

Rye Baptist Church (CIO)

Trustees' Annual Report on 2023

Aims & Purposes

The Trustees of Rye Baptist Church work together to advance the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination; to promote the whole mission of the church, through worship and pastoral care; evangelism; social care and ecumenical involvement; to advance education and carry out charitable purposes both in the UK and in other parts of the world; and as the overseeing charity for Rye Foodbank, to promote the alleviation of poverty and relief of need in the local area.

The Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of the Rye Baptist Church building; the manse at 86 Udimore Rd, Rye, East Sussex, and since March 2023, also the Old Burial Ground at Watchbell Corner in the Rye Citadel, now being developed as a Community Peace Garden.

Objectives & Activities

The Trustees are committed to enable as many people as possible to be part of the RBC worshipping community, and also to provide service and support to the wider community of Rye and District, through our various groups and activities.

When planning our various activities, the Trustees have considered the Commission's advice on public benefit and in particular, the specific advice for charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we endeavour to enable people to live out their faith through:-

- Worship & Prayer, Bible Study and Teaching
- Baptism and Holy Communion
- Offering and Encouraging Pastoral Care
- Nurture of Christian disciples
- Missionary Outreach and Evangelism, locally, nationally, and internationally
- Welcome, inclusion and Christian nurture of young people
- Supporting and encouraging Christian Social Action in the UK and beyond
- Education & Training for Christian Community Service

To facilitate this work, it is essential that we maintain the fabric of the RBC church building and the manse at 86 Udimore Road.

Achievements & Performance

• Worship & Prayer

During 2023, Sunday worship services have taken place each week, with church attendance gradually increasing and with a number of new people becoming regular attenders. Numbers on a Sunday averaged from 35-50. The summer season also brought in a number of visitors to our services. Our seating layout of semi-circles of chairs around coffee tables, giving a relaxed and informal feel to the worship service, has continued to be appreciated by regulars and visitors alike, although on some services, where we have expected much larger attendances e.g funerals and the CTRD united morning services, we have occasionally reverted to the more traditional rows of chairs. During 2023, the church invested in a set of new radio microphones from the legacy we received in 2022, and these have really enhanced the sound quality of our services.

Preaching series during 2023 included studies on the book of James; a Lent series looking at events on Jesus' journey from Jericho to Jerusalem; a series on outreach based on the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity's resource on "Confidence"; a topical series on the Book of Proverbs; and an Advent Series on Luke 1 and 2. During the minister's half- sabbatical (mid September to November) we also were blessed by a number of guest preachers bringing sermons on a variety of themes.

A special worship highlight during August was an open-air evening service held in our old burial ground to re-dedicate the space to God as a Community Peace Garden.

Other worship highlights during 2023 included a Covenant New Year service; a Reflective Service for Good Friday and a Family Celebration of Easter; 2 streamed sermons from the Baptist Assembly; a Coronation themed service; a Church Anniversary celebration; a Harvest celebration; a Remembrance Service; a Christingle Service; and a Christmas Eve celebration service which included Carols by Candlelight.

In addition to our regular Sunday worship, throughout 2023 we also continued holding our "Encountering God" evenings - a monthly midweek informal praise and prayer gathering.

Prayer is recognized as a very important element in the life of the church, and hence prayer takes place at almost all of the church's services, events and activities. The church's four well-populated house-groups all focus on prayer, as well as worship, Bible study and fellowship. Our main church prayer meeting is the monthly "Saturday Prayers" which takes place via Zoom. R4P (Request for Prayer)– our text/email prayer service has been used and appreciated extensively during 2023. Some 20 people are on the prayer team, responding to texts and messages about prayer needs, and have been greatly encouraged by the results.

In January 2023 members of the Church also participated in the local "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity", which was held via Zoom.

- **BU & SEBA membership**

Rye Baptist Church is part of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and a member church of the South Eastern Baptist Association.

- **Church Buildings & Land**

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure the church buildings are well maintained.

In November 2021 some cracking was noticed in the manse, which was later diagnosed by the insurance company's structural engineer to be caused by subsidence. This was monitored regularly during 2022, with drain repairs being carried out in August of that year. Movement had settled by the end of 2022, so the final remedial repairs and refurbishment were carried out over 7 weeks between March and May of 2023. During this period the minister and her husband moved out into temporary accommodation.

Thanks to a church member's legacy, we were delighted to be able to replace several windows and doors on the lower floor of the church building. Also, in the manse, the front door and several upper floor windows were replaced following the completion of the subsidence refurbishment work.

In February 2023, an email conversation revealed that the burial ground attached to the previous Rye Baptist Church building had not been sold with the church building in 1909, as had been assumed, but that a lease arrangement had been made with the local district council after the Second World War. The district council have since maintained the space as a public garden. This lease came to an end in 2023, whereupon the responsibility for its upkeep reverted to RBC as its owners. Some negotiation is still ongoing with Rother District Council on repairs that should have been undertaken prior to the expiry of the lease.

Having taken legal advice, the RBC Trustees are now the registered owners of this piece of land through the Land Registry.

After discussion and prayer, the church decided to develop the space in the future as a Community Peace Garden. An arrangement has been made with Rye Town Council for the general maintenance of the garden in return for a contribution towards the costs from the church. Plans are underway for signage giving both information about the history of the space, and to include scriptures and texts which might aid visitors to the site in quiet prayer and reflection. In the meantime, our Butterflies Carer and Toddler group used the Garden for a Teddy Bears' Picnic in July 2023, and an evening Worship Service of Dedication took place there in August.

Pastoral Care

- Pastoral Care of the church fellowship is overseen by the Minister, assisted by the team of Trustees, and the house-group leaders. In addition to this, the church family are encouraged to look out for, and care for one another, and this has worked very well.
- During 2023 four house-groups met regularly, maintaining a strong level of mutual pastoral care. Mindful of continuing Covid concerns, and lack of space in people's homes, three of these groups met in the church lounge, and just one in the leaders' home which has plenty of space. One of the evening groups continued to meet via Zoom for the colder and darker months in early 2023.

Church Membership etc.

RBC has a membership roll of people who have been baptised by immersion and who, after an interview process, have covenanted to support and serve the church here. During 2023, one member sadly passed away, but we were delighted to welcome one new member. Three other members had also moved away, two of whom lost touch with RBC, and the other chose to move to our Associate List. This brought our total number of active members at the end of the year to 44. The congregation also includes a number of 'fringe' folk and committed non-members who are very much part of the church family.

Mission & Evangelism

- **Coffee Plus** – from Easter to December 2023 – our Coffee Plus outreach activity re-opened. Selling low priced refreshments and cakes in a comfortable welcoming environment, the friendly volunteers also offer opportunities for prayer and pastoral conversation if this is desired. Many positive contacts in the community have been made through this outreach.
- **Butterflies** -Throughout 2023, Butterflies - our Carer and Toddler group, opened from 9.30 to 11am on Fridays during school term-times and welcomed up to 20 carers and toddlers each week. Our welcoming and caring helpers, and the comfortable and safe environment we provide, has created positive connections and outreach opportunities with a good number of families in the community.
- **Rye Food Bank** operating from our building is also run with a Christian ethos, by a Christian manager, and a number of our church folk are on the team of volunteers. Prayer is offered and a listening ear, and signposting to agencies that can help with clients' problems with benefits, heating, housing and so on. From January 2023, following discussions with Hastings CAP (Christians Against Poverty), a CAP Debt Advisor has been appointed to work in Rye one day a week alongside Foodbank. This lady has been working with a number of clients, and during 2023 several of these have been able to become debt-free.
- **Website and Online Sermons:** -For some years RBC has maintained a website giving useful information about the church. The website also includes a page with recordings of readings, sermons, and prayers from our Sunday services. This enables us to present a clear Gospel message in an online presence, and provides an opportunity for people to be able to make a Christian commitment.
- **Personal Witness** - It has always been our practice to encourage our congregation to witness personally to their faith to friends and neighbours.
- **Connect and Engage** – Our monthly fellowship gatherings in a local pub (Connect for Ladies and Engage for men) provide an enjoyable evening out for church folk, and also serve as an opportunity for gentle evangelistic outreach.
- **R4P (Request for Prayer)** – this text/email prayer service has been greatly utilised by church folk and others outside the church who would like our prayer team to pray for particular needs or concerns. Many have been helped by this, and again it is a means of witness to the power of prayer and the God who cares for all.
- **Council Prayers** – During 2023, our minister Fiona was invited to lead prayers at several of the Rye Town Council Meetings – a great opportunity for witness and building connections with the Town Council.
- **School Assemblies** – We continue our connections with the local primary School via school assemblies. During 2023 our minister Fiona led several assemblies both at Rye Primary School and at a school in Bexhill. She also helps lead the local Churches Together “Open the Book” team – a Bible Society initiative whereby a group of people from the various Rye churches go into school to enact and explain Bible stories to the children.
- **Rye Bonfire** – This is a big event in the community life of Rye, and RBC joined in again this year by opening our building, selling hot drinks, and allowing use of our toilet facilities, which was much appreciated by the public.
- **Rye Christmas Festival** – In December 2023 we participated in Rye Christmas Festival by providing our rear hall to be used as “Santa’s Grotto”. Some 200 children came through our doors, and we utilised this opportunity to also promote the Christian understanding of the real meaning of Christmas, by giving out booklets in party bags, and through displays, films and refreshments in our main hall.

- **Rye Street Pastors** -a number of our members also serve as Street Pastors in Rye and District, reaching out to the night-time economy to listen, help and care. We are pleased to provide our church hall as the town centre base for their operations and prayer.
- **Rye Homes for Ukraine** – Since the war began in the Ukraine RBC has sought to offer what support we could for Ukrainian guests and those hosting them in our area. To that end, during 2023, we have hosted regular meetings for Ukraine guests, hosts, and support services to network and socialise together, which have been much appreciated.
- **Evangelistic Men's Breakfast** – In November 2023, our outreach ideas group put on an evangelistic men's breakfast with a guest speaker. This was well attended and positively received, and further similar events are planned for 2024 for both men and ladies.
- **Publicity in Rye Fixtures Magazine** – Since April 2023, the church agreed to a year's trial of placing an advertisement highlighting both our upcoming and regular events in the local Rye Fixtures magazine. This has raised our profile in the community, and elicited positive comment and interest by various readers of the magazine.
- **Overseas Mission Support** - Through our tithes and various special collections during the year, we have sent financial help to those in need following natural disasters, conflicts etc. and supported a number of overseas mission agencies and ministries, e.g. Hope Home in Thailand; the BMS Harvest Appeal; Tearfund; Bible Society, and Samara's Aid Appeal.

Ecumenical relationships

Rye Baptist Church is part of Churches Together in Rye & District, and our minister, the Revd. Fiona Gill, has been Chair of the Executive Committee of CTRD for the last five years. In May 2023 she felt the time had come to step down from that role, although she remains on the Executive Committee. During 2023, the churches in Rye have engaged in various worship and outreach activities together. Representatives from all the congregations participated in a Walk of Witness on Good Friday. Three congregations joined together for a United Morning Service in January and May at the Anglican church and in September at RBC. In July we celebrated Sea Sunday with a service at Rye Harbour Church led by our minister Fiona. We also joined together in a series of Zoom Prayer and Discussion Meetings during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. The committee and church leaders met several times during the year to plan our ecumenical worship and outreach activities .

Rye Food Bank

During 2023 Rye Food Bank left the franchise of the Trussell Trust, but continues to operate as an independent Food Bank under the charitable oversight of Rye Baptist Church CIO, on behalf of Churches Together in Rye & District. Rye Baptist Church therefore owns all Food Bank assets, and the Church Trustees are responsible for the governance and oversight of the financial affairs and operations of the Rye Food Bank. Rye Food Bank operations are carried out from the Rye Baptist Church building by a team of volunteers, headed up by the Food Bank manager, Robert Harper, who supplied the following report:-

Summary Report on Food Bank Operations in 2023

2023 was another year of progress in meeting the growing needs of a community, part of which knows very well the hardship of financial insufficiency, poor housing and inadequate local services.

Demand on our foodbank remains consistent at about 100 clients (households) each week and a demand trend that is 25% up on equivalent months in 2022. It is an ongoing ambition to combine food provision with face to face advisory services especially covering matters of benefit entitlement, financial planning and debt management and control. These services run shoulder to shoulder with the Food Bank and support a healthy turnover of clients, with the newly needy coming in and the actively helped no longer needing food on a regular basis.

Our clients comprise all individuals – singles, couples and families with children of all ages, pensioners, and disabled people. We are also supporting a small number of homeless people. We continue to make the most of resources available to us, and all incoming funds are only used for food-associated items, and deliveries to those unable to visit the Food Bank.

The Food Bank is supported financially through grant funding, and support from mainly local private individuals and businesses. Being wholly voluntary without directly attributable premises costs, all of our outgoing spend directly benefits those who need our help. The provision of premises without charge and additional donated food items are a big help – the latter comprises some 20% of the total food supplied. Our local supermarket supplies food at cost price which is a tremendous help.

Our total spend in 2023 was a little under £70,000. Income is spent entirely on food and makes a significant difference to all whom come to visit us. As before, the difference made is not easy to quantify. We notice we are increasingly seen as an essential 'port in a storm' and our clients tell us how much they appreciate a warm welcome and supportive listening ear. Perhaps the most important benefit we provide is hope.

The number of beneficiaries, as opposed to households, during 2023 was 5,006 - comprising 3,002 adults and 2,004 children.

There are challenges ahead and some risks to operations that are being actively considered with a view to mitigation. And there are opportunities in plenty for enhancing the services provided. We are confident that we can rise to these challenges and opportunities with the ongoing good will of our community.

Bob Harper, Manager, Rye Food Bank

RBC Financial Review

During 2023, total receipts on unrestricted funds were £64,744. We further received restricted funds of £61,368 for the Food Bank activities.

Planned giving by way of bank transfers, standing orders and cheques to the unrestricted funds were up by 11% during this period, although the total income of this fund fell by 61% compared to the previous period due to that previous period being inflated by legacies received.

From the unrestricted funds Rye Baptist Church spent £102,744 in providing Christian ministry and the upkeep of the church building and the manse. This figure is including contributions to the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society. We also put £35,000 into a new savings account. The net result for the end of the year was that our unrestricted fund had a net of receipts over payments of -£38,000. Adding this minus figure to the balance brought forward at the beginning of the year of £141,265 gives us a balance of £103,265 carried forward on the 31st December 2023.

The restricted fund for the Food Bank was split between a current account and a savings account at the start of the year. This allows the savings account to be used as a buffer for any monthly shortfalls. The net of receipts over payments was minus £668. The net interest on the savings account was £691. Adding these to the balance brought forward at the beginning of the year of £80,128 gives us a balance of £80,151 carried forward on the 31st December 2023 across both current and savings accounts.

The total balance of unrestricted and restricted funds carried forward at year end was £183,416

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy of Rye Baptist Church is to hold three months of all necessary expenditure plus a further three months staff costs to allow the church to adapt to any changes in the income or expenditure of the church. The trustees currently believe this amount to be £23,206. There is currently sufficient funding in our general account to meet the policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Volunteers

The Trustees would like to thank all of the volunteers from our congregation who work so hard to make RBC the loving, lively and vibrant congregation it is. Fiona, our Minister, would like to also thank our Trustees and house-group leaders for all their hard work. Particular mention should go to Geoff Austin, our Church Secretary; Penny Kingham our Treasurer; Paul Kingham, our Financial Lead; Gillian Jarrett and Sally Moore of the Finance team; Geoff Haynes for oversight of the website and recordings; and Marguerite Kenward and Keith Haward for their help in so many areas of church life.

Structure, Governance & Management

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of the Minister, the Church Secretary and the Treasurer, plus three other Trustees, all elected by the membership in accordance with the procedures detailed in our Constitution. The Trustees are authorised by the church meeting to make decisions on smaller matters relating to the running of RBC, whilst larger matters, and larger items of expenditure are brought to the Church Meeting for approval.

During 2023, Church Members' Meetings were held in January, April, July and October, to update members on general church business, and to discuss and agree plans for the immediate future. At the AGM in April, Ruby Stoodley stepped down as Trustee; Geoffrey Haynes was re-elected to serve a further term as Trustee, and Keith Haward was elected as a new trustee.

Throughout 2023, The Trustees met monthly on Zoom, for church business, and also regularly, in person, throughout the year for pastoral prayer meetings.

Administrative Information

Rye Baptist Church is situated in Cinque Ports Street, Rye, East Sussex. It is part of the South Eastern Baptist Association within the Baptist Union of Great Britain. The Church is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charities' Commission of England and Wales with the Charity Number 1188057.

The Trustees, serving at least until the date this report is approved, are as follows:-

Chair - Revd. Fiona Gill, Minister
Secretary – Geoffrey Austin
Treasurer – Penny Kingham
Trustee – Geoffrey Haynes
Trustee - Marguerite Kenward
Trustee – Keith Haward

Approved by the RBC Annual Church Meeting on 29th April 2024
Signed by:-



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

Rye Baptist Church

No (if any)

1188057

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date

1/1/23

To

Period end date

12/31/23

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	50,389	-	-	50,389	53,063
Gift Aid Refund from HMRC	8,967	1,610	-	10,577	12,023
Sales coffees/teas	4,767	-	-	4,767	5,234
Miscellaneous	445	-	-	445	1,750
Legacies	-	-	-	-	83,640
Interest	176	691	-	867	32
Fellowship Fund	-	-	-	-	2,500
Foodbank grants	-	19,823	-	19,823	24,887
Donations to foodbank	-	39,244	-	39,244	63,077
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	64,744	61,368	-	126,112	246,207
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total receipts	64,744	61,368	- 0	126,112	246,207
A3 Payments					
Ministry	37,084	-	-	37,084	34,450
Mission	1,424	-	-	1,424	586
Manse	13,056	-	-	13,056	5,666
Upkeep of Church	25,687	-	-	25,687	8,016
Administration	1,478	-	-	1,478	1,370
Miscellaneous	15,874	-	-	15,874	4,230
Fellowship Fund	22	-	-	22	2,525
Away Giving (Tithe)	8,119	-	-	8,119	8,727
Foodbank purchases	-	61,345	-	61,345	78,566
Sub total	102,744	61,345	-	164,089	144,137
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	-
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total payments	102,744	61,345	- 0	164,089	144,137
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 38,000	23	-	- 37,977	102,070
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	141,265	80,128	-	221,393	119,323
Cash funds this year end	103,265	80,151	-	183,416	221,393

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 (RBC Current Account)	68,089	-	-
	Kingdom Bank (RBC Savings Account)	35,176	-	-
	Barclays Bank (Foodbank Current Account)	-	4,460	-
	Barclays Bank (Foodbank Savings Account)	-	75,691	-
	Total cash funds	103,265	80,151	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Details	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

RYE BAPTIST CHURCH

On accounts for the year
ended

31/12/2023

Charity no
(if any)

1188057

Set out on pages

1 & 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD/MM/YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 (~~other than that disclosed below*~~) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts 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 order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

J. Anstead

Date:

17/06/24

Name:

JERRY ANSTEAD

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

46 B, CULVERDEN DOWN,
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
TN4 9SG

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 brief details of
any items that the
examiner wishes to
disclose.**