



Connect Southwater Community Church Trustees' Annual Report:

For the period:

From 1st January 2024 **Period start date**
To 31st December 2024 **Period end date**

Charity name: Connect Southwater Community Church

Charity registration number: 1193477

Objectives and Activities:

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document: SORP Para 1.17

To advance the Christian faith in Southwater & the surrounding area in such ways as the trustees shall think fit including connecting people to others & to God, celebrating life, loving, serving, & creating community.

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts: SORP Para 1.17 & 1.19

- Generally advancing the Christian religion
- Educating people about the Christian faith
- Pastoral care, conducting religious ceremonies such as marriages or funerals
- Missional, evangelical, outreach activities and events
- Raising awareness of Christian religious beliefs and practices
- Promoting Christian ethical standards of conduct
- Promoting moral welfare/mental or moral improvement
- General charitable purposes
- Education/ Training/ Research
- Supporting an educational establishment or students
- Relief of those in need (age, disability, ill-health, financial or other disadvantage)
- The prevention or relief of poverty

The key public benefits offered by Connect:

1. The provision of time, space, events and activities through which people benefit by connecting with others and building up community.
2. The provision of social welfare support to help alleviate local and global need, giving financial, material, physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health support.
3. The provision of Christian worship, education and learning opportunities to enable people to benefit from faith in Christ.

Connect's main activities and achievements in 2024 in relation to these purposes and the three areas of public benefit listed are all underpinned by our church vision (*to see heaven touching earth*) and mission (*to connect people to the love of God in Jesus by His Spirit*), and our core/distinctive values as a Pioneer church (being a relational, missional, charismatic and Kingdom focused community).

In compiling our annual report we recognise that there is inevitably a gap between what is envisioned and hoped for, and various factors can contribute to making less forward progression than we might want to see, however we continue to serve faithfully, seeking God's help in stepping up to our agreed vision and mission, aiming to grow more deeply in our core values in order to deliver the many benefits that flow from our life together as a church. The three areas of public benefit remain the same:

1. Connecting with others and building up community:

In this 4th year as a charity we continue to impact people and help transform our community through offering a range of groups and local service initiatives, sharing with local partners where possible. The care, community resources, support and activities offered by Connect are reflective of our first core value, to be a **relational** church, growing relationships of mutual trust and respect. Overall we saw a small increase in our core membership, as more people have connected with us and our mission to share the love of God in Christ. We also aim to be a **missional** church, with an outward focus, serving others because of His love for us and for them, offering informal opportunities for people to understand their immense worth and value, and to connect with His love for themselves. This means that we continue to connect where we are, yet always looking for new spaces and places where we can take the light of the gospel.

We continue to enable and equip members of Connect to be committed Christian disciples, followers of the way of Jesus, by encouraging in them this outward focus, both local and global. This **Kingdom** emphasis is an intentional engagement in God's Kingdom values of joy, justice, peace, righteousness, healing and hope, helping bring life in its fullness to our own community and those further afield. Community and Kingdom focused activities such as the Community Fridge, Café Connect, Connect & Play, Connect & Create, Young @ Heart, and Southwater Youth Project provide opportunities, spaces and places where we can offer the benefit of connection to people in different ways, giving informal pastoral support, care and prayer to members of the community alongside the care offered to our own members in our more specific church settings and through our geographical based mission care network groups (Connect North, South & Horsham). Caring for each other within Connect, and for others outside of Connect is part of our mission - growth through caring, building Kingdom relationships and local connections continues to be important.

It is our belief that community is integral to both our understanding of Church and of God, who is Himself a community, a Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit. Hence woven within all the above is our determination to hold closely to the core value of being a **charismatic** church community, guided in all that we do by God's Spirit, gifted by Him, seeking His wisdom, and His directing presence, following His purposes by working together in not simply by serving, but by saving and setting people free. We seek to connect deeply to God through His Spirit, aiming to become a non-anxious, positive and hopeful presence in the community, to be His people of peace and His community of grace, exercising the many gifts of His Spirit.

Embedding these four core values will be a key task for the leadership in coming years, as we seek to create a culture of vision, where as a church community we expect to see and experience the things of heaven touching earth, and as we seek to grow a culture of owned mission, where people can more easily feel connected to God's love in Jesus, through His Spirit at work in all of His people.

2. The provision of social welfare support to help alleviate local and global need, giving financial, material, physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental support:

A significant and continuing part of our mission, and the groups/activities which help us in providing this second area of public benefit are often also delivering on the previous benefit of creating community. With different degrees of emphasis, these groups/activities help us in developing a relational, missional,

charismatic, and Kingdom focus. Key benefits arise from the provision of human resources through volunteers, the provision of financial resources from internal voluntary contributions and fundraising, and through ensuring we underpin all our mission activities through prayer. Social welfare activities include:

- a) Continuing to help fund and provide volunteer support for Southwater Youth Project (SYP), a Christian ethos community youth work charity. Connect's funding contributes around 12% of the Project's core costs as well as core volunteers. This involvement helps us contribute to the well-being, and the spiritual, moral, emotional, and cultural education of children and young people in our community, in our local schools, and in the wider Horsham district. Our pastor works with the SYP youth worker in building up relationships with local schools, access to which has significantly improved since last year. As anticipated, Connect's support for SYP became more vital following the cessation of the only other church funding, from Horsham & Slinfold URC. Three Connect Trustees serve as volunteer Trustees for SYP and have worked with Trustee Board to stabilise the Project's financial viability for the next few years, and secure new premises. In November it was a joy to help SYP celebrate 18 years of local, embedded community youth work in their new premises and to have played a part in enabling young people to be the best that they can be.
- b) Young @ Heart, our weekly over 60's group, provides a range of activities and continues to help ease social isolation and loneliness in older members of the community.
- c) Connect & Create (formally Connect, Craft & Chatter) – provides friendship, conversation and creative activities for all, and actively fundraises for Connect's funding commitment for SYP.
- d) Connect & Play weekly babies, parents & carers group, is based on explicitly Christian themes, and continues to prove popular with those of faith or none. This group helps break through the social isolation that can be experienced by young parents and carers, and gives us a space to make new connections with local families, teaching and speaking of faith in gentle and accessible ways, with the aim of building bridges to church e.g. through inviting them to come to the Sunday morning Breakfast Club and special Connect events/services. This year has seen additional, informal gatherings at a local park in the summer holidays, which further enables ongoing connections.
- e) The Pop Up Monthly Community Fridge, part of the wider Horsham Community Fridge, hosted by our Anglican friends, sees an average of 70 visitors and brings clear, verifiable ecological, economic and community benefits. In 2024 a total of 42 tonnes of food was distributed through Horsham Community Fridge. Less waste goes to landfill, free food is given without question, and volunteers from both Connect and the local community are working together for a shared cause.

We continued to collect goods for the local Food Bank, offering targeted support where needed. We raise funds for global Christian social welfare and aid agency Tear Fund, maintaining our links with a Pakistani Pioneer pastor, helping his churches to provide a clean water pump in a suburb of Karachi. In December our pastor was able to join with Billy Kennedy, the head of Pioneer International, and his wife Caroline, to meet with him in Trento, Italy. There are real and ongoing threats to his life, and this has served to raise a greater awareness of our sisters and brothers in the persecuted church. We were touched by the generosity of Connect members in enabling this trip.

3. The advancement of the Christian faith and the provision of Christian worship, education, and learning opportunities in order that people might benefit from faith in Christ:

We continue to explore together what it means to pursue a vision of *"Heaven touching earth"*, and to have a mission to help *"connect people to the love of God in Jesus by the Spirit"*. We hope that developing and deepening our agreed values, being a relational, missional, charismatic, and Kingdom oriented church, will

help us to create a culture whereby we are building up healthy followers of Jesus and a strong church community, and providing a common purpose, especially significant in drawing together members from a wide range of church backgrounds/streams. We recognise the challenge to grow in all four core values but especially the call to be missional – this is part of the core meaning of our name, Connect, to help people see and experience how God in His love connects to us in Jesus by His Spirit. We are also aware of the benefit that will come to our mission through being a community which seeks to operate from out of the Spirit's gifting or charisms and not just our own strength. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in line with God's Word, our Leadership Team continues to seek to equip and enable Connect to help people benefit from having faith. Hence the LT are committed to help Connect members grow stronger and more confident in witness and evangelism, both through words, and actions, as well as by our presence as a Christian community worshipping in the local junior school in the heart of the village.

A church community is a key way by which God chooses to be present to people in His world. The wider benefits of this are incalculable. Meeting together as a "gathered" church community on a Sunday in a local school, a place where we can be seen and be found, is therefore central to our identity. We have grown our connections with the school this year, with the pastor delivering RE lessons to years 3 and 4. We were asked to assist with the year 6 SATS, and gave assemblies to the other village primary school at Easter and Christmas. Being present matters, and we continue to gather at the school on Sundays, seeking to be welcoming, and to make our worship accessible, informal and participative in style, offering biblical based teaching, illustrations, and relevant explanations, applications, and activations to help bring faith alive. Aware that Sundays represent the main space, time and place when most of Connect gather together, the LT discerned a range of topics designed to help people grow in their understanding of Connect's shared vision, mission and ethos. For example, in the lead up to our first ever MISSION MONTH in May we provided two preaching series, one on the theme of *"Inspired by ... Invested in"*, the second titled *"Church With A Mission: sent to serve/heal/save/trust & obey/celebrate."* The Away Day in May concluded this teaching on mission, having more of a teaching component than the 2023 Away Day. The aim was to help equip people with some of the basic tools of spiritual warfare, and build up awareness that stepping up to more intentional witness and evangelism will bring spiritual opposition. The LT aim to run another teaching day at some point, but a reflective/creative Away Day will be a priority in 2025, to enable people to have space to rest, reflect, and to soak in God's presence and peace.

In the summer we focused on bringing key teaching on what it means to be a charismatic church, what we understand by the work and the person of the Holy Spirit, the many ways by which He speaks to us and the potential this has for our mission. This continued into the autumn/winter with a biblical focus on what it can look like to be an ordinary person, equipped and enabled by the Spirit to be extraordinary, simply by being obedient to God's call to serve in His Kingdom and to share the good news of Jesus where we are.

We continued to offer live zoom worship participation for a small minority of members, recording talks for wider publication on FB/YouTube. One member described her online experience very positively: *"I feel part of the Connect Online Community as well as being virtually part of the service. There are a few of us who are regular on-liners as it were and we often have good interaction when we are asked to discuss/share something during the service. We know there is no distance which can separate us spiritually and I regularly sense the presence of God and sing/speak in tongues in unison with those gathered physically in Southwater. For me there is no barrier to participation by being online - I do not feel remote."*

This year we started an experimental Sunday Breakfast Club, in conjunction with SYP, at the school, with the aim of enabling children and families to explore the Christian faith and, if desired, to stay on to our worship service. This has been moderately successful with up to 4 families involved, all of whom are already linked to Connect & Play; we were pleased that some of them joined our revamped Christmas carols worship in December. Having identified the widening of our demographic as a key missional aim, we had changed what we have previously done, moving communion to Christmas morning, which those present found particularly moving, and switching our Carols by Candlelight family service from Christmas Eve to the Sunday before Christmas. We were very encouraged by the comments made by the “not yet” Christians who attended, more this year than previously. The worship was “*uplifting*” and “*very including of the children*”, and the atmosphere was felt to be tangible in terms of the sense of welcome, with one person describing it as a space where they “*never feel judged, just loved*”. The change was well-received, and both our seasonal work, and our children and family work, will continue to be under review as we seek to determine the best missional approach in 2025 and beyond. We were encouraged by this testimony to the benefit that faith can bring when compiling Pioneer’s Annual Impact Survey for 2024: “*Whilst being with Connect church for the past year I've experienced God's love and acceptance from everyone in the leadership team and congregation. I've also experienced deep healing and freedom from trauma in my past and know that I am washed clean and am free from shame. Also I know God is with me and I have recently been hearing Him clearly through current difficulties in my life.*”

New Christians joined Connect this year, which we see as a direct answer to our ongoing prayers for growth. Like last year, these are few in number, but it is heartening that they are attracted by our vision and mission as a local, community based church, and encouraging that they are seeking the benefit of growing in faith and fellowship with us. Aware that we need to resist the temptation to focus inwards, the LT are agreed that our primary aim has to be growing our mission through evangelism and witness, led by the Spirit - it is great to have existing Christians commit to our mission, but it is the “not yet” Christians who must be reached if the Christian faith is to advance as well as grow.

We have therefore been pleased to see more people step up to help serve in our outward focused groups. Of particular note was the team at our Soul Space tent at the Village Christmas, working alongside our Kids Craft tent, especially those who engaged directly with members of the community for the first time, and which was out of their comfort level/experience. Being able to pray for people in their need, and listen to God’s Word for them, is exciting, and grows faith, and we hope to build on this in 2025, by offering more specific teaching/training on outreach, witness, and evangelism, and by encouraging and enabling our three Connect neighbourhood groups to own, and help deliver specific outreach events by which more people can connect with us.

We continue to support, grow and develop people’s faith through our pastor and preachers, Leadership Team, pastoral team, and prayer team, as well as through our worship, and in groups/activities where people can put their faith into practice, using our informal, internal gatherings to give mutual support, care, prayer and encouragement. Neighbourhood Connect groups, for discipleship, care, encouragement, mission, and fellowship, are being encouraged with one group meeting fortnightly from last year, and since the autumn the other two village based groups have begun to hold occasional gatherings. This was a direct result of this year’s harvest “experiment”, whereby instead of having a central harvest lunch or supper we encouraged people to hold a Harvest @ Home. Our hope is that what was a largely internal, relational experience will develop a growing outward, missional focus in 2025.

Spiritual leadership and oversight continues to be given by the pastor (p/t) who oversees the church's vision and mission along with the Leadership Team. The pastor carried significant extra responsibility since the assistant pastor (p/t) stepped down in 2022, and in April 2024 the Trustees acknowledged this with increased remuneration backdated to September 2023. The paid role of Communications Officer (p/t) ended in the summer, and a reduced set of tasks was taken on by a volunteer. Throughout the year members have been informed about and able to comment on key LT decisions, and receive these and other essential communications via mailchimp. The LT also held several "LT Drop In" sessions in the spring just before the monthly Prayer Meeting, but few people attended, and we concluded that as a small church people feel able to speak with the LT without the need to formalise the opportunity.

Drawing upon Charity Commission advice and the Pioneer Governance Framework the Trustees work alongside the Leadership Team to provide financial, legal, HR, policy, and charity governance, with the pastor (Chair) completing our Annual Report for submission with our Annual Return and audited accounts. Amongst other governance matters, the Trustees wrote and approved the following policies: Safeguarding, Health & Safety, GDPR, Complaints & Grievance including spiritual abuse and whistle blowing, and our Volunteer Policy. Trustees agreed a pattern of policy review/updates, and a Risk Register is almost complete, with the annual Pioneer UK Impact Survey completed in February. Trustees work with our LT and Safeguarding Officer to ensure that all those within Connect who are engaged in educational, children & youth work, pastoral care, and leadership including Trustees, are subject to due DBS processes, and trained in safeguarding to the appropriate level. All our activities are covered by insurance, renewed annually and subject to appropriate risk assessment.

To enable Trustees to grasp the operational work and oversight provided by the Leadership Team in their task of enabling and equipping Connect's vision, mission, and core values, we held four joint meetings throughout the year. In September the current pastor gave early notice of her sense that God was calling her to step back from her lead role next year. Following further discernment she decided to resign at Easter 2025, giving a considerable amount of time for the LT, Trustees and church to consider this new development and plan for the future. The pastor has since helped to oversee and facilitate the church's discernment process, as well as the communication of its various phases to the church, and has indicated a desire to be as helpful as possible in the transition and thereafter. The LT were immensely encouraged by the sharing of four key dreams/visions from God this year, which have enabled church members to see God's purposes in all this. The LT and Trustees sense we have been given the opportunity by God to develop and oversee a church built upon our existing agreed vision and mission, rooted in our core Pioneer values and the Word of God, a church that will operate from a shared leadership which sits within the heart of a church community, drawing on everyone's gifting and held within a wholly owned mission. We do not therefore consider that we need to call out or seek a new pastor at this time. We believe this is the direction God has been equipping us for and which He has set before us. Called, gifted, and guided by His Spirit, we believe that together we will continue to discern God's direction and His heart for us and our community – we are excited about being a Holy Spirit "experiment" in local mission!

Our relationship with the Pioneer UK Network provides opportunities for Trustees, staff and volunteers from Connect to join various national and regional training events and conferences, online and in person, including Pioneer Core Values teaching weekends, the Pioneer Pathway leadership course, the Annual Pioneer Leadership Conference, and Safeguarding for Trustees. One of our newer members stepped up to the Pioneer Pathway leadership training which the church agreed to subsidise by 50%. Should this person continue into 2024/5 Connect will cover the full cost. We have valued connections with a local Pioneer

Hub, and the wider southern regional group, who have all been supportive as we transition into a new phase of our life together, pointing us to other Pioneer churches with similar approaches to leadership. We continue to support Pioneer International which enables us to bring a wider benefit in supporting other overseas churches and their leadership.

Connecting with other churches where possible remains important to us and we continued to work with the 3 local village churches in delivering the annual Village Remembrance service together in 2024, with Connect's pastor giving the talk. We continue to be a member church of Horsham Churches Together, welcoming other local church leaders to preach from time to time. The pastor's direct involvement in HCT lessened considerably this year however, due to the additional workload arising from Connect no longer having an assistant pastor, and the need to prioritise our missional development.

Leaving behind the initial setting up of Connect and the issues of covid/lockdown that were all key drivers in our first four years as a church, we continue to be encouraged greatly by the evidence we see of our church members seeking to *"thrive and come alive"*! We have been blessed with encouraging testimonies about people's individual search for a spiritual home e.g. *"I have been part of Connect Southwater for 2-3 years. I moved to Horsham at that time in order to join the church. I believe that was God's guidance at a crossroads in my life. I did not see it straight away but have since realized this is the church for which I have been yearning for nearly 50 years!"*

We are not without issues or concerns to address – e.g. a growing yet ageing demographic, a hesitancy in giving public testimony or witness, a reluctance to engage fully in the ministry of the Spirit, and a tendency to see church as a place to receive, rather than a base out of which to serve and witness. Connect members balance multiple life commitments and we do not often see everyone present on Sundays – this impacts communications, vision and relationship building, and can hinder teaching/mission impetus and continuity. We have the challenge to hold together despite some differences in theological outlook, and a wide range of spiritual experiences and ecclesial understanding etc. Yet all of these things continue to be held in love not judgment; the fact that we are holding together means we are more diverse than some churches, and yet the diversity and difference is not divisive. Nonetheless, seeking balance out of a desire to keep everyone on board can risk missing the Spirit led moment or the possibility of missional change and challenge to which we are all called to continue to be open, hence spiritual vigilance and discernment is vital if we are to avoid stagnation, becoming settlers rather than pioneers.

Overall, there is a deep sense of hope in God, on whom we depend - we trust in His power and willingness to provide growth and help us bring a harvest out of all the seed planting. Church social/fellowship connections are growing. Our prayer team is active on WhatsApp and monthly in person prayer has been well-supported. Engagement in our worship, our groups, and activities is growing. We are seeing people occasionally offering Godly words and pictures to each other, and offering words and prayer in worship, with a growing yearning to know His presence and hear Him speak. Perhaps most significantly, the desire and the need to welcome more people into our life together and into connection with Jesus is becoming stronger.

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit SORP Para 1.18

Connect Trustees confirm we have not set up the CIO in order to benefit ourselves, either personally and/or corporately, and we have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit wherever relevant.

Additional information:

Policy on grant making SORP Para 1.38

To ring fence 10% of our income from general congregational giving as a mission fund, within approved Terms of Reference, and to ring fence fundraising for our core costs grant to Southwater Youth Project.

Contribution made by volunteers SORP Para 1.38

We estimate an 80% input of time and energy from volunteers towards our aims and objectives, whether through specific or ongoing logistical support, admin, worship and music leading plus related techno, or through leading worship/activities/events, helping with our various activities, and praying. Connect's mission is entirely funded by our worshipping members and it has been pleasing to see giving increase this year both in terms of regular giving, and giving for one off requests.

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole. SORP Para 1.20

Continuing to offer meaningful worship and impactful teaching, alongside increased opportunities to serve and be involved in our mission has made a difference by helping increase our sense of presence within the community, creating and deepening our community connections and wider profile. This also enables us to attract others to Jesus and into our mission, and advance understanding of and/or commitment to the Christian faith. A further benefit to members comes via their growing understanding and ownership of our shared mission, with more members stepping up to own aspects of our life together, and as the earlier testimony shows, individual members are benefitting in increased well-being, renewed spiritual freedom, and growth in faith and understanding.

Gaining new members during the year makes a difference in increased financial support, prayer support, and in our worship, as well as bringing additional spiritual gifts and talents to our shared mission and balancing out any income lost when members leave.

Beginning to develop ministry for women, and for men, has enabled much of what is taught on Sundays to be owned and to become more embedded into people's lives. This makes a difference to them, but also helps grow in them a desire to enable others to experience God for themselves. Hence we want to develop further any missional ideas which can be delivered by and/or through single sex groups.

Supporting Southwater Youth Project by continuing to develop relationships with a core funder, the Parish Council, continues to be essential, giving clear community benefit by enabling new premises in the Ghyll. Connect's support for this Christian ethos charity is important, and makes a significant impact in terms of relationships with other community groups and individuals. Any potential antipathy towards a church or Christians is mitigated by our community focused reputation and ongoing support of SYP and local young people. The public experiences a social benefit from a Christian ethos charity which offers faith conversations but the social support is given with no faith strings attached. Connect is up front about who we are, and our various contributions to the local community within and alongside SYP and other community/public service organisations are welcomed, respected, and understood. Inevitably this leads to a difference in attitudes and opens the door to many meaningful interactions and faith conversations.

Having occasional shared LT/Trustees meetings helps meet our objective to enable shared mission, oversight and governance, and increases mutual understanding. Similarly, developing church Away Days are significant ways to connect with each other, and embed our vision, mission and values; we recognise the need to increase these opportunities for shared ownership of our mission moving forward. Activities/

training opportunities offered by Pioneer and through HCT and other regional Christian churches/streams/denominations continue to help members of Connect to grow in their faith and gifts, with the additional benefit of connecting them to other Christians.

The next phase of our existence has an agreed task and impetus, to mobilise all our members both to understand, and to own our shared Spirit led vision and mission, and to encourage a greater understanding of how working together within a shared leadership structure can become a significant tool for our mission to connect more people to the love of God in Jesus by His Spirit.

Additional information (optional)

Achievements against objectives set SORP Para 1.41

Primary objectives

To own and embed our vision, and build a secure basis for shared leadership and mission activities, by exploring our mission and values through worship, teaching, community activities and fellowship groups, and by maintaining ongoing connection with one another. This continued to be achieved through:

- The provision of worship, prayer, and faith resources rooted in relevant preaching themes, equipping members with teaching content and illustrations weighted towards cultivating vision, (*Inspired by/Invested in*), enabling wider congregational reflection on our mission (*Church with a Mission*), while encouraging an openness to the Spirit, deeper connection to God, stronger commitment and wider participation (*Ordinary people, Extraordinary outcomes*).
- An emphasis on conversational/participatory/Spirit led worship to enable members to understand the many ways by which God communicates with us, encouraging an openness to the charismatic and prophetic, and a stepping forward into their own part in His purposes (*The Holy Spirit, How God Speaks, Influence and Legacy* etc.)

To establish and grow a committed, generous income base. This continued to be achieved through:

- Ongoing emphasis on whole life stewardship e.g. teaching theme, *Going all in* – offering back to God the life He has given us; regularly communicating the need for financial resourcing and celebrating its missional use; the purchase and use of a card machine for Sunday offerings.

To mobilise for mission. This continued to be achieved through:

- Leadership Team Away Day and meeting focus and agenda shifting towards vision and mission.
- Joint LT/Trustee meetings.
- Re-emphasising Vision and Mission in our Sunday teaching, our first MISSION MONTH, and a mission focused Away Day: this widened the outreach team at the Village Christmas, and has produced a growing awareness of the need to revisit our core values in 2025 and focus on further teaching/training and creating opportunities for evangelism and witness.

Other objectives

To encourage meeting together in homes/as groups in public spaces. This is being achieved through:

- A new post covid “normal”, i.e. increased willingness to socialise amongst members.
- Café Connect - ongoing prayerful support, friendship and witness to God’s love in community.
- Connect @ Prayer – in person monthly meeting.
- Connect Neighbourhood Groups – the pragmatic reduction to 3 groups from 4 was well-received, and all groups are now meeting, with a growing sense of purpose and missional ownership.

To create intentional, specific faith engagement with community. This is being achieved through:

- Beginning to build up prophetic, creative ministry within church e.g. in worship/prayer, and beyond.

- Encouraging wider involvement in team ministry e.g. Soul Space
- Increasing our intentional faith presence in community events e.g. Fun Fest
- Beginning to maximise connections: e.g.
Connect & Play mums, dads, grandparents, and carers by setting up a Sunday Breakfast Club
Who Let The Dads Out – tracked through to 2025 as a potential task for Connect’s men.
Community Fridge - other than informal relational interactions each month this link has not yet been built upon; ways to connect with volunteers/show appreciation to track through to 2025.
Connect & Create: meaningful conversations held throughout the year, the group continues to raise funds for SYP, with the mission potential to be tracked through into 2025.

Overall, as per the more detailed sections of this report, we received and continue to be encouraged by the prophetic word given at the 2023 Pioneer Leaders Conference - *“God sees our work and it is pleasing to Him, therefore we are to not lose heart because He is going to reveal that seeds sown are developing shoots – the ground is no longer hard but softening!”* The further dreams and visions we have received and reflected upon throughout the year are equally encouraging (the Net, the Fruitful Tree and Saplings, the Cow’s Successful/Saved Pregnancy, and the Lily Pond) and we are expectant for further growth.

Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set SORP Para 1.41

No fundraising activity occurred during the financial year.

Investment performance against objectives SORP Para 1.41

None of the charity’s financial assets were invested during the financial year.

Financial Review

Review of the charity’s financial position at the end of the period SORP Para 1.21

For the General Fund (unrestricted), income exceeded expenditure by £12,891. In addition, there were internal transfers of £3,000 to the Youthworker Fundraising Fund, £1,000 to the Mission Fund, £174 to the Compassion Fund and £75 to Connect and Play, which resulted in an overall surplus of £8,642. This produced an increase in the accumulated balance from £13,677 at the previous year end (2023) to £22,319 as at 31st December 2024. The main restricted fund, the Youthworker Fundraising Fund, had net receipts of £3,079 and a year end balance of £13,875 (£10,796 at 31.12.23), representing 2 years’ planned expenditure. The other restricted funds, Soul Space and Open the Book had no income and minimal financial outlays during the year so the year end balances were £1,903 and £321 respectively.

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held SORP Para 1.22

The church’s policy for holding reserves is that an amount equating to 3 months’ budgeted expenditure should be held. This is intended to ensure that in the event of either unforeseen operational costs, or a significant reduction in income or the charity being wound up, there are sufficient funds available to meet the church’s financial commitments, particularly regarding payments that would be due to employees in those circumstances. Reserves are freely available to be spent for any purpose consistent with the church’s charitable purposes, and at any time. The policy is reviewed annually.

Amount of reserves held SORP Para 1.22

£10,074

Reasons for holding zero reserves SORP Para 1.22

Not applicable

Details of fund materially in deficit SORP Para 1.24

No fund was materially in deficit at the year-end.

Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern SORP Para 1.23

There are no uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern.

Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter) SORP Para 1.25

CIO Foundation Constitution

How is the charity constituted? SORP Para 1.25

CIO

Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees SORP Para 1.25

In discussion with the Charity Commission we included clauses in our constitution Section 6: “Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons”, sub clause (2) Scope and powers permitting trustees’ or connected persons’ benefits: this was in order to enable a charity trustee or connected person to receive payment for serving as a pastor of the CIO, provided that this does not lead to a majority of charity trustees being remunerated and provided that the following sub-clauses (i) to (v) are satisfied. Having approved this paid role, in 2021 it was structured into 2 p/t posts reverting back to one post (p/t) in 2022. We can affirm that the other charity trustees are satisfied i) that it is in the best interests of the CIO to pay a pastor rather than requiring the pastor to be self-supporting financially having considered the advantages of disadvantages of each approach; ii) that the details of the payment are set out in an agreement between the CIO and the pastor; iii) the remuneration package does not exceed what is reasonable in the circumstances taking into account regional variations; (iv) that the reasons for the decision of the charity trustees is recorded in their minute book; and (v) that the trustees concerned must be absent from the part of any meeting at which the level of payment is being discussed or determined and must not vote on any such matter or be counted in the quorum for the part of the meeting during which such matters are discussed. However in relation to discussions concerning the performance of duties of his or her office, the trustee in question shall have the opportunity to address the meeting and respond to any points of concern that are raised.

The trustees can affirm that these sub clauses have been adhered to. As noted, the role of assistant pastor (p/t) ended in 2022, and the current pastor’s (p/t) role will end in April 2025. The above mentioned clauses will enable the reappointment of any future paid pastor/s and enable them to also serve as trustee/s.

In appointing new trustees, Section 10 “Appointment of charity trustees” and sub clauses (1) and (2) have been followed in the appointment of new trustees in addition to the first charity trustees. Before being appointed at a duly constituted trustee meeting, new trustees are invited to submit a brief personal statement outlining any relevant experience and interests that they bring to their role.

Employment changes during the year

The church pastor requested to step back from her role which was agreed to take effect in April 2025.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees SORP Para 1.51

In accordance with the constitution Section 11 “Information for new charity trustees” a copy of the current version of the constitution; and the CIO’s latest Trustees’ Annual Report and statement of accounts are made available to all new Trustees. Additionally all Trustees are required to have a DBS, avail themselves of training in Safeguarding for Trustees, and are given a copy of the current Safeguarding policy.

The charity’s organisational structure & wider network with which the charity works SORP Para 1.51

Governance, HR, and safeguarding, and the oversight of our aims, object, purposes and finances, is undertaken by our trustees in line with our constitution and Charity law requirements. Membership of the

CIO is as detailed in Section 16, and consists of trustees only for the time being. Trustee responsibilities, decisions, delegated powers, meeting requirements, procedures and record keeping are as detailed in the constitution Sections 4 – 7; 9 - 15, 17, 20 - 28. In relations to Sections 26 – 28 there have been no new rules or byelaws created, no disputes, and there have been no amendments to the constitution.

The LT work with the pastor in the oversight of our missional activities, ensuring these are in line with our vision and values, and directed at those whom we consider to be beneficiaries.

In terms of wider networks we are a member church of the UK Pioneer Network, itself a member of Churches Together in England, and we are also a member church of Horsham Churches Together.

The Statement of Faith and Mission as submitted originally to the Charity Commission has been slightly amended/approved to take account of our being accepted into membership of the Pioneer Network.

Relationship with any related parties SORP Para 1.51

Connect has been part of the UK Pioneer Network of churches since March 2022, and was accepted as a member church of Horsham Churches Together in June 2022.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name: Connect: Southwater Community Church

Registered charity number: 1193477

Charity's principal address: c/o 32 Sloughbrook Close, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5JD

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted	Body entitled to appoint trustee
Rev Kathryn Jones	Chair	10.2.2021 ongoing to April 2025	CSCC Trustee Board
Mrs Tina Andrews		10.2.2021 reappointed to Feb 2027	CSCC Trustee Board
Mr Iain Jones		10.2.2021 reappointed to Feb 2026	CSCC Trustee Board
Mrs Fiona Lowther		10.2.2021 reappointed to Feb 2026	CSCC Trustee Board
Mr Ian Johnston		18.10.2022 ongoing to Oct 2025	CSCC Trustee Board
Mrs Rosemary Johnston		18.10.2022 ongoing to Oct 2025	CSCC Trustee Board

Corporate trustees: names of the directors at the date the report was approved: None/not applicable

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity: None/not applicable

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others: None/not applicable

Additional information (optional):

Name of Pastor: Kath Jones (ongoing to April 2025)

Exemptions from disclosure: None/not applicable

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Annual Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s): 



Full name(s): Iain Jones

Tina Anne Andrews

Position: Trustee

Trustee

Date: 13 October 2025

Connect Southwater Community Church

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2024

Registered Charity - Registration number 1193477

Minister and Chair of Trustees

Rev Kath Jones (to 30.4.25)

Trustees

Tina Andrews	Rosemary Johnston
Fiona Lowther	
Iain Jones	
Ian Johnston	

Approved by the Trustees on 11 February 2025

Chair:

Kath Jones

Trustee:

Iain Jones

ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 December 2024

SECTION A		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals this year	Totals last year
		£	£	£	£
a1	RECEIPTS	Note			
a2	Offerings and Tax recovered	41,143		41,143	32,829
a3	Bank interest				
a4					
a5					
a6	Other receipts	7,823	7,385	15,208	9,751
a7	TOTAL RECEIPTS	48,966	7,385	56,351 (a7)	42,580

SECTION B					
b1	PAYMENTS				
b2	Salaries and benefits	29,528		29,528	29,197
b3	Donations		1,339	1,339	2,654
b4	Rent	2,344		2,344	1,841
b5	Insurance	205		205	207
b6	Loan repayments				
b7	Other payments	4,072	6,357	10,429	8,953
b8	TOTAL PAYMENTS	36,150	7,696	43,846 (b9)	42,852

SECTION C							
c1	NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR	(a6-b8)	12,816	(311)	12,505		(272)
c2	Total funds brought forward from last year		13,677	13,269	26,946	(c6)	27,218
c3	Sub total	(c1+c2)	26,493	12,958	39,451		26,946
c4	Transfers and adjustments		(4,174)	4,174		(c7)	
c5	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	(c3+c4)	22,319	17,132	39,451	(c8)	26,946 (c6)

SECTION D					
FOR INFORMATION ONLY: MONEY RECEIVED AND PASSED ON TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS					
d	(these amounts are not to be included in total receipts/payments figures)		£		£
d1	Balance brought forward from last year				373
d2	Offerings/Gifts - received for external organisations		5,023		
d3	Offerings/Gifts - passed to external organisations		5,000		373
d4	BALANCE STILL TO BE PAID	(d1+d2-d3)	23		

SUMMARY OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

SECTION E

Summary of the Church accounts for the period ended 31 December 2024 and Internal Organisations. Note that the funds of an Internal Organisation would normally be Restricted funds unless it could be clearly shown that they could be used for any purpose.

	INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	Receipts	Payments	Net Receipts / (Payments)	Adjustments	Opening balances	Closing balances
e1	Connect and Play	1,291	1,074	217		136	353
e2							
e3							
e4							
e5							
e6							
e7							
e8	Sub total of Internal Organisations funds	1,291	1,074	217		136 (e11)	353 (e12)
e9	Church accounts (totals brought forward from page 2 - totals column)	56,351 (a7)	43,846 (b9)	12,505	(c7)	26,946 (c6)	39,451 (c8)
e10	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	57,642	44,920	12,722		27,082 (x)	39,804 (y)
	Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and bring the totals forward	TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS				

SECTION F

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CHURCH - CASH FUNDS HELD at 31 December 2024

		OPENING BALANCES	CLOSING BALANCES
f1	Cash in hand		
f2	Bank Current Account	26,946	39,451
f3	Bank Deposit Account		
f4			
f5			
f6	Other funds		
f7	SUB TOTAL - Church accounts	26,946 (c6)	39,451 (c8)
f8	Total funds held by Internal Organisations (the closing balance total from above) (e12)	136 (e11)	353 (e12)
f9	TOTAL CASH FUNDS HELD BY CHURCH	27,082 (x)	39,804 (y)

SECTION G

OTHER ASSETS and LIABILITIES

	At 31-Dec-23	At 31-Dec-24
g1	Investments (include Endowments)	
g2	Land & Buildings (see notes re Insurance value)	
g3	Loan(s) - show amount outstanding at year end	
g4	Other Liabilities	

DECLARATIONS

Accountant

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Church and that they include all funds under the control of the Trustees

Signature of Accountant

Iain Jones

Date

15.9.25

Name

IAIN JONES

Address

32 Sloughbrook Close, Horsham,
West Sussex RH12 5JD

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of

Connect Southwater Community Church

This Report is on the Church Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2024

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 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 the 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 (other than that disclosed below*):

- (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;
 - 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.

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

* Please circle as appropriate

Name

TONY CARVIN

Signature



Relevant Professional qualification or body

Address

33, KINGMERIE,
SOUTH TERRACE
LITTLE HAMPTON
W-SUSSEX BN17 5LD

Date

6th OCTOBER 2025