



**Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church**

**End of Year Trustees Report and Financial Statements**

**15 month period ending 31 March 2024**



## Trust Information

### Trusts

#### Working Funds Trust

Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth

#### Freehold Property Trust 1814

Church and Classroom Block  
London Road Sawbridgeworth

#### Freehold Property Trust 1921

The Manse, Hoestock Road  
Sawbridgeworth

### Minister

Gary Hanson

### Managing Trustees

Gary Hanson	Minister
Rachel Millett	Secretary, Re-appointed Jan 22
Dian Sapsford	Appointed May 19, Re-appointed Dec 23
Ann Voortman	Appointed May 21 until 30 Apr 24
Gavin Urquhart	Appointed Dec 21
Julia Kelly	Acting Treasurer Appointed Jul 21

### Independent Examiner

Sarah Ulyatt

### Holding Trustee

FIEC Ltd

### Bankers

Barclays Bank plc  
The Water Gardens, 14 The Centre, Southgate, Harlow, CM20 1AN



## **Trustees Report 15 month period ended 31 March 2024**

The primary aim of the Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church is to fulfil the role of a Christian Church in Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding area and to help others in supporting and promoting the Christian faith in the United Kingdom and overseas.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the Church are the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with our Basis of Faith, in Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding areas.

As a collection of people of different ages and backgrounds whose lives have been changed by Jesus Christ, we seek to fulfill the calling of Jesus in our lives.

This is done through worship as a community but also in the application of our faith for the benefit of others, through teaching and pastoral care, prevention and relief of need, provision of facilities in the interests of social interaction.

We seek to live out the faith as contained in the Bible and be a blessing to those within the Church and those outside of it, desiring to see the people of Sawbridgeworth come into a relationship with Jesus Christ as their Lord, Saviour and friend.

### **Trustees and People**

The Managing Trustees are collectively responsible for the spiritual leadership and administration of the Church and are comprised of the Minister and other members of the church leadership team who are appointed by the Members of the Church. The members of the Church, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ have the final decision on all policies and important decisions that affect the life and witness of the Church.

Though the Church employs a full-time minister, a part-time Office Manager and a formal partnership with the Red Balloon Fellowship to lead on our youth and children's work, it is reliant on and benefits from the active participation of volunteers from members and others connected with the Church to help achieve its objectives. This means presenting the Christian message among people they meet, being involved in teaching, public worship, pastoral care as well as in practical ministries, maintenance and administration. The Church is grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm of those who give their time & resources, often in ways that cannot be easily quantified.

### **The 15 month period to 31st March 2024**

The main ways the Church sought to achieve the calling of Christ upon it and its charitable activities for the public benefit by the advancement of religion has been as follows:

- Fulfilling its objects in the teaching and preaching in the weekly services on Sundays which are open to all people.
- Sunday services are live-streamed to enable greater access to the Church community and complement our in-person services. These services are planned with the aim of making them multigenerational, welcoming, thought provoking through clear Bible teaching.
- Midweek teaching groups are held at the Church, various private homes. These groups have been a lifeline for many in the Church family, providing support and friendship but ensuring Church



members study the Bible and pray together. Our 'Connect Groups' provide a sense of dynamic community within the wider congregation and enable members to grow together, form close friendships and provide much needed peer to peer discipleship. We have three 'youth Connect Groups' running that are ensuring our children and youth develop valuable friendships and a sense of belonging.

- Groups for children and young people are held on Sunday mornings during the service.
- A group for Carers and Toddlers, Open Door, runs every week during school terms helping families with young children and babies find friendship and much needed support.
- Friday Zone is a youth group for children in school years 4-10 run on a weekly basis during school terms. This club gathers a number of local and Church children and is highly thought of.
- During this year the Church continued our youth provision from RBF who have helped us continue all areas of our youth work, ensuring deeper friendships and a greater understanding of their faith.
- The 'Alpha' course - a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith that is available to all.

Activities which involve the wider community include-

- Participating in the 'Make Lunch' program to provide hot lunches to families. Members of the Church gave their time sacrificially and helped many families who have found life harder and harder.
- Our 'Food Hub' (formerly known as the Pop-Up Shop), continues to provide much needed practical and social support to local residents, as they shop for free. We have forged greater links with the CAB and the Bishop's Stortford food bank.
- We continue to show our support for areas of need and conflict in the world, via financial support to Lifeline Romania and our continued care for Ukrainians in the town by letting our hall be used to host language lessons, fund-raising events, prayer, the Food Hub and special events to make significant occasions.
- We are continuing to progress our building project plans and this has enabled us to reach out to the local community and understand local needs better, as well as creating new relationships. Our buildings will be in keeping with the local area, sensitive to the 'look' of the town and a benefit to local charitable groups. We are looking forward to being able to expand our impact in the local community.



## **Financial Review**

The financial statements for the 15 month period to 31 March 2024 have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.

The financial resources received during the year amounted to £228,830 the expenditure however totalled £277,862, on the activities and ministries of the Church. The main reason for the increase in expenditure related to expenses associated with the architects' fees and planning application.

We can give thanks to God for the generosity of the members and attendees of the Church. The long-standing policy of the Church is not to take collections for the on-going work of the Church but rather to rely mainly on regular donations paid direct to the Church's bank account with additional gifts made through offering boxes.

Donors are encouraged to use Gift Aid schemes so that additional tax refunds can benefit the Church. On some occasions specific collections may be made for the special appeals of external organisations or projects which are compatible with the ethos of the Church.

The Church has a policy of allocating a proportion of its general income for designated purposes:

- 10% is devoted to the support of mission work outside of the local area
- 10% is allocated to the anticipated costs of major maintenance tasks, upgrading and expanding the Church buildings.

The Managing Trustees have set a policy of retaining sufficient reserves to provide for the foreseeable needs of the Church. These free reserves are available to meet the costs of normal running and to ensure that the Church can meet the commitments it has entered into. The minimum amount is anticipated to be equivalent to six months expenditure + scheduled transfers (the relevant figure for 15 months was £181,267). This indicates a minimum reserve figure of £90,634. This is considered appropriate in view of the challenging economic environment, (considering increasing energy costs) and potential developments and future changes to the Church property.

## **Risks**

All major insurable risks are subject to normal Church and employer insurance. Risks and other areas of activity and premises are subject to periodic review. The premises are professionally inspected every five years; the last inspection was conducted in 2023. The main Church boiler was replaced during 2023 as the old boiler had failed. Other ongoing maintenance work is being carried out by Church members. Replacement of fencing at the Manse has also been undertaken in early 2024. The Church has a policy on the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults which is reviewed periodically.

## **Statement of Trustees Responsibility**



## Statement of Trustees Responsibility

As a member of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, the Church is currently an "excepted charity" under the provisions of the Charity Act 2011. Now that income is in excess of £100,000 the Church is required to register as a charity in its own right and will be structured as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It has commenced this process and is expected to complete it during 2024.

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the resources during that period. In preparing these accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make adjustments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Acts. They are also responsible for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees confirm that the accounts comply with current statutory requirements and the Charity's trust deeds.

No payments were made to trustees other than the minister's salary & pension and approved payments for expenses legitimately encountered in the running of the church.

Signed: Rachel Millett

Secretary: Rachel Millett

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Signed: Julia Kelly

Acting Treasurer: Julia Kelly

Date: 4 August 2024



## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/  
members of

**Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church**

On accounts for the  
year ended

**31 March 2024**

Charity no:

Set out on pages

**8 – 11**

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.

Examiners responsibility is to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent  
examiner's statement

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

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; and
- 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.

Signed:

Date 29 JULY 2024

Name:

Sarah Ulyatt

Address:

BRAMBLETYPE, LOWER STREET, PURY END, NN12 7J5

Prof Qualification:

ASSOCIATION OF TAX TECHNICIANS(ATT)



Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church  
Fund Movement summary  
Selected Period: 01 January 2023 to 31 March 2024

Fund	Fund Balances B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Fund Balances C/F
General	101,748	194,550	(141,778)	(38,910)	115,610
Benevolent	595		(102)		493
Building Fund		20,063	(0)		20,063
Building Expenses			(56,554)		(56,554)
Community Fund	4,842	6,742	(9,368)		2,216
Mission Fund	7,717	5,975	(24,970)	19,455	8,177
PA& Video		1,500	(0)		1,500
Property Fund	119,253		(20,477)	19,455	118,231
Legacy of RF	2,172		(0)		2,172
Transfers*			(24,613)		(24,613)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£236,327</b>	<b>£228,830</b>	<b>(£277,862)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£187,295</b>

**Notes:**

Graveyard and Restricted Funds were closed during 21/22

Community Fund, (this is an umbrella fund for the community shop, open door, parenting course, make lunch and zone)

\*A new bank account was set up in December 2023 to receive contributions relating to the building fund, monies received into the general account prior to December were transferred into this new account.

**Community Fund**

Community Fund	Fund Balances B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Fund Balances C/F
Community Shop	794	6,362	(7,769)	(613)
Hailey Centre		380	(294)	86
Make Lunch	1,968		(1,212)	756
Open Door	150		(0)	150
Parenting			(93)	(93)
Zone	1,930		(0)	1,930
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,842</b>	<b>£6,742</b>	<b>(£9,368)</b>	<b>£2,216</b>



## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

## Balance Sheet Detailed

		<b>As at 31/03/24</b>
		<b>£</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	Barclays Current	5,810.18
	Barclays Active Saver	76,875.64
	Barclays Building Fund Account	38,147.99
	Monmouthshire Building Society	36,928.55
	Santander Bond	25,565.58
	Accounts Receivable	3,966.74
	<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>£187,294.68</b>
<b>Reserves</b>	Excess/(deficit) to date	(49,032.32)
	Starting Balances	236,327.00
	<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>£187,294.68</b>

	<b>Represented by</b>
	<b>£</b>
Unrestricted	23,649.69
Designated	123,325.00
Legacy RF	2,172.00
Building Fund	38,147.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>£187,294.68</b>



## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

Analysis of receipts and payments  
 Selected period: 01 January 2023 to 31 March 2024

Receipts	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	This Year
	£	£	£	£
<b>Donations</b>				
Recurring BACS	0	0	0	0
Charity Vouchers	0	8,050	0	8,050
Collections £30+	4,019	0	0	4,019
Collections £30-	189	0	0	189
Envelopes/Giro	6,335	0	0	6,335
Sundry Donations	0	0	0	0
Recurring SO's	137,081	0	0	137,081
Gift Aid Recovery	24,068	8,543	0	32,611
<b>Total</b>				<b>£149,113</b>
<b>Investments</b>				
Interest	2,397	0	0	2,397
<b>Other income</b>				
Building Fund	0	38,148		38,148
<b>Total</b>	<b>£174,089</b>	<b>£54,741</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£228,830</b>

## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

## Analysis of payments 1/1/23 to 31/3/24

Payments	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	This Year
Administrator Salary	10,643			10,643
Administrator Pension	0			
Affiliations	2,707			2,707
Building Fund Expenses	56,067			56,067
Building Fund Transfer	0		22,751	22,751
Catering	1,550			1,550
Church Gas	7,021			7,021
Church Electricity	777			777
Church Water Rates	339			339
Church Insurance	5,596			5,596
Church Suite	633			633
Cleaner – contract	6,345			6,345
Colin & Bron Cleaver		2,784		2,784
Compassion	0			
Copyright licenses	1,082			1,082
Community Fund	9,217			9,217
CSW		1,392		1,392
Donations Other		9,338		9,338
Equipment	1,738			1,738
Gardening	0			
INF (Shirley Heywood)		1,392		1,392
Latin Link (M&H Frost)		3,480		3,480
Legal Fees (EC)	6,257			6,257
Lifeline Romania	0			
Manse Council Tax	3,032			3,032
Manse Water Rates	687			687
Manse Telephone	704			704
Manse Insurance	517			517
Manse Maintenance	1,274			1,274
Manse Other	58			58
Miscellaneous costs	1,270			1,270
Ministers Salary	45,204			45,204
Ministers Expenses	2,437			2,437
Ministers Pension	6,324			6,324
Operation Mob		2,784		2,784
Photocopying	1,315			1,315
Property – other	23,665			23,665
Publicity - Noticeboard	3,138			3,138
Safeguarding	226			226
Samaritans Purse	0			
Stationary	585			585
Stephen Pointing		1,392		1,392
Street Pastors	0			
Tear Fund		1,456		1,456
Telephone/ Broadband	860			860
Transfer back to savings	10,673			10,673
Transport – STC	525			525
Worship Study Materials	116			116
Youth Work	18,511			18,511
<b>Total</b>	<b>£231,093</b>	<b>£24,018</b>	<b>£22,751</b>	<b>277,862</b>





## Notes on Accounts

Total income for the 15 months to 31 March 2024 was £228,830 and expenditure £277,862 producing for the first time a deficit of £49,032, this gap was closed by a request for members to increase their monthly giving together with a transfer of funds from savings to bridge the gap. Income received included Gift Aid of £32,611. During 23/24 there was significant expenditure relating to the building fund as the plans and survey for the new building moved forward.

The increase in expenditure this year arises from the following:

### General Fund, On-Going Expenditure

- This was the fourth year that both the administrator costs and increased support contract to Red Balloon (Youth) Fellowship to cover 20 hrs per week of a youth worker were paid for a full year, these costs are now stable and are being covered from general income.
- Supplier contracts have been reviewed and a fixed tariff for gas and electricity has been set for a three-year period, costs have increased in line with energy prices and an accrual remains in place to cover these costs for 23/34 as 24/25.

### One-Off or Capital Expenditure

There were a number of special projects that resulted in considerable 'one-off' expenditure.

**General Fund, Charity Registration** – The FIEC solicitors Edward Connor have done considerable work to assess and prepare the church trusts and constitution for charity registration. The complexity of this has increased costs, about £6,257.

**Building Fund** – Expenditure on building project amounted to £22,751 which covered the architect's fees and required surveys, in the absence of any specific donations ongoing costs will need to be financed from the general fund.



## Fund Summary Descriptions

<b>General Fund:</b>	Covers the majority of ongoing running costs and income.
<b>Designated Funds</b>	Funds that the church establishes to receive designated income and pay for specific projects or activities:
<b>Benevolent Fund:</b>	For gifts to assist church members in financial need. Funded from specific gifts which have to be given without gift aid.
<b>Building Project:</b>	To cover the new building project (Set up March 2019), a designated bank account was opened in December 2023.
<b>Community Fund:</b>	The Community Fund acts as an umbrella fund for all costs associated with the community including the pop-up shop, parenting courses, Open Door, Make Lunch, the Hailey Centre and Zone. (set up April 2022)
<b>Missionary Fund:</b>	Supports work by other Christian organizations outside of the local area. Funded by 10% of general income (see below for details of missionaries we support)
<b>PA &amp; AV:</b>	Re-activated to cover a major PA and Video upgrade.
<b>Property:</b>	Major building maintenance and capital expenditure costs. Funded by 10% of general income (Set up Nov 2010)
<b>Legacy RF:</b>	The restricted and endowment funds were closed in 2021, going forward graveyard maintenance costs will be funded from general income.



### **Missionaries and Organizations We Support**

- Colin & Bron Cleaver, Operation Mobilization, Novosibirsk, Siberia: Lead OM team and run a discipleship center which trains and equips young Russian Christians to discover and use their gifts effectively. They also work alongside Baptist churches in and around the city.
- Martin & Hazel Frost: Latin Link, City of San Francisco, Argentina: Involved in bible teaching, web-authoring, prison visiting, school support and rural community projects.
- Yulia Notkin, Operation Mobilization, Novosibirsk, Siberia: Tutor at the discipleship center run by Colin & Bron Cleaver who are involved in teaching, counselling and organizing trips for students to gain experience in ministry.
- Dr. Shirley Heywood, International Nepal Fellowship, Surkhet District, Nepal: A gynecologist working with district hospitals and mobile camps performing surgery on women with obstetric fistulas.
- Roger & Marvyn Amos, Lifeline Romania: Help run Lifeline Romania which provides clothing and domestic goods for poor Romanians and supports several local churches. SECC funds trips to supervise distribution of goods from the UK and helps with pack shipping lorry.
- Regular giving was established in 22/23 for both Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Stephen Pointing who is involved with missionary work.
- In addition, special collections were funded by the Church congregation to support aid for Pakistan via DEC, a contribution for Jews for Jesus, the Ukraine Appeal and support for Matt Fowell's trip to Gambia.