the overall policy of the Church. In accordance with the Church Constitution, Members appoint Charity Trustees, who together with the Minister(s), Church Secretary and Treasurer (each also appointed by the members) and collectively known as the Eldership and Diaconate, are responsible for the day-to-day running of the Church's work and witness, and the financial and legal aspects of the charity. All Members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the charitable objective. Church Members' meetings are open to non-members. They can join in meeting discussions but only Members are entitled to vote.

Relevant matters may be presented to the Church Members' Meeting by the Elders and Deacons for guidance, or they may be raised by Members in the Church Meeting for further consideration by the Elders and Deacons. Though the Trust Deed and the Church Constitution permit decisions to be made at Church Members' Meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

In our previous annual report, we disclosed that in October 2023 the Church Members' Meeting approved a request by the Charity Trustees to commission legal advice on two possible changes to our Church governance and structure:

- Appointing the Baptist Union Corporation (BUC) as Property Trustee, in place of the four individuals currently acting as holding or Church Trustees; and
- Making an application to the Charity Commission to reform the Church as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Regarding the first possible change, following the completion of due diligence work, in March 2025 a Special Church Meeting of Members passed two resolutions:

- 1) To appoint the Baptist Union Corporation Limited to become the Sole Holding (Property) Trustee of Alnwick Baptist Church, Lisburn Street, Alnwick NE66 1UR.
- 2) Assuming that the appointment under Resolution (1) above is successful, that, pursuant to the Baptist and Congregational Trusts Act 1951, the Church's Holding Trustees be requested to adopt the Baptist Model Trusts for Chapels and Halls known as the Baptist Trusts for Churches 2003 in respect of the Church premises, Alnwick Baptist Church, Lisburn Street, Alnwick NE66 1UR.

Consequently, the Charity Trustees anticipate submitting an application in respect of Resolution (1) to the Baptist Union Corporation in the first half of 2025/26, and we will confirm the result of this application in our next annual report.

Regarding the second possible change to reform the Church as a CIO, our due diligence work remains ongoing and the Charity Trustees will report on its progress and any consequences in our next annual report.

5. Objectives and activities

To achieve the principal objective set out above (see *Charitable Objective*), the Church provides a variety of activities, both to its membership and to the community generally.

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.

Services and acts of worship

Central to the work and the witness of the Church is the provision of regular public services of Christian worship, which normally take place each Sunday at 10:30am in our building on Lisburn Street. On the first Sunday of each month, our morning worship also includes communion. On the third Sunday of each month, morning worship normally is an all age service, and there is a reflective communion service at 7pm.

In months with a fifth Sunday, each person in the ABC family is actively encouraged to take our individual act of worship into the local community. Additionally, we provide for our Church building to be open for 'reflective worship', for those in the ABC community who wish to engage with Fifth Sunday in this way and also to provide for visitors.

There are also occasional services at other times which are advertised variously through the weekly diary on [our website](#), invitation leaflets, in the local press and on the Church noticeboard. ABC seeks to be a friendly, open and embracing community and anybody is welcome to attend any of these services.

On the theme of welcome, in October 2024 the Church resolved to amend the welcome published on our website, which is addressed to those looking to explore faith or somewhere to belong, and you can read the words of that welcome [here](#).

Missional communities

The Church also has several missional communities, which function as small relational services, usually held outside the Church building within community settings. One example of this is *The Gathering*, a group meeting monthly on a Sunday teatime, in homes over food, to explore more about following Jesus.

Pioneer ministry

In July 2024, the Church Members' Meeting passed a resolution to appoint Karen Smith, part-time Minister in Training at this time, to the new office of ABC Pioneer Minister. Subsequently, Karen completed her training, was ordained in September 2024, and commenced her office in October 2024, working 1.5 days a week.

The Pioneer work in Widdrington is currently in its early stages, predominantly embodying being a presence and a support wherever possible within the local community. This includes intentional listening within that community for areas which represent possibilities for future Pioneer activities.

Children and families

The Church welcomes children and families, with a broad range of activities co-ordinated by our Children and Families worker, Sarah Hamer. We have a children's programme as part of *Junior Church* in most morning services, and each month:

On the second Sunday, there is *Messy Church* at 3.30pm (an activity supported by all the local churches in Alnwick), usually in St James United Reform Church, Alnwick.

On the third Sunday, as mentioned above (see *Services and acts of worship*), morning worship is an all age service.

Junior Church follows the same programme as the main church, making new opportunities for connections and discussions between parents and their children.

Young people

The Church also provides activities for young people independently and in partnership with other local churches. In her ABC role, Sarah visits several primary schools in our community, engaging with the students through different activities such as school assemblies and prayer groups. Each year we host our well-established *Higher Sports* holiday week for young people in Years 4 to 8 at St Paul's Primary School in Alnwick. The Church is also part of the ecumenical approach to regular youth work, as one of several local churches supporting the **Ignite Youth Project** (Charity No. 1089954). Ignite works in schools and amongst children and young people through clubs and other activities, using a 'youth cell' structure. Church members support Ignite financially, as volunteers assisting in schools work or youth groups, and by acting as trustees.

Church groups

The Church runs a series of midweek groups for the growth of faith and discipleship, hosted in the homes of some Members. In addition to the opportunity for bible study and to develop themes and practical application from the Sunday message, these groups form an important part of the prayer and practical support the Church family give to one another.

A prayer group faithfully meets in our building each Saturday morning from 9 to 10am, praying for the Church, our local community and the wider world.

Other group activities connecting with and supporting our local communities

A major commitment of the Church is running a debt advice centre in Alnwick, as a part of **Christians Against Poverty** (Charity No. 1097217), offering free debt advice and support to anyone in the local community who requests it.

A further substantial commitment is our *Warm and Welcome*, a safe warm space providing hot refreshments and companionship on a Wednesday, for the benefit of any in the local community. In the summer months, from April, this activity continues in a scaled down version known as the *Warm Welcome*. Out of this ministry, and new in the past year, the Church has begun to offer the complimentary activity of a *Community Lunch*.

As we highlighted in our previous annual report, in July 2023, the Church Members' Meeting agreed that we become a supporting church for **Hope into Action UK** (Charity No. 1137686), through a service level agreement with **Gateway into Life** (Charity No. 1184557). Gateway into Life is a franchise of Hope into Action UK, operating under the name of Hope into Action: Northumberland. In the Hope into Action model, a house is purchased in a local area from funds provided by national investors, which is linked with a local church partner providing support for the property and the tenants through a Friendship and Support Group (FSG).

The Church runs further groups and activities to connect with our local communities, including: a Tuesday morning *Explore group*, weekly *Faith Talks* at Weavers Court (local extra care housing), leading Christian services in community residential settings and an occasional *Walking group*.

The Church offers and supports various events for people of all ages to allow opportunities to build relationships, explore different expressions of worship and develop personal faith. We do these both as an individual church and also by partnering with others, such as CTiA (Christians Together in Alnwick).

Further details of all our activities are available from the Charity Trustees on request by emailing info@alnwickbaptist.org.uk.

Providing activities appropriately and safely

The Church maintains and operates systems to ensure that all people working with children and adults at risk are safely recruited into their roles, including DBS checks where necessary. Once each year, in a Church Members' Meeting, a statement on the Church's Safeguarding Policy is read out, to remind Members (and to update them, where required) about their responsibilities under the policy. The Church also formally reviews the Safeguarding Policy at least annually and update it where required. A specific Charity Trustee is responsible for oversight of the Church's safeguarding procedures, and the Church appoints and retains separate Designated Persons for the safeguarding of children and for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

6. Activities and achievements

We measure the success of our programmes in the opportunities we provide for fellowship, as well as the encouragement given to Members, the wider congregation and the community which we serve, rather than simply being driven by numbers. Nevertheless the Trustees recognise our responsibility to ensure that funds are utilised appropriately and effectively, and note some of our criteria for success can be difficult to measure.

In 2024/25, our achievements are characterised by being centred on our three pillars of: Mission; Discipleship and Community. We have sought to be a Spirit-led Church family, seeking to engage with our local community in a contextually relevant way, driven by a heart for justice and seeking to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We are a united Church, not uniform, seeking to follow Jesus with authenticity and integrity. The Charity Trustees are very proud of the breadth and depth of the activities and achievements of the Church family. We trust this report properly reflects these, and wish to say a huge 'Thank you' to everyone involved.

At the beginning of April 2024, we had 95 Members in the Church. In the year to the end of March 2025, this reduced to 88 as we welcomed five new Members, 10 Members resigned, and sadly two of our Members passed away.

We continue to encourage the Church that our 'family' is wider than just the congregation and to find their own 'home' where they feel part of Church community and discipleship. For some, this is the weekly service and for others it is our midweek groups or missional communities. Over the year attendances at weekly services ranged between 90 and 110 people and we operated seven different midweek groups, involving around 65 people in total. The size of our total Church family numbers around 160 people.

As we stated in Section 5, the Church aims to provide a variety of ways for people to connect with the Christian faith. Regarding our missional communities, the monthly *Gathering* has now been going for over seven years, attracting numerous people keen to explore faith issues. This takes place in people's homes with informal discussion about 'Jesus encounters' in the Bible, followed by a meal together. *Thursday@7* continued to meet fortnightly in the Alnwick Starbucks, enabling a small group to 'do shared lives and provide the opportunity to ask the bigger questions' in an informal and relational way, in a familiar community setting. Alongside this, *Messy Church* has continued at its established base at St James United Reform Church, with around 14 families attending.

In 2024 our Pioneer Minister, Karen Smith, has continued to develop the group activities she leads at Weavers Court, actively listening and responding to the residents –

- A *Songs of Praise or Sacred Memories* (scripture coupled with a theme to support people sharing their stories of memories) service has continued once each month, open to all of the Weavers Court community. These services attract between 10 and 20 residents and special services such as Easter, Remembrance and Christmas are especially well-attended.
- The weekly discipleship group, *Faith Talks*, has grown and now regularly fills the first floor lounge, with around 8 to 10 residents attending. It continues to be a forum for exploring how stories from the Bible, and Jesus' teaching specifically, can be applied to life especially in the Third Age.
- The *Fish & Chips Night* each month continues to be a popular time and is well received by the residents.

These activities would not be possible without the support Karen receives from the rest of the Weavers Court team: Kerrie Andrew, Chris Friend, Elaine Ingram and Elaine Leighton.

Our recently new ABC Pioneer Minister, Karen Smith, has been very active in and very engaged with her local community of Widdrington Station, including:

- Being involved in the management and delivery of *two Warm Hubs* provided in the village.
- **Christians Together In Widdrington** activities such as the *Big Sing* and the *Elderberries* Christmas lunch.
- Many other varied ecumenical opportunities supporting and working with other local clergy, such as leading a four-week *Lent course* hosted in the community centre which had around 20 people attending, *preaching monthly at Widdrington Methodist Church*, commissioning a *pilot Bible Journalling club* with two other Ministers, and *providing pastoral support*.

One of her main Pioneer activities in the village has been the continuation of Karen's established *Ladies Supper Club*, reaching a total of 13 women. It has provided a platform to support women from the local community in diverse ways, developing to the extent where sometimes others will host the supper club. One great example of how the supper club has helped to build relationships was the opportunity to *facilitate a memorial service* which ten people attended.

The children and families in the ABC family continued to enjoy and benefit from the broad range of activities available to them through the hard work and enthusiasm of our wonderful Children and Families worker, Sarah Hamer, and the volunteers who help her to deliver the programme. The Church continues to be blessed by Sarah by the breadth and scope of the work she and her team of volunteers achieve. One change that has occurred during the year is the winding down of *Muddy Church*, reflecting a discernment that the vision for this activity has not materialised despite everyone's best efforts; but also providing an opportunity to commit those resources into new work as Sarah and the team wait on God.

In July 2024 we held our annual *Higher Sports* holiday week, an event which the Church first ran in 2012. Once again it proved very popular, running at capacity with 40 young people from Years 4 to 8. The event is a substantial commitment, delivered by a fabulous team who fulfil the roles of Games Organisers, Team Leaders and Young Leaders, as well as providing refreshments and performing essential administration. It was a great week of team games, where participants were mindful of the Olympic values: encouragement, friendship, respect, fair play, determination and inspiration. Each day was concluded by a 'Team Talk' from one of the leaders, who spoke about the difference God makes in their life. It continues to be a joy to see Young Leaders in their early teens, refreshments providers in their eighties, and everyone in between fully committed to being Good News people to the children who attend this event.

The Church continued to *support the regular work of the Ignite Youth Project*. Up to September 2024, there were four youth cells operating under the overall title of **Rooted**, which Chris Friend and Sarah Hamer both helped to lead, engaging with around 25 young people aged between eight and eighteen. In September 2024, the Rooted groups began a sabbatical because of Ignite personnel changes meaning these groups could not be resourced. This has prompted Ignite to take stock of its work and activities, and as a result, a fresh cohort of volunteers has come forward and we expect the Rooted groups to recommence in May 2025.

Throughout the year, we have maintained our commitment to a *debt advice centre in Alnwick* as a part of **Christians Against Poverty** (Charity No. 1097217). The Church continued to employ Neill Parker in the part-time role of CAP Alnwick Debt Advice Centre Manager, supported by a cohort of *volunteer Befrienders* and a very able and committed Working Group. All clients exhibit significant signs of distress, and many suffer from mental health issues which hamper their ability to function regarding even basic household administration tasks. Much patience is needed with clients and the building of trust is also vital in a process which is necessarily intrusive regarding their personal finances. In the 12 months to the end of March 2025:

- Three clients became debt free.
- Contact was made with six new clients.
- Two clients still continue on their journey to debt freedom.

Over the past year, overall, the Alnwick CAP Centre has operated at 33% of its capacity, although the latest picture appears to be more promising. Within this context, in early 2024, the Charity Trustees established clear criteria which were necessary for the project to continue. In spite of great efforts from the Working Group and the Manager, these criteria could not be consistently achieved. As a result, the Charity Trustees will be calling a meeting of the Church family in June 2025 to consider the question "Is continuing to run a CAP centre an effective and responsible stewardship of Gods resources?" We will report on the outcome of this in our next annual report.

Our *Warm and Welcome* ministry has continued into a third year, regularly receiving 10 guests hosted by a team of around a dozen volunteers who rotate as helpers each Wednesday, and supported by additional volunteers who make soup or cake provided to the guests. This ministry, led by David and Judy Riddington, continues to have an impact beyond just hospitality, such as guests attending Church events or the Tuesday Explore group, requesting prayer for themselves or their families, and asking questions about our faith.

As referenced in Section 5 of our annual report, this year we have begun to offer a new ministry of the *Community Lunch* – the provision of lunches for those within our community who would benefit from a meal in the company of others. We are very grateful to the **Alnwick Food Bank** (Charity No. 1173294) for their donation of £500 for this purpose. A team of Church volunteers has cooked and served a two-course lunch monthly since June 2024, initially at Alnwick Cricket Club but now at the Costello Centre. On average 25 guests attend and whilst many are regulars at the Warm and Welcome, a significant minority are new, including some people from Abbeyfield House residential care home.

In the past year, we can report some further progress on our relatively new ministry of being a supporting church for **Hope into Action** (Charity No. 1137686). The *Friendship & Support Group* (F&SG), co-ordinated by Rob Andrew, is fully resourced and trained, ready to deliver its purpose of both providing practical support and relational support to tenants. During the year, the main obstacle to implementing this community-focused ministry has been the sourcing and commissioning of a suitable property in Alnwick, something outside of the Church's control and influence. However, the year has ended on a positive note: a house in Alnwick has been sourced, and the F&SG wait on confirmation of the prospective tenants for the property.

In 2024, for the first time, we took our annual *Harvest Ceilidh* to the Lindisfarne Centre, owing to the unavailability of the Northumberland Hall, the venue in previous years. Nonetheless, this event was a great success, with over 100 people enjoying food, fellowship and dancing.

It was a similar story for our *Carol Service* hosted at the Lindisfarne Centre, when we considered the theme Unchanging Message of Christmas. For many within our local community, this is 'their' carol service, perhaps due to the neutral status of the venue, and it was lovely to see people linger and socialise over refreshments after the service.

We continued to seek to be a positive impact in the local community through other established activities, some as ABC and others by the Church or its family providing support to other charities and organisations, including:

- *Leading Christian services* at the **Abbeyfield House** residential care home and **St Pauls Court** sheltered housing, providing support and friendship to residents.
- *Operating as volunteer Chaplains* in the **Duchess High School**, working closely with the school's pastoral team.
- *Taking assemblies, running Prayer Spaces, and telling bible stories* through Open the Book programme in **local schools**.
- *Supporting the local community centre* **Community@NE66** (Charity No. 1171202), both in a 'hands on' capacity and serving as trustees of the charity, and the **Alnwick District Food Bank** (Charity No. 1173294), a charity with trustees both of faith (with at least four different churches in Alnwick represented) and not.
- Actively supporting **Christians Together in Alnwick** (CTiA) and participating in shared activities such as the *Lenten Lunches* and the *Good Friday Act of Witness* service in the Alnwick market square (CTiA is an association of churches and other organisations in Alnwick and Shilbottle who express their Christian faith in fellowship and shared action).
- The involvement of some of our Church family in work at **HMP Northumberland**, including services for prisoners by **Good News For Everyone** (formerly Gideons UK - Charity No. 221605), the **Sycamore Tree Project** (part of **Prison Fellowship** - Charity No. 1102254) for restorative justice, and the **Welcome Centre** for families visiting prisoners.

Finally, our firm commitment to pastoral care and support for the Church family was maintained through the exceptional work of the *Pastoral Team* coordinated by Pauline Davidson and the *Prayer Line* facilitated by Chris Friend and Thelma Pallas. Prayer has continued to be a crucial and fundamental endeavour by the Church, through the Saturday morning prayer meeting with seven people as regular attendees. This provides a vital underpinning of Church and community life. ABC continues to pray regularly for our BMS partners and for the various missional and community activities that ABC is involved in, as well as praying for broader world issues. This year it has been a privilege to also include the work at Widdrington Station. In a monthly gathering we also *pray for Christians experiencing persecution* in different parts of the world, informed by information produced primarily by **Open Doors** (Charity No. 1125684).

7. Financial review and policies

The Church continues to raise the majority of funds which it needs to carry on its activities from within its membership and congregation. This year our budget included two items of expenditure where we planned to seek additional funding from external sources. These were the appointment of Rev Karen Smith as a part-time Pioneer Minister, supporting her through her years as a Newly Accredited Minister, and replacement of the lift that enables wheelchair access to the building. The Church applied to the Northern Baptist Association (NBA) and The William Leech Charity for grants to support the work of our Pioneer Minister. We were delighted to receive £5,000 from the NBA and £3,000 from The William Leech Charity. A sum of £6,000 towards the costs for the replacement of the lift was also received from a donor. Other grant applications are still pending.

The most significant recurring expenses are related to the ongoing employment of:

- Rev Chris Friend and Rev Caroline Friend as Co-Ministers of the Church, who lead and co-ordinate the Church's activities including the Sunday Services, provide pastoral care for the congregation and other people, and equip and encourage the membership in their life, Christian witness and service.
- Mr Neill Parker as CAP Alnwick Debt Advice Centre Manager, on a part-time basis.

- Mrs Sarah Hamer as Children and Families Worker, on a part-time basis.
- Rev Karen Smith who was appointed to the office of ABC Pioneer Minister (1.5 days per week) with effect from 10th October 2024 following completion of her three-year part time work placement (1.5 days per week) as part of her ministerial training.

The Church is heavily dependent on its membership working as volunteers in all aspects of the Church's activities, many of which are run with little or no impact on the Church's expenditure, but which nevertheless contribute substantially to the achievement of the Church's objectives.

The financial statements set out on pages [11] to [17] cover the Church's financial year ended 31 March 2025.

Total receipts for the year amounted to £163,867 (preceding year £174,362) and total payments were £180,347 (preceding year £163,829), producing a loss in the year of £16,480 (preceding year a surplus of £10,533).

Regular monthly giving to the Church, mostly through Gift Aid, continued at a similar level to the previous financial year for most of the year and the Charity Trustees are grateful for the consistency of this financial support. However, 10 members left the Church between November 2024 and March 2025 and the full impact on financial giving will be seen in the next year 2025/26.

The Church benefited from the higher rates of interest paid for balances on deposit, due to the healthy level of reserves sustained throughout most of the year.

Donations of £5,000 for Pioneer Minister, £2,335 for the CAP Alnwick Debt Centre and £500 for Community Lunches were received from a variety of donors, in addition to the grants of £8,000 for Pioneer Minister and the donation of £6,000 for the lift replacement. The Charity Trustees wish to acknowledge the generosity of these donations, which enables the Church to support our work within our local community.

Total financial reserves as at 31 March 2025 amounted to £142,494 (31 March 2024 £158,974), of which £28,792 are held in restricted funds (31 March 2024 £19,831).

The Church continued to allocate a significant amount of its income to supporting a range of external organisations engaged in Christian outreach and teaching, promotion of justice and care for the poor and needy, and the development of personal faith.

The Charity Trustees would like to express their appreciation to Jane Harvey of Greaves Grindle, Chartered Accountants, Alnwick for once again carrying out the independent examination of the Church's financial statements.

Reserves policy

The Charity Trustees' policy is that the minimum amount of unrestricted funds to be retained should cover normal operating costs for six months, as well as holding a reserve for the cost of replacing equipment (photocopier, PA system etc) - say £90,000 in total. Actual reserves shown in the financial statements as at 31 March 2025 still exceed this figure.

The Church budget for the year ending 31 March 2026 anticipates a loss of £68,629, due to significantly reduced income, continued high cost of living increases, and support for our Pioneer Minister. The Church continues to seek grants to cover the costs of lift replacement and support for our Pioneer Minister. Some of the deficit could be covered by the surplus currently held in reserves, leaving £60,000 in general reserves in the event that no grants are obtained. This is below the minimum amount of £90,000 recommended by our reserves policy. Therefore, the Charity Trustees have recommended that the budget for year ending 31 March 2026 is reviewed after six months (1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025), with any recommendations for change brought to the Church Members' Meeting scheduled in November 2025. The Charity Trustees believe this considered approach will facilitate careful measured decision-making in relation to our financial commitments and resources.

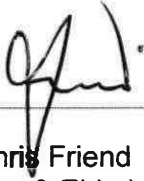
Investment policy

The Charity Trustees seek to invest the Church's funds in such a way as to produce investment income whilst minimising the risk of capital loss. Interest-bearing deposits are currently held with the COIF Charities Deposit Fund and the Baptist Union Corporation Loan Fund.

8. Signature and declaration

I declare that in my capacity of Charity Trustee, that

- The Charity Trustees have approved the report above; and
- They have authorised me to sign it on their behalf



Rev Chris Friend
(Minister & Elder)



Rev Caroline Friend
(Minister & Elder)



Mr Russell Lee
(Deacon & Secretary)

Date: 25.07.2025.

ALNWICK BAPTIST CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



Receipts and payments account for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Year ended 31 March 2025			Year ended 31 March 2024
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £	Total £
Receipts				
Offerings and donations - Gift Aid	93,380	-	93,380	95,704
Offerings and donations – other	13,795	40	13,835	15,721
Tax reclaimed via Gift Aid	25,753	-	25,753	24,972
Interest receivable	7,746	-	7,746	7,647
Donations for ministry training costs	-	-	-	2,227
Donations/grants for Pioneer Minister	-	13,000	13,000	-
Donations for CAP	-	2,335	2,335	1,838
Donation for lift replacement	-	6,000	6,000	-
Donations for other organisations	-	897	897	2,130
Receipts for church events (Note 6)	-	421	421	5,329
Legacy received	-	-	-	18,294
Donation for Hardship Fund	-	-	-	500
Donation for Community Lunches	-	500	500	-
	140,674	23,193	163,867	174,362
Payments				
Staff employment costs (Note 2)	110,647	1,707	112,354	102,624
Upkeep of church premises (Note 3)	8,481	-	8,481	8,490
General expenses (Note 4)	8,135	40	8,175	9,973
Equipment and furniture (Note 5)	14,042	6,000	20,042	150
Church events (Note 6)	1,969	421	2,390	7,232
CAP Alnwick Debt Centre (Note 7)	1,265	2,335	3,600	4,528
Donations (Note 8)	21,576	897	22,473	28,175
Warm and Welcome Hub (Note 9)	-	2,045	2,045	1,662
Weavers Court (Note 10)	-	787	787	995
	166,115	14,232	180,347	163,829
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	(25,441)	8,961	(16,480)	10,533
Bank/deposit balances at start of year	139,143	19,831	158,974	148,441
Bank/deposit balances at end of year (Note 11)	113,702	28,792	142,494	158,974

The notes on pages [13] to [17] form part of these financial statements.

ALNWICK BAPTIST CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2025

	<u>31 March 2025</u>	<u>31 March 2024</u>
	£	£
Bank/cash balances		
Lloyds Bank	7,264	7,781
Charities Deposit Fund	95,230	111,193
Baptist Union Corporation Loan Fund	40,000	40,000
	<u>142,494</u>	<u>158,974</u>
Other monetary assets		
Debtor - tax reclaimable via Gift Aid (re: Tax year 2024/25)	<u>25,402</u>	<u>25,753</u>

Fixed assets retained for church use


Alnwick Baptist Church premises, Lisburn Street, Alnwick NE66 1UR
Furniture, fittings and contents of church premises

The notes on pages [13] to [17] form part of these financial statements.

Approved by the Charity Trustees of Alnwick Baptist Church and signed on their behalf by:



Rev Chris Friend
(Minister & Elder)



Rev Caroline Friend
(Minister & Elder)



Mr Russell Lee
(Deacon & Secretary)

Date: 25. 07. 2025.

ALNWICK BAPTIST CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Notes to the financial statements

1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis, as permitted by Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.

General funds are for the furtherance of the normal purposes of Alnwick Baptist Church and are not subject to any restriction of use.

2 Staff employment costs

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Salaries	83,194	76,014
Manse rent (leaseback on Ministers' residence)	10,656	9,988
Council tax and water rates	2,454	2,287
Housing allowance (Pioneer Minister)	1,285	-
Employer's NI contributions (net of Employment Allowance)	578	-
Employer's pension contributions	9,514	8,600
Telephone and broadband	1,033	1,154
Travel expenses	2,544	4,261
Courses and conferences	1,096	320
	112,354	102,624

Rev Chris Friend (full-time) and Rev Caroline Friend (part-time) were employed by the Church throughout the year as Co-Ministers. The Co-Ministers, who were also Charity Trustees, lived in a house rented from them by the Church.

Mr Neill Parker was employed part-time by the Church throughout the year as Manager of the Alnwick Debt Centre, which is run by the Church in partnership with Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

Mrs Sarah Hamer was employed part-time by the Church throughout the year as Children and Families Worker.

Mrs Karen Smith continued a part-time work placement (1.5 days per week) as part of her ministerial training, for which she was paid pro-rata (0.3 full time equivalent) of the Baptist Union recommended ministerial stipend until October 9th 2024. From 10th October 2024, Karen was employed as a Pioneer Minister (part-time – 0.3 full time equivalent) and began receiving a housing allowance from this date. Karen was also a Charity Trustee.

All of the employees are members of personal defined contribution pension plans into which the Church makes an employer contribution equivalent to 10% of salary.

No sums were reimbursed to the Charity Trustees for their work as Charity Trustees (2023-24 none).

Rev Caroline Friend was paid fees to provide safeguarding training for the Church in her professional capacity as a qualified Safeguarding Trainer in the financial year 2024/25 and also the previous year 2023/24. This was sanctioned by the Trustees as the most cost-effective and efficient method of providing the required training at a local venue.

3 Upkeep of church premises

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Gas, electricity and water (see Note 8)	2,634	1,990
Repairs, maintenance and cleaning	4,313	4,991
Insurance	1,534	1,509
	8,481	8,490

4 General expenses

As referenced in Section 4 of our annual report (Organisational structure and decision making), the Church has commissioned legal advice on two possible changes to governance and structure. This due diligence work is ongoing and payments made up to 31 March 2025 for legal advice are included in the analysis of general expenses below:

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Teaching materials	71	625
Children and Families resources	583	937
Photocopying, postage and stationery	2,183	2,481
Website, audio system and IT	1,245	1,168
Safeguarding	342	773
Subscriptions	749	925
Fees/expenses to visiting speakers	105	572
CCLI copyright licence	907	866
Legal Fees (Anthony Collins for advice relating to CIO)	1,220	864
Other	770	762
	8,175	9,973

5 Equipment and furniture

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Shelving	-	120
Twin port plug	-	30
Pedal bin	6	-
Cafetiere	8	-
Lift replacement	20,028	-
	20,042	150

6 Church events

Table 1 below provides an analysis of the gross expenditure on Church events. For certain activities, there is an associated income stream and Table 2 accounts for this by reporting the net expenditure on each activity. Where income exceeded gross expenditure, the net income shows as a number in brackets – for example, in the year ended 31 March 2024, the Craft event raised £143.

With reference to the Bassenfell holiday: in the year ended 31 March 2024, this event took place in October 2023 from Monday to Friday. In the year ended 31 March 2025, the event was due to be held as a weekend in October 2024, but cancelled due to lack of numbers for which a cancellation fee of £595 was paid. A deposit of £200 for a further booking in October 2025 was also paid, but this event has also been cancelled for lack of numbers.

Equipment was purchased for Higher Sports this year.

Table 1: Church events gross expenditure	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Bassenfell holiday	795	4,993
Carol service	538	601
Rob Halligan concert	-	525
General catering	256	291
Harvest ceilidh	269	259
140 th birthday blessings	-	230
Higher Sports	374	212
Thursdays@7	105	121
Craft event	-	-
Housegroup (3 weeks at Lindisfarne Centre – lift out of action	36	-
Prayer breakfast	17	-
	2,390	7,232

Table 2: Church events net expenditure / (income)	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Bassenfell holiday	795	409
Carol service*	538	601
Rob Halligan concert	-	375
General catering	256	291
Harvest ceilidh*	269	259
140 th birthday blessings*	-	230
Higher Sports	54	(138)
Thursdays@7	4	19
Craft event	-	(143)
Housegroup (3 weeks at Lindisfarne Centre – lift out of action	36	-
Prayer breakfast	17	-
	1,969	1,903

* Offerings and donations at the Carol service and Harvest ceilidh are *not* part of the *Receipts for Church events* totalling £421 disclosed in the *Receipts and payments account for the year ended 31 March 2025* on page [11].

7 CAP Alnwick Debt Centre

The Church runs the Alnwick Debt Centre in conjunction with Christians Against Poverty (CAP), a national charity. We are grateful for the donations received from Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship (£1,150) and St. Michael & All Angels Church in Felton (£1,000), in support of the Debt Centre. Employment costs for the Manager of the Alnwick Debt Centre are included in the staff employment costs in Note 2. Other amounts paid during the year were as follows:

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Donation to Christians Against Poverty central costs	3,600	4,528
	3,600	4,528

8 Donations

The Church supports Christian work in a variety of situations through prayer and financial giving, the latter by making donations to national and international Christian organisations and societies with Christian aims and objectives compatible with the Church's own charitable purpose.

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Baptist Union Home Mission	5,600	5,500
BMS World Mission (previous year includes the visit of the Clarks in 2023)	5,600	5,980
Harvest offering – <i>Tearfund (Salt and Light)</i> (previous year <i>BMS Days of Plenty</i>)	532	838
Christmas offering – <i>BMS Special Deliveries Chad</i> (previous year <i>Embrace the Middle East</i>)	590	639
Ignite- general (formerly Contagious)	3,417	3,334
Tearfund	500	500
Release International	500	500
Good News For Everyone (formerly Gideons UK)	500	500
Lifepath Brinkburn	500	500
The Farming Community Network	500	500
Open Doors (current year includes donation for speaker in June 2024)	650	500
Newcastle West End Refugee Service	500	500
Community@NE66 (Alnwick Community Centre)	917	834
Rural Ministries	500	500
Hope into Action	500	500
Alnwick Homes for Ukraine Support Group	917	834
Support for Young Person with Mission (Jasmine Friend)	250	-
Ignite - Messy Church, Open the Book (Bill Dunsire Thanksgiving Offering)	-	554
MND (Ken Muter Thanksgiving Offering)	-	395
Contribution to ministry training costs (Karen Smith)	-	4,627
Northern Baptist Association (donation for speaker)	-	140
	22,473	28,175

9 Warm and Welcome Hub

In August 2022, the Church received donations to run a Warm and Welcome Hub for local people providing a warm environment and soup, rolls, hot drinks, and cake. Warm and Welcome has continued to run this winter, and in the summer months as Warm Welcome, providing a place for coffee, cake and chat. Costs of the Hub are shown below. Soup and cake were mostly donated free of charge by members of the Church and no volunteers received payment for their time spent helping at the Hub.

In May 2024, the Church received a donation of £500 from Alnwick Food Bank to provide lunches for those within our community who would benefit from a meal in the company of others. These 'Community Lunches' have been held monthly from June 2024 to March 2025, provided by a team of volunteers who cook and serve the two-course meal. Money from the Warm and Welcome Hub donations was used to cover additional costs in excess of £500.

Warm and Welcome Hub

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
General expenses	352	580
Gas and electricity	1,107	1,082
	1,459	1,662

Community Lunches

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
General expenses	586	-
	586	-

10 Weavers Court

In 2022 a grant was received from the Lady Hewley Trust to provide Fellowship meals to residents, and a separate donation given to support Faith talks and other activities at Weavers Court. Money was still available to support these activities this year.

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Fellowship meals	680	816
Faith talks etc.	107	179
	787	995

11 Reserves in Restricted Funds

	Year ended 31 March 2025	Year ended 31 March 2024
	£	£
Reserves Warm and Welcome Hub/Community Lunches	17,039	18,584
Reserves Weavers Court	460	1,247
Reserves Pioneer Minister	11,293	-
	28,792	19,831

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER
to the Trustees of Alnwick Baptist Church ("the Charity")**

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages [11] to [17].

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's financial statements carried out under Section 145 of the 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with the accounting records.

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 financial statements to be reached.



Jane Harvey FCA
Greaves Grindle
Victoria House
Bondgate Within
Alnwick
NE66 1TA

Date: 16/1/2026