

## **Albert Road Evangelical Church**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

#### **Managing Trustees Report**

##### **Managing Trustees**

The Managing Trustees, (referred to as "Trustees" hereafter), hosted a meal in January to welcome several newcomers to the church and encourage them to consider membership. Two did become members later in the year and most of the others remain as adherents. Later in the Spring, our Pastor Russell Howes felt God's call to pastor at a large church further south and duly took up his new post there in September, having left us in July. He has been greatly missed on many levels, and the workload for the trustees has increased greatly since his departure. We met formally in March then in June, before our Pastor Russell left.

Since then, our meetings have been more frequent in order to manage the church during the interregnum (time without a Pastor in post). This has added a considerable amount to our workload, particularly as we remain a group of just a minimum of three people in the absence of others who are willing or able to join us. We are most grateful to Gillian Scott-Forrest for extending her term of office for another year to provide some continuity with the two new Trustees who were appointed in June last year.

Our work now includes arranging for visiting preachers along with our in-house speakers to maintain the spiritual work of the church. We are required to deal with all incoming emails and liaise directly with the Bulgarian church who meet regularly.

The journey to seek a new Pastor, under the guidance of the Lord, has commenced with a most useful Vision Day event organized by the Trustees and held by Rural Ministries to prepare us for changes and new beginnings. This promoted much discussion among the large group of members and adherents who attended.

**Administrator:** We have been very grateful for the ongoing help of our administrator Marcus Harrod Wild on a part-time basis. We have remained in close contact with him.

**Church Treasurer and Accounts:** Tory Bell continues to do an excellent job as our Church Treasurer and we are most thankful for her unstinting and efficient work in keeping insurance policies up to date, seeking competitive long term fixed rates for electricity and managing our financial affairs. Tory also organizes payment for the visiting Preachers whom we now require to supplement our own in-house speakers. We continue to call on the services of Luke Howson, a Christian accountant, to complete the independent examination of our accounts. We have not, as yet, been able to recruit anyone to assist Tory in her role as Treasurer but she continued to do a wonderful job managing the accounts online during two extended periods of being abroad. The accounts for the year (2023) have been completed and reviewed by an external examiner and will be submitted to the charity commission along with this report.

**Fire Officer:** Our Fire Officer, Ian Young, had to move north early in 2023 for family reasons, so the role was taken on by Eric Humphreys who has worked diligently to ensure that all fire regulations are met. Fire alarm call points are checked weekly, as are the fire extinguishers. He checks fire doors, smoke alarms and emergency lights monthly. The fire extinguishers were serviced in April. The fire call point in the main church has been replaced

and the door seals adjusted to improve the fit. We are very grateful to Eric for volunteering to take on this important role. Fire equipment and procedures notices continue to be displayed in both English and Bulgarian.

### **Safeguarding**

The new safeguarding policy which Jenny and Russell worked together on has now been formally adopted. Rebekah Lachowicz, a GP, has taken on the role of Safeguarding Officer within the church.

Other Written Policies the Health and Safety policy, Data Protection and Privacy policies which were redrafted last year remain unchanged.

### **Buildings**

Some routine maintenance was carried out. The front facing wall in the entrance hall was re-plastered and painted. A crack in the internal wall in the kitchen was surveyed and not found to be critical to the fabric of the building was repaired. The main expenditure and work will be recorded in the 2024 report. Plans to update the kitchen have been put on hold while we are interregnum as the Trustees are prioritizing the work of the church and plans to recruit a new Pastor. Externally, we now have a purpose-built bin store in situ, supplied and built by a regular church adherent at cost.

### **Missionary Secretary's Report:**

We support five different missionaries and mission organizations both in prayer, fellowship and finance. Some of the highlights are described below. It is a privilege to share with them and reminds us that Albert Road Evangelical Church, although small is part of a much bigger picture of God's work in the world.

*Dr. Rachel Newby – Serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo.* On 26th July 2023, Dr. Newby came to share with the church about her work in Lubumbashi. She is entering her 40th year of service in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rachel lives on the Restawhile compound which is the hub of the Mission working alongside the local Garenganze church. She shared many aspects of her work in which she is involved, support for Church plants, building projects and Sunday Schools - giving encouragement and supporting prayerfully, and financially when possible:

- Healthcare - offering practical and spiritual support for staff at the Papillon Medical Centre.
- Education - supporting three schools and two schools' evangelists in their work.
- Prison visits - once a month providing the prison evangelist with food for prison inmates.
- Hospitality - preparing accommodation for visitors or other members of the missionary team who spend time in Lubumbashi and taking missionaries/visitors to the airport or collecting them from the airport.

*DFN India:* The aim of Dignity Freedom Network is to see the poor, marginalised and outcasts of society transition to living in dignity and freedom. We sponsor three Dalit children's education; they all attend the same Good Shepherd school in India. In sponsoring these children, we are financially supporting the whole educational programme of their schools. The children attend a Good Shepherd School in the surrounding district of Hyderabad, southern India. These schools are providing good quality English medium education to over 26,000 children around India. The

schools provide education across the class divide although the students are predominantly from Dalit or other low caste and disadvantaged backgrounds.

*Rural Ministries* Simon Mattholie, CEO of RM, visited our church last year. The Saturday was spent looking at our church profile and strengths as we advertise for another pastor. The meeting was well attended. Simon preached at church the following day. Our Managing Trustees have had lengthy conversations with Simon asking for advice as they are responsible for leading the church at this interim period without a pastor.

*Christian Schools' Worker Project:* Jane Webber                      Jane provides support in all activities and matters relating to the Christian faith, promoting thinking and discussion.

Jane's work includes- Taking school assemblies, forming Christian Unions, taking Religious Studies, PSHE and Philosophy lessons, mentoring of pupils, leading all-inclusive prayer/reflection spaces and Self-esteem workshops

Jane is exceptional in her work and is respected by staff and pupils at the schools she visits.

*SAT-7 The Middle East and North Africa:* In November 1995, SAT-7 was born at a founding meeting at Larnaca, Cyprus. SAT-7 is based in the Middle East and broadcasting to the 500 million people of the region through Christian television and digital media. SAT-7 is seeking to share the Gospel with millions of families who would otherwise not have access to it, in the privacy of their own homes. It strives to make the Gospel as easily understood and culturally relevant as possible; most of the programmes are produced by Middle Easterners living in the region. The ministry's satellite presence has grown to five 24/7 satellite channels: three in Arabic including one dedicated children's channel, one in Farsi, and one in Turkish.

Susan Humphreys

Missionary Secretary

### **Teaching and Preaching Report 2023**

The year began with Russell, our pastor since 2009, continuing the teaching and preaching side of his ministry. We have greatly benefitted from his faithful approach to biblical teaching and the way he has helped us apply the truths of scripture to our lives. I was therefore a challenge for us when Russell announced in March that he had felt the call to Lower Early Baptist Church (LEBC) and would be leaving for there at the end of July.

To prepare us for his departure he ran some sessions on preaching to help those of us who would be taking more of the responsibility for preaching on Sunday morning. These sessions complemented earlier sessions on leading worship. On Sundays he also, for his final preaching series, spoke from John's gospel which record some of Jesus' final teaching to disciples before his crucifixion. He encouraged us to keep following Jesus and to stay together.

We had a wonderful final service of thanksgiving and many people that had been blessed by Russell (and the rest of the family!) during his time with us were able to celebrate with us. We were obviously sad to see him go but when several of us were able to attend Russell's inauguration service at LEBC we were encouraged to know that God's hand seemed to be on this, and he was in the right place to continue his ministry.

For the rest of the year, we are grateful to Gill Cox for arranging speakers and worship leaders (and on occasion speaking). We are also grateful to those who prepared services, leading worship and preaching both from within the fellowship and a few external speakers. While we missed the consecutive teaching week by week, we did enjoy a great variety of different approaches but all maintaining the pattern of worship and biblical teaching vital to our shared life of faith. Also, a note of thanks to the technical team who help with the sound during the service, broadcast it live on zoom for those unable to attend and place recordings on our YouTube channel. Though the numbers watching on 'catch up' aren't large they average between 20 and 30. Slightly less than those attending in person on Sunday mornings.

### **Bible Study**

As well teaching on Sunday morning two groups meet in the week for bible study, prayer and fellowship. One group meets on Tuesday evening and the other, the 'Blessings group' meet on Wednesday morning.

### **Nursing Home ministry**

We have the opportunity to visit two nursing homes, High Lea, monthly and New Fairhome on the fifth Sunday of a month. Gill Cox, Roy and Tony have been leading the services and with a small group from the Church have enabled the residents to enjoy some hymn singing and a short bible-based message of encouragement and challenge. It gives the residents who might not be able to get out to Church an opportunity for Christian worship and fellowship. This ministry is shared by other churches in the area who go on other Sundays in the month.

### **Children and young people**

During the year we continued the Sunday school ministry and on the first Sunday of each month we had an all-age service (which we call super Sundays). For the first half of the year, we followed the junior version of Christianity Explored aiming to cover the core doctrines of Christianity and build up the faith of our younger members. With the Pastors family leaving we had fewer children and young people. They were also very involved in Sunday school and youth activities. Sunday school continued most Sundays, except for a few Sundays when most children were away. We also continued to enjoy the children explaining to us what they had been learning about at the close of the service.

Unfortunately, with the loss of Pastor we didn't have enough people to run a children's holiday club. Something we would hope to take up again when we are able to. Another ministry that came to an end this year was the Friday night youth group. Although numbers had been regularly 20 plus, during the summer term the group became dominated by several young people who only seemed to come to cause trouble. It was with some sadness that we felt we needed to stop but running it became increasingly difficult and with less people available to help this seemed the right decision.

### **Little Gems**

The mothers and toddlers group continues to meet on a Thursday morning. It is used by local families who find a supportive and friendly group as they navigate the early years of family life. We are grateful to all the church members who give up their time each week to hold out Jesus' love in this very practical ministry.

### **Churches together**

With Russell's departure Gill Scot Forrest became the main point of contact with Churches together in Oswestry. Being part of the Churches Together network has helped us further our aims as a Church, for example supporting the work of the local school's worker as described above. We have also hosted some of the Churches together gatherings during the year.

### **Chairmans closing remarks**

With Russell's ministry at AREC coming to an end 2023 has certainly been a challenging year. Any church will struggle during an interregnum and a small church such as ours is no exception. We are grateful to those that took on extra work and remained faithful in maintaining Christian witness here. We also continue to support Christian Ministries in Oswestry and other parts of the world through the five core Christian charities and one-off gifts to other charities as we see the need. For example, the local food bank. As trustees we met much more frequently to try and make sure that everything was maintained.

We came together as a church a couple of times following Russell's departure to assess where we were at as a church and discern the Lord's direction. The overwhelming thought was the need for a replacement pastor, and this will be the focus going into 2024.

Philip Newman Chair of Trustees October 2024

**Accounts 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**  
**Profit and Loss: Cash Basis**

**INCOME**

<b>DONATIONS</b>	
Offering box cash (GASDS applicable)	3,356.25
Offering box (not GASDS applicable CHQ or large cash)	1,255.59
Covenanted giving to bank (Gift Aid applicable CHQ & direct)	24,696.00
Covenanted giving to bank (not Gift Aid applicable)	1,620.00
Miscellaneous giving (not Gift Aid applicable not via off. box)	138.00
Special Services	1,011.57
HMRC Gift Aid (Covenanted gifts)	7,735.74
HMRC Gift Aid (GASDS)	
Sales	70.00
Friday Youth Group	204.06
Little Gems group	308.76
Building Hire	710.00
Savings Account Interest	546.29
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>41,652.26</b>

\*Coffee Morning money deposited directly into the Building Work Fund £69.39

\* Sale of work money £80 also deposited directly into Building Work

## EXPENSES

<b>Operational Costs</b>	
<b>Utilities</b>	2,369.76
Insurance	1,073.29
Accounting Fees (payroll and auditing)	607.76
Professional Fees (CCLI & Thirty One Eight)	561.30
Computer operational costs (website hosting, emails, software)	1,318.24
Training	
Advertising and Promotion	14.75
Office supplies (including postage)	28.98
<b>Staffing Costs</b> (Wages, Tax/NI, Pension, Travel)	20,456.11
<b>Building</b> (repairs, maintenance and housekeeping)	2,351.52
AV & PA System	3,412.25
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	3,294.51
<b>Holding On to Jesus</b>	
Discipleship (inc. books/courses)	
Wider church fellowship (Churches Together, etc)	279.97
Ministry expenses (parking/wine)	
External Speakers and expenses	490.50
<b>Holding Out His love</b>	
Ministry resources (books/courses/Super Sunday)	704.96
Children's Outreach (Christmas, Holiday bible club, Pancake party)	146.53
Little Gems group	246.69
FYG	181.82
Miscellaneous	
Social & Welfare	420.00
Short term restricted funds	880.50
<b>External Charity Gifting</b>	
Our 5 supported charities @ £926.70 each)	4,633.50
Turkey Appeal ARC	500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,972.94</b>

## **SUMMARY**

Total Income	£ 41,652.26
Total Expenses	£ 43,972.94
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>£-2,320.68</b>

## **Income and Expenditure levels for 2023:**

With an adjustment to include the payment of the AV System and the chairs of £ 4769.70 (which is reflected in the Building Fund Balance rather than in the general expenditure) we end with a surplus of £2,449.02.

Income	£41,652.26	(Average £801.00 per week; Budget £844.23).
Expenditure	£39,203.24	(Average £ 753.91per week; Budget £913.82).

## **YEAR END TOTALS**

<b>TSB Current Account</b>	2,827.35
<b>TSB Savings Account</b>	54,668.49
<b>Total Cash and Bank</b>	57,495.84

## **Fund Management**

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Current total</b>
Unallocated Funds	35,055.62	25,268.05	36,293.42	*23,777.75
Building Work	12,889.76	15,149.39	6,024.70	22,014.45
Mavis Jones	658.20	0	0	658.20
Weekend away/ fellowship	245.44	0	0	245.44
Social & Welfare	167.50	0	420.00	0
Little Gems	0	308.76	308.76	0
FYG	0	204.06	204.06	0
Legal Reserve	6,800.00			6,800.00
Contingency Fund	4,000.00			4,000.00
Short-term Restricted	0	722.00	722.00	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	59,816.52	652.26	43,972.94	57,495.84

Little Gems and FYG are zero as year-end net profit absorbed.

\*The total of unallocated funds has been adjusted to absorb the over spend in the Social and Welfare fund of £252.50.

## **One off funds**

Our five supported charities zero - paid in full in 2023



## **Looking forward to 2024**

Income for last year on which we calculate our 10% giving was £39,347.87 @ 10% = £3,934.79  
Split into our 5 charities = £786.96.

### **Budget for 2024**

Projected income (not including special collections) £51,850

Projected expenditure £17,735

This does not include FUND spends i.e. Building Work Project.

The Budget has been difficult to project due to the ministry vacancy.

Signed



Date

10/10/24

Trustee

Chair of Trustees

## **Report**

Russell's decision to move to pastures new was a very significant unforeseen event. With considerable consequences for the future. We have ended 2022 with a small surplus but with income and expenditure lower than budget. One of the main reasons for this was the departure of Russell and family moving on to pastures new. However, we have improved the fabric of the church. This is shown in the Building Work Fund expenses of £6,024.70, the total includes the new AV/PA system and deposit for the new chairs and building work carried out by Eric Owen to the entrance hall.

The Pancake Party donations raised £112, which went to the Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal and we as a church gave £500 also to this appeal.

A very big thank you to all who generously give and to those who are able to Gift Aid. in due time we will be welcoming someone new to our church and we therefore need to have a healthy bank balance able to pay them. The year ahead will be very testing for us all but with God with us who can be against us!

**ALBERT ROAD EVANGELICAL CHURCH**  
**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2023.

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

**Basis of independent examiner's 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**

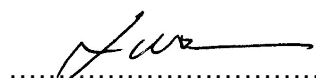
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....  
Luke Howson MAAT

Dated: **14th October 2024** .....

Finansure Ltd, 2 Sheppard Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5FF