



Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church

Registered Charity No. 1205506

Trustees' Report and Accounts 2024



Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church

Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts for the Period 31st October 2023 to 31st December 2024

Legal Information:

The church is an excepted charity under Sub-section 5 of Section 3 of the Charities Act 1993.

Church Address:

28 Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5LW

Trustees during this period:

- **Minister:**
Reverend Kevin Clark
- **Church Leadership Team (Elders):**
Ann Hunter
Anthony King (Treasurer)
Colin Tompson (Church Secretary)
- **Church Leadership Team (Deacons):**
Jeffrey Needham
Graeme Perry

Bankers:

Not applicable – for explanation see Finance Section on page 6

Independent Examiner:

Not applicable – as above



BUCKHURST HILL BAPTIST CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 31st October 2023 to 31st December 2024

The Trustees have pleasure in submitting the Report and Accounts for the period of 31st October 2023 to 31st December 2024. It was on 31st October 2023 that the new Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO) constitution was officially registered with the Charity Commission. And the Charity Commission in turn informed us that they recognized us as a charity and our name had been entered into the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number 1205506.

Charitable Object

The main purpose of Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Trust seeks to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the Church's services and activities, its involvement in pastoral care, education and community service; and indeed, by all its work in the local area and in other parts of the world. Through the involvement of our members and in the use of our church premises we offer a significant service to all ages of people in the neighbourhood and a long-established benefit to the community. The Church occupies premises which are held by the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd in trusts which are entirely compatible with our main charitable purpose.

Government

The Church Meeting has ultimate authority with regard to any decisions taken by the Church but the Church Leadership Team (comprising the Church's Trustees) is regarded as responsible for the Church's decisions. Church Meetings take place four times per year, including the Annual General Meeting. These meetings are attended by church members who have been accepted on profession of their Christian faith and in accordance with the Constitution. The Church Meeting appoints people from among the Church's members to work with its Minister as the Church Leadership Team. The Team is responsible for the day to day running of the Church's work and acts as Managing Trustees in the financial and legal aspects of the Charity. It meets regularly on a monthly basis. At the Church Meeting, the recommendations of the Trustees are brought and the views of members are sought. All members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the charitable objective. Though the Constitution permits decisions to be made at Church Meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

Review of Objectives and Activities

In order to achieve the principal objective which is set out above, the Church provides a variety of activities for the local community and among the members of the Church and congregation. In planning the activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission in December 2008 on Public Benefit. This finds expression throughout our Report, as we record how the Church has sought to serve the public, near and far, through sharing the Christian faith in both word and deed.

Central to the work and witness of the Church is the provision of regular public services of Christian worship. These services take place each Sunday at 10:30am. Additional services at special times of the year, such as Easter Sunday and Christmas Day, are advertised by public announcement, via our Twitter account (@BHBaptist), via Facebook and via our excellent website (www.bhbc.org.uk). Our website allows access from mobile devices and complies with search engine requirements. It continues to be managed and updated onsite.

Throughout the year, services continued in-person at church to all members of the congregation. There were strict instructions issued that anybody experiencing Covid symptoms or who had tested positive for the virus should not attend. Numerically the congregation at Sunday services grew steadily throughout the year. Sunday services continued to be streamed online via YouTube for those members of the congregation who were unable to attend our services in person. There are an increasing number of people who listen into the services via YouTube who live too far away from the church to be physically present at the services.

The church leadership team has met monthly throughout the year to seek God's plan for the church, conduct business and oversee vision and pastoral care of the church. The team consists of three elders who are involved in the pastoral and spiritual side of the church and two deacons, who are involved in the practical running of the church, for example in premises and fabric and technology. Reverend Kevin Clark, our pastor, chairs the leadership meetings.

The three elders continue to be Ann Hunter, Tony King, the church treasurer, and Colin Tompson, the church secretary. Jeffrey Needham and Graeme Perry continue to be deacons. All three elders had been in office in excess of six years, but with the formal registration of the new Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church CIO on 31st October 2023, it was agreed that all three elders would commence a new initial three-year period from that date.

At the beginning of the year, the Elders and Deacons Team reiterated the Vision Statement of the church. This is as follows: To impact our world by building a Christ-centred church – connecting, transforming and empowering lives. This is based on Matthew 28:19 – *'Go and make disciples of all nations'*. A consequence of this is *'building the church of tomorrow today'*. We marked the church theme for 2024 as *'Pray Continually'*. The verse chosen for 2024 was 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 – *'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.'*

The new Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church CIO constitution had been formally registered on 31st October 2023. Therefore during 2024 the process for the Transfer of Assets from the present Charitable Unincorporated Association (CUA) constitution to the new CIO continued throughout the year by our solicitors. This was completed on 31st January 2025 which is why the report for 2024 has been extended to this date.

The Advent season in 2023 included a Communion Service around “Immanuel - God with us”. The evening Carol Service message was about not missing Christmas in the busyness of Christmas. The year ended with Sunday being on the last day of the year in which the Pastor took the opportunity to speak to the congregation on a sermon called “How is it with you soul” which explored the Magnificat, “My soul glorifies the Lord”. The congregation was encouraged from the Magnificat to remember to praise God, to lean into His grace, to declare God’s victory and to connect with God’s salvation-historical purposes in Jesus Christ.

In the first half of 2024, Pastor Kevin preached on the themes, including ‘*More of Jesus*’, ‘*Living Life to the Glory of God*’ and ‘*Overcoming Opposition and Hurts*’. There were special services on Good Friday and on Easter Sunday. The day before Good Friday the Life Groups celebrated a Covenant Thursday Communion. During this time both Mothers’ and Fathers’ Days were celebrated as was Ascension Sunday and Pentecost. Throughout the second half of the year, Pastor Kevin preached on the theme of ‘*Living the Blessed Life: The Beatitudes*’, based on Matthew 5:1-12.

In October we held our annual Harvest Festival service and funds were collected for two charities, these being Mill Grove and TEAR Fund. We also held our annual Anniversary service in the same month. In November six adults and four children underwent believer’s baptism at a Sunday service. The children especially were very firm in their Christian faith and had asked to be baptised by immersion. This had been preceded by a short service commemorating all those who had died in war, this being Remembrance Sunday. The evening carol service was held on Sunday evening 22nd December. The turnout was very high with all seats occupied.

As well as Pastor Kevin preaching regularly at Sunday services throughout the year, the three elders and one other member of the congregation also preached occasionally.

We commenced Wednesday evenings in 2024 on selected dates in January and February at the church in place of the usual weekly Life Groups. These would comprise teaching and prayer and a time for group discussion in Life Groups. The theme for the teaching was ‘*How is Your Soul*’ illustrating the restoration of our souls and the restoration of everything that God has for us individually and for the church. Those attending who had not previously attended a Life Group were encouraged to join one. The church believes that along with the Sunday services, where we all gather together in the one larger group, being part of a Life Group is to be encouraged.

Midweek Life Groups recommenced straight after the end of these sessions and have continued to meet throughout the year on a weekly basis except for short breaks in school holidays. These continued to be in-person with one group meeting online. Each Life Group session involved sharing news, worship, praying for each other, the church and issues in society, and also discussing questions which Pastor Kevin has previously distributed related to his sermon. It is in these smaller groups usually meeting in homes in mid-week where people can become part of a smaller and more individual community where we can build one another up in our faith and in our lives.

During October and November, there were five Wednesday evenings at the church entitled '*School of the Word*'. These comprised a teaching session presented by Pastor Kevin or one of the three elders. In the second half, those present divided into small groups, loosely based on the Life Groups to discuss questions from the first half presentation

During the third week in January and in the third week of March, we held a week of prayer and fasting. Members of the congregation were encouraged to concentrate their prayers on our church with its vision statement of transformation and our local neighbourhood of Buckhurst Hill. These were held to specifically pray for spiritual breakthrough and revival in the church and in the locality.

Worship, which includes singing spiritual songs, continued to be a vital part of all our services and was much enjoyed by the congregation with many testimonies of the help that they gave, often with encouragement and healing taking place.

The Worship leader for each week met with Pastor Kevin to plan worship and the team rehearsed each Sunday before the service. It has been good to see young people also taking part in the Worship Team which goes along with our vision of an all-age and multicultural congregation.

Part of the worship team is a Technology team, normally comprising three people who very ably controlled volume of sound and lighting and projection of the words of the songs and of Biblical verses used in the sermons. During the year the Technology team continued to have young people involved, sometimes with all three members being young people. Occasional video clips showing links we have with others (e.g. churches internationally and charities we support) and various news items of up-and-coming events were also shown. Tony King, our treasurer, continued to give a brief talk weekly on giving financially to the church and financial giving continued to be cashless with the congregation being able to give either via standing order payments, by bank transfer or via the website. People are now also able to give via a card reader. As a church we receive no financial support from outside the church which relies entirely on regular financial giving from all who attend

A small dedicated team from the church continued to visit Queens Court, a local care home, during the year to take a monthly service for the residents there.

Throughout the year, Anastasia Moniatis and Carly Peek continued to lead the children's and youth work in the church. There has been throughout the year a growing team who are involved with this work with Anastasia and Carly as leaders of the team. At some point in most services, the children and young people leave to join their own groups, these are relational in nature with prayer and discussion over Bible topics. This has grown steadily both numerically and spiritually.

A youth meeting on Friday evenings also continued throughout the year, open to all young people in the area. This contains both the social and the spiritual in the form of worship and, like the Sunday sessions, continued to grow numerically throughout the year during term time.

The weekly coffee mornings on Thursdays have continued throughout the year during school term time. These have been well supported and are very much appreciated by all those who come as it affords a time of good fellowship and conversations.

Mission agencies and individuals that we supported both financially and in prayer during the year were Rob Hobbs in the national leadership of YWAM (Youth with a Mission), the London Baptist Association Home Mission and the Baptist Missionary Society.

Justine Keel, our salaried full time Administrator, continued in her post, working partially from home and in the office at the church for much of the year, her work still facilitating the smooth running of the life and work of the Church.

Our Safeguarding Policy is read out annually at every AGM. The Church operates safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all people working with children and adults at risk are properly trained and appropriately vetted via the Disclosure Barring Service. The Church enjoys a good reputation in the local community, not least for its warmth of welcome and its all-year-round provision for children. The church continues to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations by continuing to follow the policies and procedures that it implemented in 2018 in compliance with the new regulations.

Membership at the end of the year stood at 41, which is a net reduction of four from the end of 2023. There were five new members in 2024, but the reduction can be accounted for from two members transferring their membership to another church, having moved out of the area and seven people on the membership list who had failed to sign the form for CIO Foundation Members. Without exception, these were people who had not attended the church for a considerable amount of time and we were not sure that we even had their present contact details. In some cases, they had never given us permission to contact them under GDPR.

However, we are expecting an increase in our membership as a number of people have expressed an interest in applying for membership in 2025.

A considerable amount of money and time has been spent on the upkeep of the church building including repairs to the foyer roof, and the Manse, the latter suffering from the presence of damp. At the beginning of the year a CCTV and Intruder Alarm System was installed and is working well. But the major project was the launch of the Window Project because of a broken window due to an unsuccessful burglary. We decided in the end to replace all six windows in the sanctuary as they were old and insecure. The amount was fully met by the congregation within a few months and the new windows have been installed.

As last year, we can say that it has been a very encouraging year. We have seen a steady growth in the number of newcomers attending services regularly, especially since the end of the Covid lockdown. There are a good number who see BHBC as their spiritual home and are committed to attending services, being involved in the church and its activities and supporting the church both financially in regular giving and in prayer. There has been a greater unity within the church and a real maturing spiritually in many lives, with some experiencing healing.

Review of Finances, Risk & Responsibilities

The Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church CIO was registered on 31st October 2023. The Transfer of Assets date was 31st January 2025, which is after this reporting period. This was the date when the assets of the Buckhurst Hill Baptist Church Unincorporated Charity (no. 1129670) were formally transferred to the CIO. Throughout 2024 all income continued to be received into the old charity’s HSBC bank accounts and expenses paid from these accounts. The new HSBC bank accounts for the CIO were opened on 10th December 2024 but were not used until January 2025. Therefore, there are no financials for the CIO to report in 2024.

Approval

This report was approved by the Trustees on 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Treasurer Name: A.J King.

A Trustee Name: Colin Tompson