

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	01	01	2024		31	12	2024

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Association of Festival Churches

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

1191777

Charity's principal address

c/o Hon treasurer

Park Villa

Thornham Parva, Suffolk

Postcode

IP23 8EY

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Sir Antony Brian Baldry	Chair		
2	Priscilla Victoria Latham			
3	The Revd Paula Whitmore Llewellyn Griffiths			
4	Timothy John Bridges			
5	Wendy Coombey MBE			
6	Geoffrey Rea Hunter			
7	The Revd Andrew Paul Whitehead			
8	Andrew Boyce			
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Nigel Mills (Festival Churches Development Officer)

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Unincorporated Association
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by existing trustees

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

- (1) The Advancement of the Christian religion in accordance with the tenets, practices and principles of the Church of England through supporting and promoting the use of churches as Festival Churches and the delivery of divine service therein;
- (2) Promoting and supporting the use by Parochial Church Councils of Festival Churches for the benefit of the public in ways that are consistent with its status as a consecrated space.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

During 2024 the Association of Festival Churches (AFC) continued to advance the Christian faith and promote the conservation and sustainable use of church buildings by supporting the development and implementation of the Festival Church model across the Church of England. The charity's activities were undertaken wholly in pursuit of its charitable objects and for the public benefit, in accordance with guidance issued by the Charity Commission. The trustees confirm that they have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning and reviewing the charity's aims and activities.

The AFC provides advice, advocacy, and practical support to dioceses, parishes and strategic partners exploring the Festival Church model as a means of maintaining both the physicality of historic church buildings and maintaining a living Christian presence in rural and fragile communities. The model enables churches with limited resources to focus on worship at key times of the year while opening up their buildings for wider community and cultural use.

During the year the Development Officer, appointed in March 2024, led an extensive programme of engagement with dioceses, individual churches and national church institutions. Regular contact was maintained with the Church Buildings Council, diocesan officers and the Church of England's Buildings for Mission project. The AFC also contributed to the ongoing review of the Pastoral Measure and to discussions about governance models for churches of lesser use.

The Association worked to strengthen its partnerships with key bodies including Historic England, the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, the Plunkett Foundation, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture, promoting shared learning and identifying opportunities for collaborative projects.

Case studies were developed to illustrate the benefits of the Festival Church model and to encourage other churches to explore this approach. The AFC also provided direct guidance to an increasing number of parishes seeking to adopt or formalise Festival Church status. Through this work the charity supported the Church of England's wider vision for a mixed ecology of worship and community life, helping to sustain parish churches as places of faith, heritage and community engagement.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

2024 was a year of significant progress for the Association of Festival Churches, as awareness of the Festival Church model grew nationally and demand for support increased.

Key achievements included:

- **National and diocesan engagement:** The AFC established active dialogue with over 30 dioceses and became a regular point of contact for diocesan buildings officers and the national Buildings for Mission network. Presentations and workshops were delivered in several dioceses, including Leicester, Ely, Lincoln and Exeter, where the Festival Church model is being embedded within wider strategic reviews of church buildings.
- **Support to individual churches:** Enquiries from individual parishes increased steadily throughout the year, reflecting greater recognition of the model's potential. The AFC provided tailored guidance and facilitated introductions to relevant diocesan contacts. Site visits were undertaken to several churches, including those in Cumbria and Yorkshire, to document successful local approaches and gather material for new case studies. As this work develops further, it will be important for AFC to identify advocates in individuals dioceses (eg support officers, DAC Secretaries, Archdeacons) to whom much of this work can be delegated.
- **Evidence and research:** A national survey of diocesan practice relating to Festival Churches was designed and circulated, providing valuable baseline data on awareness, procedures and attitudes. The findings informed a presentation to the Church Buildings Council in early 2025 and will shape the charity's strategic priorities for the coming year.
- **Partnership development:** The AFC strengthened relationships with national partners, resulting in invitations to contribute to sector events and publications, including the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance *Big Update*, the Council for Bellringers newsletter, and the Church Buildings Council meeting in Durham.
- **Communications and advocacy:** The charity's website and online presence were refreshed, and new materials were prepared to explain the Festival Church concept and its benefits. Positive media coverage and direct engagement with partner organisations helped raise the profile of the AFC as a trusted and constructive voice within the heritage and church sector.

By year-end the AFC was recognised as the primary national resource for advice and advocacy on Festival Churches. Through its activities, the charity contributed directly to maintaining open, active and sustainable places of worship and community life in areas where closure might otherwise have been inevitable.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

AFC has no reserves policy, having no reserves. This position will be reviewed annually.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Section F

Other optional information

Section G

Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)



Full name(s)

Antony Brian Baldry

Geoffrey Rea Hunter

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Chair

Date 30/09/2025



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Association of Festival Churches

1191777

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01/01/2024

To

Period end date
31/12/2024

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					
Grant funding	-	23,233	-	23,233	-
Interest	16	-	-	16	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	16	23,233	-	23,249	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	16	23,233	-	23,249	-
A3 Payments					
Bank fees	-	50	-	50	-
Staff costs	-	19,005	-	19,005	-
Travel and Subsistence	-	114	-	114	-
Conference fee	-	130	-	130	-
HRBA membership fee	-	48	-	48	-
Legal fees	-	480	-	480	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	19,827	-	19,827	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	19,827	-	19,827	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	16	3,406	-	3,422	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	16	3,406	-	3,422	-

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		16	3,406	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	16	3,406	-
	(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		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	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
	Antony Brian Baldry	30/09/2025
	Geoffrey Rea Hunter	30/09/2025