



**Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church**

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

**Period ended 30 April 25**



## 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 until 31 Dec 24
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 Period ended 30 April 2025**

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, and 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, and a part-time Office Manager 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 period ended 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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 together 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. Sadly, RBF ceased to operate as of September 2024.
- 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', 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 one-off collections for Churches, Christians experiencing hardship across the world.
- 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 on the local community. We were very pleased to receive full planning and listed building consent and look forward to starting Phase 1 in due course.



## Financial Review

For the 13 months ended 30 April 2025 the church accounts have changed from a receipts and payments basis to an accrual basis in line with Charity Commission rules that specify this approach must be applied when gross income exceeds £250,000. In addition, the accounts have been prepared for a 13 month rather than the normal 12 month due to incorporation of the Church as a CIO being effective from 30 April 2025. The 31 March 2024 comparative figures have been adjusted to the accruals basis.

The financial resources received during the year amounted to £317,075 (2024(restated) £183,328) the expenditure however totalled £185,341, (2024 £239,369), on the activities and ministries of the Church. The increase in income levels is attributable to the fund-raising activities for the building fund, specifically the giving days in May 2024 and April 2025.

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 12 months was £114,022). This indicates a minimum reserve figure of £57,011. This is considered appropriate in view of the current economic environment (taking into account increasing costs) and based on actual expenditure 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. Electrical fixed wiring inspections are also carried out on a regular basis.

Minor repairs are carried out several times a year as required. In the coming year a major refurbishment of the sanctuary and hall will be undertaken to address the required updates to



heating, lighting, electrical wiring, baptistry and other general maintenance items, (such as plasterwork patching). major work on the churchyard trees was done in 2021

The Church has a policy on the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults which is reviewed periodically.

### 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), this process was started in January 2024 and completed on 30 April 2025.

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.

As gross income exceeded £250,000 in this accounting period, the accruals basis of accounting has been applied in accordance with Section 132 of the 2011 Act.

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 ministers salary & pension and approved payments for expenses legitimately encountered in the running of the church.

Signed: *Rachel Millett*

Secretary: Rachel Millett

Date: *14th September* 2025

Signed: *Julia Kelly*

Acting Treasurer: Julia Kelly

Date: *14th Sept.* 2025



## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

**Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church**

**On accounts for the  
year ended**

**30 April 2025**

**Charity no: 1201704**

**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 7/9/2025

Name:  
Sarah Ulyatt

Address: OLIVERS OAK, KINGS LANE, PURY END, NN12 7NT

Prof Qualification: ASSOCIATION OF TAX TECHNICIANS



Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church  
Fund Movement summary  
Selected Period: 01 April 2024 to 30 April 2025

Fund	Fund Balances B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Fund Balances C/F
General	63,982	171,091	(124,998)	(34,218)	75,875
Benevolent	500				500
Building Fund	38,148	139,712			177,860
Building Expenses	0		(13,613)		(13,613)
Community Fund	2,035	6,272	(8,704)		(397)
Mission Fund	8,730		(14,387)	17,109	11,452
PA& Video	1,500		(1,412)		88
Property Fund	66,261		(3,537)	17,109	79,833
Legacy of RF	2,172				2,172
Transfers*			(18,690)		(18,690)
Total	£183,328	£317,075	(£185,341)		£315,062

**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, any ongoing payments are also transferred into the building fund account.

Expenditure has been adjusted to reflect the accrual basis of accounting.

**Community Fund**

Community Fund	Fund Balances B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	End Balance
Community Shop	0	3,962	5,539	(1,577)
Hailey Centre	27	687	600	114
Make Lunch	625	984	1,359	250
Open Door	100	389	35	454
Parenting	0	0	0	0
Zone	1,283	250	1,171	362
Total	£2,035	£6,272	(£8,704)	(£397)



## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

## Balance Sheet Detailed

		As at 30/04/25	Restated as at 31/03/24
		£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>	Barclays Current	751.15	5,810.18
	Barclays Active Saver	68,020.25	76,875.64
	Building Fund Account	177,859.71	38,147.99
	Monmouthshire Building Society	37,902.81	36,928.55
	Santander Bond	25,833.40	25,565.58
	Accounts Receivable	4,695.00	
	<b>Total Current Assets</b>	315,062.32	183,327.94
<b>Reserves</b>	Excess/(deficit) to date	131,734.38	(52,999.06)
	Starting Balances	183,327.94	236,327.00
	<b>Total Reserves</b>	315,062.32	183,327.94
<b>Liabilities</b>		<b>NIL</b>	<b>NIL</b>

	Represented by	Funds
	£	£
Unrestricted	44,911.61	19,682.95
Designated	90,119.00	123,325.00
Legacy RF	2,172.00	2,172.00
Building Fund	177,859.71	38,147.99
Total	315,062.32	183,327.94



## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

Analysis of incoming resources  
 Selected period: 01 April 2024 to 30 April 2025

	Unrestricted	Designated	Total
	£	£	£
<b>Donations</b>			
Regular Collections	11,742		11,742
Recurring SO's general	107,531		107,531
Recurring SO's designated	30,196		30,196
Gift Aid Recovery	25,259	8,340	33,599
<b>Investments</b>			
Interest	2,636	1,045	3,681
<b>Other income</b>			
Building Fund	0	130,326	130,326
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,364</b>	<b>139,711</b>	<b>317,075</b>



## Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church

## Analysis of outgoings 1/4/24 to 30/04/25

Payments	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	This Year	Last Year	Difference*
Administrator Salary	11,094			11,094	9,175	1,919
Affiliations	2,516			2,516	2,334	182
Building Fund	13,613			13,613	48,334	34,721
Building Fund Transfer	18,690			18,690	19,613	923
Catering	1,250			1,250	1,336	86
Church Gas	6,397			6,397	6,053	344
Church Electricity	1,235			1,235	670	565
Church Water Rates	325			325	292	33
Church Insurance*	5,250			5,250	4,824	426
Church Suite	592			592	546	46
Cleaner – contract	6,330			6,330	5,470	860
Colin & Bron Cleaver		2,600		2,600	2,400	200
Copyright licenses	972			972	933	39
Community Fund	8,704			8,704	7,946	758
CSW		1,300		1,300	1,200	100
Donations Other		37		37	8,050	8,013
Equipment	225			225	1,498	1,273
Events	1,611			1,611		1,611
Gardening	1,020			1,020		1,020
INF (Shirley Heywood)		1,300		1,300	1,200	100
Latin Link (M&H Frost)		3,250		3,250	3,000	250
Legal Fees (EC)	12,156			12,156	5,224	6,932
Manse Council Tax	2,975			2,975	2,614	361
Manse Water Rates	552			552	592	40
Manse Telephone	707			707	607	100
Manse Insurance	482			482	446	36
Manse Maintenance	1,267			1,267	1,098	169
Manse Other	972			972	50	922
Miscellaneous costs	2,013			2,013	1,095	918
Ministers Salary	42,711			42,711	38,969	3,742
Ministers Expenses	1,911			1,911	2,101	190
Ministers Pension	8,360			8,360	5,452	2,908
Operation Mob		2,600		2,600	2,400	200
PA/Video			1,412	1,412	0	1,412
Photocopying	1,221			1,221	1,134	87
Property Expenses	3,537			3,537	20,401	16,864
Publicity – Noticeboard & Right Now Media	530			530	2,705	2,175
Safeguarding	168			168	195	27
Stationary	480			480	504	24
Stephen Pointing		1,300		1,300	1,200	100
Stort Valley Trust		2,000		2,000	0	2,000
Tear Fund	0	0		0	1,255	1,255
Telephone/ Broadband	340			340	741	401
Transfer back to savings					9,201	9,201
Transport – STC	468			468	453	15
Worship Study Materials				0	100	100
Youth Work	9,068			9,068	15,958	6,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>169,542</b>	<b>14,387</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>185,341</b>	<b>239,369</b>	<b>54,028</b>

- Please note the expenditure for 23/24 is for a twelve month period, however for 24/25 this is a period of thirteen months, this is driven by the date of incorporation as at 30 April 2025 which required a longer accounting period, consequently expenditure comparisons are for differing periods. Annual expenditure has been changed to reflect the accruals basis of accounting.

## Notes on Accounts

Total income in 2025 was £317,075, (2024 restated: £183,328) and expenditure £185,341, (2024: £239,369).

The increase in income received was as a result of two focused "giving days" in May 2024 and April 2025, aimed at raising additional funds for the building fund, through the generous donations by the Congregation the building fund stood at £177,860 at the end of the financial year.

For the 13 months ended 30 April 2025 the church accounts have changed from a receipts and payments basis to an accrual basis in line with Charity Commission rules that specify this approach must be applied when gross income exceeds £250,000. In addition, the accounts have been prepared for a 13 month rather than the normal 12 month due to incorporation of the Church as a CIO being effective from 30 April 2025. The 31 March 2024 comparative figures have been adjusted to the accruals basis.

The changes to the brought forward figures can be summarized as follows:

	Net Assets at 1/4/24	Movement in period to 30/4/25	Net Assets at 30/4/25
	£	£	£
Receipts Basis	189,658	120,739	310,397
Accrued Debtors at 1/4/24	(8,417)	8,417	
Accrued Creditors at 1/4/24	857	(857)	
Provisions	1,230	(1,230)	
Accrued Creditors at 30/4/25		4,865	4,865
Accrued Debtors at 30/4/25		(200)	(200)
Accruals Basis	183,328	131,734	315,062

## One-Off or Capital Expenditure

**Legal Fees** - the only area which saw an increase in expenditure this year related to Legal Fees. 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 by £6,932 to a total of £12,156, given the success of CIO status for the church on 30 April 2025 this level of expenditure will not be required on an ongoing basis.

**Building Fund** – Expenditure on building project reduced from £48,334 in 23/24 to £13,613 this year reflective that the costs relating to the architects fees and required surveys have now been met, these costs will however be financed from the general fund.

**Youth Work** – The formal partnership with Red Balloon foundation providing assistance for youth work came to an end in the summer of 2024, thereby reducing costs from £15,071 to £9,068.



## **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.
- Regular giving was established in 22/23 for both Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Stephen Pointing who is involved with missionary work.
- Stort Valley Trust: Christian youth work in schools in and around Bishop's Stortford, Members agreed to recommence support for this group in March 2025.