

Trustee Annual Report

For the Year Ended December 31, 2025

Eastern Baptist Association

Registered charity no. 1089795

Company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 4221429

Registered office: 2 Buchanan Gardens, Wickford Essex, SS12 9QB

www.easternbaptist.org.uk

Introduction

As trustees of Eastern Baptist Association, we are pleased to present the annual report for the year ended December 31, 2025. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the activities, financial performance, governance, and future outlook. We remain committed to ensuring that Eastern Baptist Association fulfils its mission and objectives, while adhering to the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and stewardship.

Mission and Purpose of the Charity

Eastern Baptist Association was established with the goal of the advancement of the Christian religion especially by the means of and in accordance with the principles of the Baptist denomination as set out for the time being in the Declaration of Principle of The Baptist Union of Great Britain. With a particular focus on Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission in the East of England.

Over the past year, we have continued to work towards achieving the charity's objectives through strategic initiatives, careful resource management, and effective governance.

Governance and Trustee Activities

In 2025, the charity continued to be governed by a dedicated group of trustees, each bringing diverse expertise and experience to our work. Regular trustee meetings were held throughout the year to review the association's operations, financial health, and alignment with its goals. Trustees remain responsible for:

- Overseeing the associations' activities and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Monitoring financial performance and approving the annual budget and expenditures.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of strategic priorities and initiatives.
- Evaluating and addressing risks to the charity's assets and operations.

We are committed to transparency and have adhered to all relevant regulations governing the management of charitable trusts. Each trustee has acted with due diligence, care, and loyalty to the beneficiaries and objectives of the association.

At the 2025 AGM the members re-elected Mr Richard Lewis as treasurer for a further 3 years and Revd Gordon Hindmarch as a trustee. At the same meeting Revd John Goddard, Revd Sean Fountain and Revd Alan Brand retired from the role of trustee. During the year the trustees appointed Revd Adrian Ward to the role of deputy moderator to assist and support the

moderator and a further 2 co-options Miss Jessica West and Mrs Valerie Khambatta. At the conclusion of 2025 the trustee board was made up of the following individuals.

Revd Lou Webber – Moderator

Mr Richard Lewis - Treasurer

Revd Adrian Ward – Deputy Moderator

Revd Gordon Hindmarch

Revd Sandra Crawford as a co-opted member (until January 2026) and Safeguarding Trustee

Mrs Valerie Khambatta, co-opted member (until February 2027)

Mrs Jessica West, co-opted member (until May 2027)

Revd Paul Smith, co-opted member (until September 2027)

Revd David Mayne (RMTL) an ex-officio member of council

Financial Performance

The charity had a deficit of £30,077, reflecting a deficit budget in line with expectation (2024: surplus £65,430, but excluding the surplus on property there was deficit on ordinary activities of £89,514). We project and support similar annual deficits in subsequent years but recognise that this use of reserves to cover ongoing shortfalls in this way has significant implications. Reserves spent in this way cannot then be used to fund other activities and projects now or in the future. In the long term it can take many years to rebuild reserves, again reducing future possibilities and unless the funding structure for Associations is significantly revised, or other income streams can be developed. Saying that, it is expected that there will be significant financial structural changes in the Baptist Union and the associations in 2027 and following years. Once the impact of those changes is known, then the EBA can make long term sustainable plans.

Key Financial Metrics:

- **Income: £405,824**
- **Expenditures: £435,901**
- **Net Assets: £2,156,827**
- **Free Reserves: £402,888**
- **Operational Spending: £311,314 (71.4% of total expenditures)**
- **Grant Spending: £124,587 (28.6% of total expenditures)**

Fund Raising

The Charity does not actively fundraise but does receive from time-to-time unsolicited gifts and donations from the public. The Trustees do not employ professional or outside agencies to fundraise on its behalf and as such does not consider it necessary to be part of a voluntary scheme or standard. Following a clarification of BU guidelines, EBA is exploring ways to raise funds specifically for our own purposes.

Property Matters

The Company Secretary and the Treasurer together with the Finance and Administration subgroup oversee the property portfolio for the EBA. During 2025 in line with the association's Environmental Sustainability Policy reviewed the EPC rating and report for each property to consider the environmental impact of each property and consider any ways in which we can

improve the ratings. The outcome of the review was discussed in October with further investigation and costings to be developed into 2026. Following the resignation of Revd Gale Richards towards the end of the year the trustees reviewed the property stock and decided to sell the Ely Manse and at the end of the year this is on the market.

The association ends 2025 with the following properties

Southend Manse – occupied by Rev David Mayne

Wickford Manse- occupied by Rev Claire Blatchford

Ely Manse- current vacant and on the market.

Wickford Rental Property tenancy until January 2027 with a monthly income of £1400

All properties continue to be reviewed annually to maintain the five-year plan for routine maintenance and planned refurbishment of the EBA properties.

Lastly, the association is expected to receive a part share in a former church manse in Harold Hill, pending completion of the legal processes.

Trustee Engagement and Activities

In addition to regular meetings, trustees participated in the following activities over the past year:

- **Strategy and Planning:** Trustees engaged in strategic planning to set priorities for the coming year.
- **Training:** Trustees engaged with refresher training on the responsibilities of being a trustee.
- **Financial Review** Trustees engaged with reviewing the impact of decreased income and with the Baptist Union's national financial review which will continue into 2026.

Programs and Initiatives

Throughout 2025, the charity facilitated and hosted training and activities aimed at advancing its mission. Some of the highlights include:

1. **Minister's Conference:** A 3-day residential conference focused on worship, learning and networking. The teaching was provided by a variety of different people including Revd Dr Andy Goodliff who focused on Baptist Roots, Revd Dr Sally Mann who focused her session on doing ministry differently within a changing financial landscape, Dr Jonas Kurlberg whose session was on the changing digital landscape and Revd Lisa Kerry who focused on being rooted in Christ.

This initiative benefited directly 92 individuals who then return to their churches and ministry settings, and the benefit could be multiplied across the churches.

2. **Safeguarding Training:** Each year we facilitate several safeguarding courses for churches to be able to engage with the Baptist Union Excellence in Safeguarding material. During the year 10 different courses took place across the association training 503 individuals at level 2 and 214 individuals at level 3.
3. **Delivery of the "I am because you are training":** This training has been developed to raise the issues around diversity and equality. The association believe this training to be of benefit to new ministers coming through the ministerial recognition pathways and during 2025 continued to run sessions for individuals to engage with the material.

4. **Mentor Training:** The association engages mentors in the Newly Accredited Ministers (NAM) program. The association considers it important to equip the mentors to be as effective as they can be. In April a training day for mentors held and was attended by 10 individuals.
5. **Engagement in Project Violet:** Project Violet is a research project that investigated women's experiences in ministry with the results being published during 2024. The research provided us with some stark realities and recommendations for change. During 2025 the association continued with their commitments against the recommendations for change including identifying 3 individuals to take part in the next round of "Magnify You" and agreeing review points for accountability during the year to ensure we are staying true to our commitments.
6. **Engagement with the Eco-Church award:** This initiative developed by A Rocher encourages churches to be environmentally aware and put into place sustainable practices in their local area, awarding churches Bronze, Silver or Gold. The eco church enablers have highlighted this programme to our churches and inspired churches to engage with it. There are now 12 silver award holders and 5 bronze.

Looking Ahead

There were some unexpected issues within the team during 2025, with one member needing to take some time out on health grounds and another member resigning in October as she was called to a different role. Trustees agreed to roll over some of the priorities from 2025 recognising that not as much progress had been made as would have been hoped. As we move into 2026, the association will focus on the following priorities:

1. **Furthering kingdom justice:** Continuing to implement the agreed outcomes of Project Violet, working to have our justice hub integrated into the life of the association and growing its impact, helping as many churches as possible to become Eco-Church award holders and ensuring that the association complies with its Environmental and Sustainability Policy
2. **Association Reform:** There is a realisation that the association cannot continue to offer the same as it has always done with a picture of decreasing income. We will be actively exploring ways to network and associate differently. Whilst ensuring the trustee board is fit for purpose and contains the requisite skills and experience needed for an effective and balanced board.
3. **Collaborating with our Baptist Movement:** We are only a part of the Baptist family during the next year we will be active and constructive in collaboration with other parts of the family. Ensuring that the association is well represented in all areas of Baptist life, the association had a good representation at the All Teams Retreat in December.
4. **Project 17:** A commitment to identify and connect with our 10% least engaged churches, which we'll refer to as Project 17. It is hoped that EBA Trustees will work alongside the EBA Team to find good and constructive ways of building better links with these churches.

Conclusion

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our team, volunteers, and member churches for their unwavering support throughout the year. The association is not without its challenges during the next year. We are confident that with your continued support, we can achieve great things in the coming year.

Thank you for your trust and commitment to our shared goals.

Risk Management and Compliance

We continue to uphold robust risk management practices to safeguard the charity's assets. Key risks identified in 2025 included

	Key Risk	Response and mitigation
Critical Risk	Church Membership and giving decreases.	The association prepared different income forecasts to assess its viability if different circumstances occurred Assess our expenditure and use current funds wisely
Critical Risk	Breakaway Baptist union is formed.	Regional ministers remained visible and approachable to churches wishing to talk through issues
Critical Risk	Churches response to different theological viewpoints (Reputation) Indirect risk of Baptist reputation	Maintain a good relationship with the National Resource and support mechanisms. Regional ministers remained visible and approachable to churches wishing to talk through issues
Finance (including systems and controls)	Changes to financial model with impacts our income	The association prepared different income forecasts to assess its viability if different circumstances occurred Assess our expenditure and use current funds wisely

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Eastern Baptist association is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status which is governed by a memorandum and articles of association.

Appointment of trustees (also known as council members)

The following revised process for appointing council members was agreed at the EBA annual general meeting in June 2025.

1. Council will consist of individuals who hold the requisite skills and experience as to administer the duties required of Charity trustees and Company Directors.

These duties include

- a. Maintaining the aims and developing the strategies of the EBA.
- b. Setting policies and reviewing the practice of the EBA in terms of Ministry and Mission.
- c. Maintaining the financial practice of the Association through setting budgets and approving accounts.
- d. Supporting and resourcing EBA staff and volunteers to carry out their functions, roles and responsibilities
- e. Undertaking representation and partnership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and other recognised bodies.

Nominations for council members will be sought from the churches of the association, the regional team and current council members.

A member is appointed by a simple majority at a general meeting.

Any person appointed as a council member shall be eligible for re-appointment unless that person has immediately before such re-appointment already served three consecutive periods of office.

2. Subject to the other byelaws the appointment of council members shall take effect for a term which expires at the third Annual General Meeting following their appointment. The Council shall be entitled to fill any vacancy for a Council Member which occurs during a term of appointment.

A person filling that vacancy shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting of the Association. In seeking to fill any vacancy under this Bye law the Council may (but shall not be obliged to) appoint a Nominating Group to seek nominations from the Churches of the Association and make a nomination for appointment to Council.

3. The Moderator and Treasurer of the Association shall be appointed by a majority vote of a General Meeting of the Association following nomination by the Council.

The Moderator and the Treasurer shall be appointed for such term(s) as recommended by the Council and agreed by the General Meeting.

Trustee Induction and Training

The trustees seek to ensure that procedures are in place for trustee induction and training by reference to guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Organisational structure

The charity has a council who meet a minimum of four times a year and are responsible for its strategic direction and policy. Regional ministers are appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity

Signed: Approved by Trustees

Date: 18 April 2026