

St.Neots Evangelical Church

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st March 2023

www.snec.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1150478

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Legal and Administrative Information

Charity Name: St.Neots Evangelical Church

Charity Number: 1150478

Principal Address: Cambridge Street,
St.Neots,
Cambs
PE19 1PL
www.snec.org.uk

Managing Trustees:	Mike Kendall	Paul Slater
	Geoff Selley	Richard Vennelle

Independent Examiner: Brian Kelly
346 Grace Way
Stevenage
SG1 5AP

Principal Bankers:	CAF Bank Limited 25, Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ	HSBC 5, High Street, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 1DE
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Managing Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2023

Objectives and Activities for the Public Benefit

The objects of the Church are: -

1. the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith primarily but not exclusively within St Neots, Cambridgeshire and the surrounding area; and
2. such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the Managing Trustees, in consultation with the members of the Church, further the work of the Church.

The Church is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.

As a Church we exist to glorify God by:

- Reaching out with the good news of Jesus Christ
- Building up one another to live for Jesus Christ
- Training one another to serve Jesus Christ
- Sending out workers for Jesus Christ.

When planning the activities of the Church for the year, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

We have continued to seek to freely share the good news of the Christian faith with all people in St. Neots and the surrounding area, with a desire to see people become disciples of Jesus Christ and grow in their faith in him. We are committed to teaching the Bible and prayer and desire to help Christians to grow in their faith and to live lives of love, which seek to do good to all.

The church organised many activities during the year in support of its objectives and for the public benefit. These included Sunday services for all ages, midweek homegroups, ladies Bible study groups, parent and toddler groups, regular weekly meetings for children and youth, a weekly café for older people in the community, language classes and Bible studies for internationals, evangelistic events and introduction to Christianity courses. We also had a desire to see the Christian faith grow in other areas and countries and to this end we supported Christian work and activities in the UK and abroad through our mission partnership team.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Church is unincorporated and is governed by its constitution. A new Church constitution was adopted on 17th July 2012 and registration with the Charity Commission was confirmed on 14th January 2013. Prior to this the Church had been treated as an excepted charity under legislation at that time due to its affiliation to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). The Managing Trustees are responsible for the management of the affairs of the Church and consist of the Elders and Pastor. New Elders are appointed according to the Church's statement of current practice. Proposals for new Elders are made by the existing Managing Trustees to a business meeting of the Church Members. Two months are given for the Church to prayerfully consider the proposed individual and to provide feedback. If the Elders then feel that it is right to proceed with the appointment, a formal recommendation will be brought before

the Church at the next Church Members' meeting. Upon appointment, a period of association with the Eldership will take place before the new Elder is formally set apart.

There were no changes in the Managing Trustees during the period covered by this report.

The Managing Trustees who held office during part or all the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 are set out on page 3.

Review of Activities & Achievements

Sunday Services

Across the year the numbers attending our morning services continued to increase, which was encouraging. However, it also meant that we became increasingly cramped - both in the main meeting room, and in the Sunday Groups. In order to address these issues, from October the church began to hold their morning services in Ernulf Academy. This move was overseen by a church working group led by Richard Vennelle.

In the Spring Term a questionnaire was sent out to members to seek their feedback regarding the move. Whilst a number of benefits were highlighted, it was also clear that a large number of members did not enjoy meeting in the venue. In response, the church set up a new working group to assess the various options.

Throughout this time, our morning services continued to be streamed on YouTube, with the recordings being viewed by many more people.

Early morning communion and evening services also continued to be held in the church building throughout the year.

Youth and Children's Work

During the year the church ran a number of activities specifically for children and teenagers. A full-time youth worker was employed by the church to work among young people.

Little Fishes: This parent and toddler's group was held on two mornings a week during term time, with typically, 40 children (plus parents/carers) from across the town attending each session.

Groups for primary school age children: Explorers (for reception to year 2) and Gap (for school years 3 to 6) continued to run. They were attended by children from both church and non-church families and sought to teach Bible truths in age-appropriate ways and to provide fun activities.

Groups for secondary school ages: the Ten24 group for school years 7 to 13 was run on Monday evenings. A Friday evening group for 11 to 18 year-olds was also held. These groups combined opportunities to study the Bible together, to pray, chat and participate in fun activities.

Sunday groups: These groups for children from pre-school to year 6 provided age-appropriate Bible teaching during the family services.

The young people were also able to have a weekend away in October at the Frontier Centre.

Reaching Out with the Good News of Jesus Christ

The church continued to seek to share the good news of the Christian faith with the people of the town and surrounding area.

The move to Ernulf Academy was a key priority for the church. The church leafleted the area around the school prior to our first service being held there. The church also handed out leaflets in the Market Square in town.

Children: the church ran a holiday club (Secret Agent's) for the first time in 3 years in August 2022, and held a Light Party on the 31st October 2022 for children up to Year 6.

Internationals: from September, weekly conversation classes and Bible studies were held in the church building for international people in the local community.

Good Company Café: a weekly café style meeting for older people in the community was held in the church building on Friday mornings.

A Passion for Life: the church held a number of events in May & June in conjunction with the nationwide initiative, A Passion for Life.

Hope Explored Course: this short course, introducing people to the Christianity faith, was run in June '22 and January '23 with a small group of people.

St. Neots Youth Worker: in a joint venture with Youth for Christ, Open Door Church and River Church, the church continued to fund a Christian youth worker to work with unchurched youth in the town. In November the church hosted an anniversary service to mark the first year of the venture.

Christmas outreach: Christmas cards with invites to the Carol services were distributed to homes around the church building and given out to people in the Market Square. The church held a Traditional Carol Service, an International Christmas Service and a Family Carol Service, as well as a morning service on Christmas Day. There were a number of guests across the services.

Cakes for Ernulf: on a number of occasions throughout the year members of the church provided cakes for the staff at Ernulf Academy.

Through the involvement of its members the church also actively supported a number of other Christian based organisations including ACTIOS (Assisting Christian teaching in our Schools), the local Foodbank, Good News for Everyone (formerly known as Gideons) and MAST (Money Advice St Neots).

Building up One Another to Live for Jesus Christ

Systematic Bible teaching was provided during the main Sunday services including series in Mark's gospel, Ruth, John's gospel, as well as more topical series on the glory of God, When Christians Disagree and the New City Catechism (all age services). In January '23 the church adopted a Bible verse for the year ahead ("This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it." Isaiah 30:15)

Church prayer meetings were held once a month on Sunday evenings, and as part of the regular home group programme. Each Tuesday evening in August '22 the church met together to pray. Prayer meetings were also held once a month on Monday mornings via Zoom.

Eight homegroups groups met regularly. They provided pastoral care, help and spiritual encouragement. In addition to evening homegroups, weekly daytime ladies Bible study groups, 'Wednesday Women 'and 'Thursday Women 'took place through the year.

A number of separate events for ladies and men were also held in the church building and there were also opportunities for informal church family gatherings.

The church held a 'picnic in the park' in June and July '22 - which was an opportunity for the church family to enjoy time together.

In May '22 the church held a Weekend at Home, with church members spending the day together on the Saturday and then sharing a church family lunch after the service on Sunday. Our speaker was Ian Jones and we looked at the book of Colossians.

Training One Another to Serve Jesus Christ

Various types of training was provided for church members and the staff team throughout the year:

- Joe Marsh, our church apprentice, attended TEAM, a weekly training course organised by the East Anglia Gospel Partnership.
- Conferences attended by staff members included: the FIEC Leaders 'Conference, the FIEC Pastors ' Network Day Conference, FIEC Thrive for women in ministry, the Good Book Company Youth Workers ' Conference and the Biblical Counselling Conference.
- A course for people interested in finding out more about church membership, called 'Membership Matters 'was run a number of times during the year.
- A leadership programme was run for the fourth year with several members of the church taking part in monthly Biblical leadership sessions, from September onwards.
- Training evenings for Preachers and Bible teachers were held during the year.

Sending Out Workers for Jesus Christ

Three members of the church (including the Youth & Children's Worker and the Ministry Trainee) visited mission partners in West Africa, working on a garden whilst they were there.

The Church also set aside 15% of all donations for the support of missionary work. During the year the Church provided support for mission partners in the UK, France, Moldova, West Africa, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey.

The church was in regular correspondence with the mission partners we support in order to be able to provide suitable help and to pray effectively for them. The trustees have appointed a mission partnership team, made up of church members, to supervise this work and make recommendations to the elders with regard to the allocation of financial support.

Priorities for the Year

The church set a number of priorities for the year:

- To set up a home with the charity, Hope into Action, so that we care for vulnerable people in the local community.
- To establish ourselves in Ernulf Academy, so that we have space to grow and reach out into the local community.
- To adopt and implement our revised Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, so that everyone is safe and the culture of the church is healthy.
- To revise our strategy for pastoral care, so that every member is cared for and caring for others.
- To appoint new leaders - at every level, so that the church is properly supported and cared for.
- To establish clear pathways into serving, so that every member plays their part.

Staff Team & Membership

The staff team during the year were:

Mike Kendall – Pastor of St. Neots Evangelical Church
Richard Carding – Youth & Children's Worker
Catherine Heath – Women's Worker
Jan Sim – Personal Assistant to the Pastor
Joe Marsh – Church Apprentice
Dom Vennelle - Ministry Trainee

The church also began the search for an assistant Pastor, to start in September 2023. In February '23 Pete Bennett accepted the role, following a meeting of the church members.

During the year the staff team also undertook various roles and speaking engagements outside of the church. These included the Pastor chairing the East Anglian Gospel Partnership, being vice-Chair of the FIEC trust board and being a trustee of Cornerstone Care in Confidence.

At the beginning of the year there were 134 members of the Church and 136 members at the end of March '23. A number of people started attending regularly and 12 new people became members in the year.

The church baptised two people in March '23. During the year 4 funerals and 2 weddings were also held.

In March 2023 the Elders brought a proposal, to the church members, to appoint men and women Deacons to free up the Elders to lead, teach and care for the church spiritually.

Church members meetings were held via Zoom during the year which continued to enable greater attendance than face-to-face meetings. The annual covenant service was held in the building for the first time in 3 years.

Health & Safety

Richard Vennelle continued in his role as Trustee (Elder) with specific responsibility for the St. Neots Evangelical Church Health and Safety Policy and its implementation.

Following the lifting of statutory Covid 19 regulations and the publishing of the Government's 'Living with Covid' plan, a review of the risk assessment for the SNEC Cambridge Street premises was carried out and issued in April 2022. New instructions were issued for Sunday morning stewards, those serving refreshments and church cleaning.

For Sunday services spacing between rows of seats was now reduced to 0.5 metres. On Sunday mornings there were 6 rows towards the rear of the main hall, spaced 1.5 metres apart, designated exclusively for those members of the congregation who wished to still wear masks. Stewards were instructed to ensure there was a robust airflow through the building. New instructions were issued for serving communion, requiring servers to sanitise hand and place bread and communion glasses directly into the hands of congregation members. Instructions were also issued for other groups using the church building during the week.

Further guidance was issued in late summer relaxing all Covid 19 measures.

At the beginning of October an 'Event Management Plan' for conducting Sunday morning services at Ernulf Academy was issued. The plan included a risk assessment and covered the safety aspects of:

- Service management
- Traffic and parking management
- Crowd management
- Security
- First Aid
- Provision for those with special needs
- Catering
- Emergency plans for evacuation

Safeguarding

We have continued to operate our ministries in line with our safeguarding policy. This included performing DBS checks for adult volunteers working with children and young people, keeping secure records, and seeking assistance from Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS), a national safeguarding advisory service.

One of the church's priorities for the year was to adopt and implement revised Safeguarding arrangements, following the recommendations of Christian Safeguarding Service's audit in the previous year. A working group was set up to undertake this work which included:

- Updating the church's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Developing codes of conduct for key areas
- Providing role and person specifications and clear induction process for volunteers
- Developing skills and competence through formal and informal learning opportunities
- Increasing awareness and encouraging reporting of concerns
- Broadening the understanding of safeguarding in the church family

GDPR

Our data protection policy states that “An annual report on the level of compliance with or variance from good data protection practices will be produced by the Data Protection Compliance Manager”.

Actions taken towards good data protection practices:

- Maintained ICO membership by payment of annual fee.
- Advised on ad hoc data protection and data retention period questions emerging during the life of the Church.
- Followed ICO guidance in handling a minor data breach where an email was sent to wrong recipients.

Actions proposed for coming year:

- Appoint new Data Protection Compliance Manager.
- Review Legitimate Interest assessments.
- Review our record retention policy and implementation.

Paul Slater

Acting Data Protection Compliance Manager

Financial Review

The general fund receipts during the year were £247,626 (£1,990 less than the previous year) with payments totalling £254,450, giving a receipts deficit of £6,824. In addition to the general fund, the existing Hardship fund was used to provide £240 to those in need of short-term assistance. The total net receipts deficit for the year was £7,064.

The Church's income was mainly received through regular giving from Members and friends of the Church, of which £163,774 (up 10% on the previous year) were gift aided donations. £37,190 was received in the year as a tax refund on gift aided donations to the general fund.

65% of general fund expenditure was spent on Staff costs. 15% of the church's income was set aside for the support of mission work outside of the church, of which £41,499 was used for this purpose in the year. 5% of the Church's income was set aside for the upkeep of the building in the fabric fund. During the year £12,569 was allocated to the fund and £11,088 was paid out for repairs and renewal of equipment.

Total receipts in the year remained just below the £250,000 threshold that would require an accrual method of accounting. It is anticipated that the income in 2023/24 may exceed that threshold.

The Trustees have adopted a policy of maintaining reserves at a minimum level of three months of Staff costs. This policy was achieved throughout the year under review.

Mr Mike Kendall (Pastor) was employed by the Church on a full-time basis and is also a Trustee. The remuneration of the Pastor is reviewed by the Elders each year. In accordance with the Church's constitution, the Pastor does not attend the meetings at which the Staff pay reviews take place. None of the other Trustees of the Church received any remuneration from the Church during the year.

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	HSBC Accounts	83,193	2,461	-
	Cash	1,053	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	84,246	2,461	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Gift aid reclaim for 2022/23	40,943		
	Payments in advance	2,492		
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Baby grand piano			
	Panasonic projector (PT-EX620LEJ) with zoom lens			
	Rodgers W50 keyboard			
	PA equipment, drum kit, chairs, TV monitors			
	Kawai keyboard			
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Church building, Cambridge Street, St. Neots, PE19 1PL			
	50% share of 41, Gordon Close, Little Baxton, PE19 6DE			
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Missionary allocation not yet spent		13,248	
	Fabric reserve		9,792	
	PAYE/NIC liability for March 2023		3,511	
	Electricity		2,494	
	Received in advance for weekend away		7,595	

Address: 346 GRACE WAY, STEVENAGE
HERTFORDSHIRE
SG1 5AP.

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

No issues

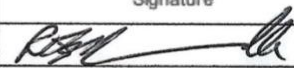

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Signature		
Full name	RICHARD ERIC GODFREY VENNELLE	GEOFFREY RICHARD SELLEY
Position	MANAGING TRUSTEE	MANAGING TRUSTEE
Date	29-01-2024	29-01-2024

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Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		RICHARD VENNELLE	29.01.24	
		GEOFFREY SALLEY	29.01.24	

Address:

346 GRACE WAY, STEVENAGE
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