

NORTH EAST CHURCHES
ACTING TOGETHER

North East Churches Acting Together

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended: 31 August 2023

Charity no: 1157138

North East Churches Acting Together

Reports and Financial Statements

Year ended: 31 August 2023

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Legal and administrative information

Trustees:	Dr MA Bonnington Mrs R Maudslay Mr W Offler Mr D Pigeon Rt Revd M Wroe
Chairman:	Dr MA Bonnington
Treasurer:	Mr D Pigeon
Regional Officer:	Ms C Stehouwer (appointed November 2023)
Address:	30 Fieldhouse Lane Durham DH1 4LT
Independent Examiner:	Neil Mullen FCA FCCA Mullen Stoker Ltd Mullen Stoker House Mandale Business Park Belmont Industrial Estate Durham DH1 1TH
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC The North Tyneside Group 3 Northumberland Square North Shields NE30 1QX

North East Churches Acting Together

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2023

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 August 2023

Reference and Administrative Details

Name of the charity	North East Churches Acting Together
Charity number	1157138
Registered office	30 Fieldhouse Lane Durham DH1 4LT

The Trustees

The Trustees who served the Charity during the year ended 31 August 2023 were:

Dr MA Bonnington
Mrs R Maudsley
Mr W Offler
Mr D Pigeon
Rt Revd M Wroe

Independent Examiner

Neil Mullen FCA FCCA
Mullen Stoker Ltd
Mullen Stoker House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont Industrial Estate
Durham
DH1 1TH

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC
The North Tyneside Group
3 Northumberland Square
North Shields
NE30 1QX

North East Churches Acting Together

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2023

Structure, Governance and Management

North East Churches Acting Together (NECAT) was registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) on 21st May 2014. The governing documents are the memorandum and articles of association of the CIO.

Organisational Structure

The Trustees consist of nominated trustees representing the Churches Together groups, the regional denominational ecumenical officers and the Northern Church leaders as well as other appointed Trustees. The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year end are set out on page two. Trustees usually meet four times each year and are responsible for formally monitoring the Charity. Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefit from the Charity. No expenses were reclaimed by Trustees from the Charity during the year.

Tees Valley Ministry

Oversight and financial guidance of Tees Valley Ministry is the responsibility of NECAT.

Objectives

To advance the Christian religion and the promotion of the churches mission in the North East of England for the benefit of church members, local churches, the wider church, and the public generally through:

- identifying opportunities for prayer and worship.
- promoting spirituality and theological reflection.
- providing advice, support and training to local churches, local churches together groups and other ecumenical bodies.
- identifying priorities and managing resources.
- bringing together statutory, voluntary, community, commercial, artistic, and cultural agencies in a common attempt to advance the churches mission.
- interpreting key social and economic trends and issues from the perspective of the Christian faith and developing appropriate responses.
- promoting religious harmony for the benefit of the common good.

NECAT is an ecumenical body in the North East of England, serving a region with a distinct culture, spiritual life and self-awareness. NECAT was formed as a result of a review of the ecumenical structures in the North East and a combining of North East Christian Churches Together (NECCT) and The Churches' Regional Commission in the North East (CRCNE).

NECAT seeks to serve the Kingdom of God in the North East by being a partnership of churches and Christian organisations dedicated to answering the call of Jesus Christ and working ecumenically for the renewal of the region through specific and local action to bring about change for the common good.

NECAT's aim and method of working is to encourage and support churches to work together and with other partners both locally and regionally and to identify and release resources which will bring tangible benefits especially to communities and churches working with vulnerable people and groups. Its process within the rich inheritance of the Christian tradition is for action-reflection aimed to bring about changes which will improve the lives of people in local communities and the region. NECAT will offer a voice for the region and its ecumenical vision in national and inter-regional forums. NECAT will be about action to encourage renewal, and the action being undertaken with others wherever possible. Working together will be a catalyst for talking together. Reflection and analysis will follow practical actions benefitting local communities across the region.

North East Churches Acting Together works to support the churches of the North East in their relationships with one another and in their wider mission in the world. Our aim is to work in partnership and help to encourage partnership working with churches, voluntary agencies and other public bodies. Churches Together Groups in the region hold a key role in contributing to the work of the church locally. They and other Ecumenical agencies are supported by the Regional Officer and denominational Ecumenical Officers who together with representation from the Northern Church Leader's Group form the Local Ecumenical Group (LEG).

North East Churches Acting Together

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2023

Churches Together

We currently have 72 Churches Together groups formally registered with NECAT, these vary from large groups, who are in themselves separate charities, to small local alliances and fellowship groups. We know that churches and Churches Together groups are finding the current post-lockdown situation difficult. The continued impact of the pandemic has meant that many groups struggled to meet, had to cancel events and are now seeing reduced numbers of volunteers returning. After the Covid pandemic some groups are recovering well, others are struggling to re-establish themselves. Numbers of people accessing Food banks have again increased and groups have expanded their provision to provide additional support, also providing debt advice, clothing banks, warm food and other support. Other groups have responded by providing Holiday Fun and Food, working together to provide food and activities, After School or breakfast clubs or by going into local schools to deliver 'Open the Book' sessions or Collective Worship or to offer volunteer time to support children with reading.

We recognise the good missional work that Churches acting together do, the huge range of activities they provide and give thanks for all of those who volunteer with them and support the work and operation of their local churches Together group.

Church Leaders

The North East Ecumenical Church Leaders group continues to meet online to pray together, discuss local and national issues and to liaise with one another across the churches.

Reverend Paul Revill left his role with the Northern Baptist Association in the Autumn. Bishop Robert Byrne left his ministry as Roman Catholic Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, to which role Bishop Stephen Wright was appointed in June 2023. Revd David Herbert retired, after many years service in various roles for the URC in the region, as Moderator of the URC Northern Synod and was replaced by Revd Kim Plumpton. Dave has been a great supporter of our Ecumenical work across the region, we thank him for all he has done and wish him well in his future ministry. The Right Reverend Helen Ann Hartley became the next Bishop of Newcastle and was installed in early 2023.

Tees Valley Ministry (TVM)

TVM is a charity set up to work in the Tees Valley to promote and support workplace chaplaincy by supporting volunteer chaplains and being an advocate of the Christian in the workplace. It has been part of NECAT since 2015 and NECAT continue to work with Regional Church leaders to discern the future direction and projects of TVM.

Regional Officer

Revd Joanne Thorns left her post in August 2022. Joanne did a few days work in order to sustain the life of NECAT through the autumn of 2022 and kept an eye on phone and emails through the year whilst the work of NECAT was necessarily diminished. All involved in the ecumenical life of our churches across the North East of England have been enormously grateful for the way in which Joanne has supported and advanced the life and mission of the churches over her time in office. This included the period of the pandemic when things were particularly difficult for all the churches of the region, and we were enormously grateful for the way in which she helped encourage the restoration of ecumenical church life in the last three years. We wish her well in her new post with the Diocese of Durham and we appointed a new regional officer in the autumn of 2023. The trustees agreed to engage Daniel Wright on an interim hourly basis to support the small number of ongoing administrative tasks that were necessary.

North East Churches Acting Together

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2023

Ecumenical Officers and the Local Ecumenical Group

NECAT acts as the sponsoring body for the formal ecumenical structures in the North East including the Local Ecumenical Group which, on behalf of the denominations, is available to support Local Ecumenical Partnerships and initiate reviews. The Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEO) and continue to meet regularly and to offer that support to LEPs, Covenant Partnerships and other ecumenical structures. The number of denominational Ecumenical officers has reduced considerably, we only have one paid officer and two volunteer officers. This does mean that it is difficult to give the support that we would like to and we are having to rethink the way in which we have worked and are trying to build up a team of volunteers able to help with reviews. The LEG has expressed concern about the future sustainability of the group and its ability to deliver the required support and the possibility of loss of Ecumenical expertise as we look to the future. The Churches Together in England toolkit, 'A New Framework for Local Unity' helps local groups ask the right questions as to what might be a good partnership model for them, enabling them to do what is needed with the minimal amount of bureaucracy, but ensuring the right documentation is in place to support their work and fellowship.

Preparing for the appointment of a new regional officer has taken quite a large part of the year and we made the appointment in Autumn 2023 for a start in January 2024. This has meant that involvement in Churches Together in England has necessarily been much less but we expect this to be restored in 2024 with the appointment of a new Regional Officer. Similarly relationship with ecumenical bodies, synods and inter-church activities will be revived in 2024.

Ecumenical Initiatives

North East Churches Acting Together is committed to working in partnership and trying to operate as a link or build networks between different churches and denominations and between churches and other agencies.

Plans for future periods

The NECAT trustees have actively considered the best way forward for NECAT and for the Regional Officer role and advertising for the post went out in the Summer of 2023. The Trustees appointed a Regional Officer in the Autumn of 2023 with the support the regional Ecumenical Church Leaders Group.

We have been kindly and expertly served for ten years since the launch of NECAT by Mr Danny Pigeon as NECAT Treasurer, who has announced an intention to stand down at the next AGM. We will therefore be seeking someone with relevant experience to replace Danny as a Trustee from early 2024.

Our website www.necat.co.uk or on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/northeastchurchesactingtogether>

Mission Fund

All Churches Together Groups and informal ecumenical groups are able to submit applications for funding for work they may wish to do in the local communities. Further information and advice can be obtained from the following email address regionalsofficer@necat.co.uk.

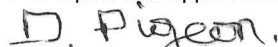
Financial review

The Charity's work is entirely reliant on income provided in the form of grants received from the Church Denominations and donations received from the Churches Together Groups in the North East.

Reserves policy

The Trustees aim to maintain reserves in a restricted fund at a level which equates to approximately six months of unrestricted charitable expenses. The Trustees consider that this will provide sufficient funds to ensure that support and governance costs are covered. Total reserves at 31 August 2023 amounted to £126,971 (2022: £136,194) of which £54,183 (2022: 87,221) were restricted.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 02/02/2024.



Mr D Pigeon (Trustee & Treasurer)

North East Churches Acting Together

Year ended: 31 August 2023

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of North East Churches Acting Together

I report to the Charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity (number 1157138) for the year ended 31 August 2023 which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts 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:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 accounts to be reached.

Neil Mullen FCA FCCA



Mullen Stoker House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont Industrial Estate
Durham
DH1 1TH

Date 02/02/24

North East Churches Acting Together
Statement of Financial Activities including summary income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 August 2023

		Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes	£	£	£		
Income from:						
Churches and denominations		25,216	0	0	25,216	26,729
Churches together groups		175	0	0	175	770
Sundry Income		340	0	0	340	330
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Grant		0	0	0	0	0
Other Grants		0	0	0	0	88,500
Donations	3	0	0	0	0	100
Investment income - Bank interest	4	73	0	469	542	47
Investment income - Dividends		0	0	618	618	611
Total		25,804	0	1,087	26,891	117,087
Expenditure on:						
NECAT operation	5	6,439	0	0	6,439	41,433
Mission	5	0	0	0	0	300
Refugee and Asylum Seekers	5	0	0	0	0	172
Covid Recovery	5	0	0	30,092	30,092	39,908
Big Society	5	0	0	0	0	98
TVM operation	5	0	0	250	250	250
Total		6,439	0	30,342	36,781	82,161
Net incoming resources / (resources expended)						
before transfers		19,365	0	(29,255)	(9,890)	34,926
Transfers between funds		0	0	0	0	0
Net incoming resources/(resources expended)		19,365	0	(29,255)	(9,890)	34,926
Realised (loss)/gain on investment assets		0	0	667	667	(1,116)
Net incoming resources / (resources expended) including realised gains on investments		19,365	0	(28,588)	(9,223)	33,810
Unrealised gain on investment assets		0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds		19,365	0	(28,588)	(9,223)	33,810
Fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2022		31,233	22,190	82,771	136,194	102,384
Fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2023		50,598	22,190	54,183	126,971	136,194

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above.

North East Churches Acting Together

Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2023

	Notes	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 £	Charity 2022 £
Fixed assets					
Investments	6		21,398		20,732
			<u>21,398</u>		<u>20,732</u>
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand			106,215		116,104
			<u>106,215</u>		<u>116,104</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7		(642)		(642)
Net current assets			<u>105,573</u>		<u>115,462</u>
Net assets			<u>126,971</u>		<u>136,194</u>
Funds:					
Unrestricted funds					
General fund	8		50,598		31,233
Designated funds					
Mission fund	8	2,190		2,190	
Reserve fund	8	20,000	22,190	20,000	22,190
Total unrestricted funds			<u>72,788</u>		<u>53,423</u>
Restricted funds					
Publicity fund	8	614		614	
Refuges and asylum seekers fund	8	1,525		1,525	
Covid recovery fund	8	0		30,092	
Big Society fund	8	9,402		9,402	
TVM fund	8	42,642	54,183	41,138	82,771
Total funds	8		<u>126,971</u>		<u>136,194</u>

The financial statements on pages 9 to 12 were approved by the Executive Committee and authorised for issue by the trustees on 2 February 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Dr MA Bonnington
Chairman



Mr D Pigeon
Trustee & Treasurer

North East Churches Acting Together

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Accounting policies

(a) Basis of preparation and going concern

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The Charity constitutes a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

(b) Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds have been transferred from unrestricted funds for a particular purpose and are to be used in accordance with that purpose as imposed by the trustees.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for a particular purpose. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

(c) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Gifts in kind donated for distribution are included at valuation and recognised as income when they are distributed to the projects. Gifts donated for resale are included as income when they are sold. Donated facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

(d) Grant income

Grants and contributions received for current year expenditure are recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which they are received, provided that the conditions for receipt have been complied with. Where income is received in advance for expenditure in a future accounting period, it is deferred and recognised in the future period to which it relates.

(e) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

(f) Investments

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. The Statement of Financial Activities includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

North East Churches Acting Together

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

(g) **Defined contribution pension scheme**

Existing employees of the Charity were entitled to join NEST which is funded by contributions from the employee and employer. New and existing employees were automatically enrolled into the master trust with the option to opt out should they choose to do so.

2 Related party transactions and trustees' expenses and remuneration

The trustees give freely their time and expertise without any form of remuneration or other benefit in cash or kind (2022: £nil). Expenses, in respect of travel and subsistence, paid to trustees in the year totalled £nil (2022: £nil).

3 Donations and gifts

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Individuals	0	0	0	0	100

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Interest receivable - Barclays Active Saver a/c	73	0	0	73	2
Interest receivable - CBF Deposit a/c	0	0	469	469	45
	73	0	469	542	47

North East Churches Acting Together

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

5 Resources expended

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Stationery and printing	1	0	0	1	38
Necat management fee	0	0	250	250	250
Computer software/website	334	0	0	334	332
Telephone - emails	406	0	0	406	286
Web expenses	270	0	0	270	0
Advertising	1,669	0	0	1,669	0
Travel and subsistence	106	0	0	106	1,154
Training	0	0	0	0	69
Office allowance	0	0	0	0	306
Subscriptions	700	0	0	700	1,400
Insurance	458	0	0	458	458
Salaries	1,373	0	0	1,373	34,330
Employers pension payment	0	0	0	0	1,694
Sundries	151	0	0	151	0
Wages/NEST processing	329	0	0	329	723
Independent examination	642	0	0	642	642
Refugees and asylum seekers	0	0	0	0	172
Covid recovery	0	0	30,092	30,092	39,909
Big society	0	0	0	0	98
Mission	0	0	0	0	300
	<u>6,439</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>30,342</u>	<u>36,781</u>	<u>82,161</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 0 (2022: 1) with all employee time involved in providing either support to the governance of the charity or support services to charitable activities. The total employment benefits including employer pension contributions of the key management personnel were £nil (2022: £1,694). No employees had employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) in excess of £60,000 (2022: £nil).

6 Fixed asset investments

	2023 £	2022 £
Within the UK		
Church of England Investment Fund at market value	<u>21,398</u>	<u>20,732</u>

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals - accountancy	<u>642</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>642</u>	<u>642</u>

North East Churches Acting Together

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

8 Statement of funds

	At 1 Sept 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Investment gains £	Transfers £	At 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted						
General fund	31,233	25,804	(6,439)	0	0	50,598
Designated funds:						
Mission fund	2,190	0	0	0	0	2,190
Reserve fund	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000
Total unrestricted funds	53,423	25,804	(6,439)	0	0	72,788
Restricted funds:						
Publicity fund	614	0	0	0	0	614
Refugees and asylum seekers fund	1,525	0	0	0	0	1,525
Covid recovery fund	30,092	0	(30,092)	0	0	0
Big society fund	9,402	0	0	0	0	9,402
TVM fund	41,138	1,087	(250)	667	0	42,642
Total restricted funds	82,771	1,087	(30,342)	667	0	54,183
Total funds	136,194	26,891	(36,781)	667	0	126,971

General funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Mission funds provide small grants to Local Churches Together and similar groups such as Regional bodies/initiatives and ad hoc groups formed for a particular event.

Designated reserve funds are to be used to pay expenses due should the aims and objectives of NECAT, as originally envisaged, cease resulting in the cessation of NECAT.

Publicity funds are for the purpose of publicising NECAT and /or regional events.

Refugees and asylum seekers funds seek to provide support and integration into the community.

Covid recovery fund gives support to community buildings and church halls of all denominations across County Durham. Initially to help with the re-opening post covid, but this was extended to include funding works that would improve the energy efficiency of a building and make community space more sustainable.

Big society fund is a social impact fund which looks into the feasibility of using church land and buildings to provide affordable housing. It supports a feasible project's further planning and securing its financing where appropriate.

TVM fund operates in the Tees Valley to promote and support workplace chaplaincy by supporting volunteer chaplains and being an advocate of the Christian in the workplace.