

Annual General Meeting Report 2026



Eastern
Baptist
Association

Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's Mission in the East of England

Welcome to new Ministers

Simon Harry	Bluntisham	Sean Fountain	Whitehouse
Paul Walker	Harlow	Ruth Conlon	Hornchurch
Keith Glover	Friars, Shoeburyness	Matt Henderson	Kingswood, Basildon
Darren Hirst	Theydon Bois	Claire Henwood	Kings Street, Thetford
Dave Barker	Wisbech	Amy Barker	Wisbech
Kim Downes	Centenary, March	Tom Pender	Hadleigh
Clare Hogg	Pilgrims Hatch	Jeremiah Olouch	Stalham
Daniel Ward	Beacon, Bacton	Simon Mattholie	Clare
Carl Morehouse	West Mersea	Kimberley Rayson	Arbury Road, Cambridge
Monica Cragg	Great Shelford	Claire Heffer	(MIT) Frinton
Israel Olofinjana	Colchester	Andrew James	Canvey Island
Claire Hamilton Deane	Park, Great Yarmouth	Thiago Vajas Simoes	Costessey
Ellie Ake	Halstead		
Shonaidh Marsh	(MIT) Maidstone Road, Felixstowe		

Welcome to new EBA Team

Amy Barker, Director for Vocations and Ministerial Formation

Welcome to new member Churches

Harold Park, Romford

ECHO Church, Harlow

Retirements

Sue Millar

John Walford

Alexander Love

Daniel Pritchard

Andrew Cowley

In Memoriam

Brian Stenner

Graham Cordery

Raymond Brown

Richard Owen

Gordon Tubbs

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 association's 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 three 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 two co-options Mrs 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 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 (Hayley Beckett) and Treasurer (Richard Lewis) 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 three 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 Rocha 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. We will ensure 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.

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

- Maintaining the aims and developing the strategies of the EBA.
- Setting policies and reviewing the practice of the EBA in terms of Ministry and Mission.
- Maintaining the financial practice of the Association through setting budgets and approving accounts.
- Supporting and resourcing EBA staff and volunteers to carry out their functions, roles and responsibilities
- 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.

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.

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 which meets a minimum of four times a year and is responsible for its strategic direction and policy. Regional ministers are appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity

Approved by trustees

Date: 18 April 2026

EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

PAGE 7

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2025 Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £
INCOME									
Grants and donations	2	317,927	-	35,744	353,671	256,068	-	17,790	273,858
Investment income	3	52,153	-	-	52,153	61,604	-	-	61,604
Surplus on disposal of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	154,944	-	-	154,944
TOTAL INCOME		370,080	-	35,744	405,824	472,616	-	17,790	490,406
EXPENDITURE									
Charitable activities	4	394,747	11,800	29,354	435,901	349,033	8,156	67,787	424,976
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		394,747	11,800	29,354	435,901	349,033	8,156	67,787	424,976
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS BEFORE TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS		(24,667)	(11,800)	6,390	(30,077)	123,583	(8,156)	(49,997)	65,430
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	11-12	705	-	(705)	-	215	-	(215)	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR		(23,962)	(11,800)	5,685	(30,077)	123,798	(8,156)	(50,212)	65,430
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS									
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1ST JANUARY 2025		2,079,122	49,510	58,272	2,186,904	1,955,324	57,666	108,484	2,121,474
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2025		2,055,160	37,710	63,957	2,156,827	2,079,122	49,510	58,272	2,186,904

All the above results derived from continuing activities. There were no recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movement in funds are disclosed in notes 11 and 12 to the financial statements.

The notes on pages 10 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	£	2025	£	2024	£
FIXED ASSETS						
Tangible fixed assets	7		1,272,068		1,280,748	
Investments	8		380,204		380,204	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS			1,652,272		1,660,952	
CURRENT ASSETS						
Debtors	9		14,290		11,260	
Cash at bank and in hand			509,284		531,662	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS			523,574		542,922	
LIABILITIES						
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10		19,019		16,970	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			504,555		525,952	
NET ASSETS			2,156,827		2,186,904	
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY						
Unrestricted Income Funds			2,055,160		2,079,122	
Designated Income Funds	11		37,710		49,510	
Restricted Income Funds	12		63,957		58,272	
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS			2,156,827		2,186,904	

The trustees consider that the charitable company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of Section 477(1) of the Companies Act 2006. Members have not required the charitable company under Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006, to obtain an audit for the year ended 31 December 2025. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at 31 December 2025 and of its deficit for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of Section 396 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to the financial statements as far as applicable to the charitable company.

The financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006, were approved by the board on 30 April 2026 and signed on its behalf.


Richard Lewis
Trustee

The notes on pages 10 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

AGM Agenda 2026

1. Welcome
2. Signing of the minutes from 2025
3. Reception of trustees' Annual Report
4. Presentation of the Financial Report for 2025
5. Result from the election of trustees
6. In Memoriam
7. Welcome to new churches
8. Welcome to new ministers
9. Welcome to new team
10. Feedback from the Listening and Sharing Gatherings
 - a. Home Mission
 - b. Financial Model Review
 - c. Districts
11. Close of AGM

Eastern Baptist Association
Annual General Meeting 4.00pm 22 June 2025
Witard Road Baptist Church, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 9XD

Welcome

Lou Webber opened the meeting with a welcome and made everyone aware that the trustees' annual report was included in the printed papers given on arrival and was available on the EBA website.

Signing of minutes from 2024

The minutes from September 2024 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

Reception of Annual Report

Thanks, were offered to the trustees and Regional Ministers for all they do in the running of the Association and the annual report was presented to the meeting for information.

Presentation of Financial Report for 2024

Income for 2024 totalled £472,616 with expenditure totalling £349,033 with the resulting balance £123,583. However these figures include a couple of property changes. A truer picture of the income and expenditure for 2024 is

Income	£317,673
Expenditure	£349,033
Balance	-£31,360

Looking forward into 2025 there are a couple of financial items to be aware of.

·The Baptist Union financial model review which is a commitment to look at the financial structure to try and make it more sustainable.

·Home Mission giving is decreasing, the needs are increasing and costs are increasing.

·EBA is reviewing its missional grants system with these changes being as effective as they can be in supporting mission.

Finally, thanks were given to all churches who give generously to Home Mission.

Trustee Election results

As the association held two association days, the election was held electronically so all churches had the opportunity to take part.

Richard Lewis was elected to serve a second term as EBA Treasurer.

Gordon Hindmarch was elected as a trustee and will serve an initial term of three years.

Byelaw Changes

The council had reviewed the byelaws and felt as the role of trustee had developed and with added responsibilities from the Charity Commission, it was proposed to amend our byelaws to fit better with what is legally expected of trustees. Proposed changes to byelaws 2, 3, 4 and 5 were circulated to members for consideration. The vote to change these was included in the electronic ballot.

The vote was passed with a majority of 44/1.

Welcome to New Ministers

It is always a privilege to welcome new ministers to the EBA. These ministers have arrived to or moved churches within the EBA within the last 12 months. Following the reading of names, they were all prayed for.

Sarah Phillpot, Ann Wolstenholme, Darren Hirst, Chris Tanton, Satyajit Deodhar, Simon Cragg, Alan Brand, Simon Harry, Cate Allen, Chad Archbold, Michelle Dorrington, Helen Harrigan, Katie Gowland.

We also give thanks for those who have retired during the last year

Chris Collicot retired from Holland on Sea, John Prothero retired from Christ Church Coggeshall, Peter Paine retired from Chaplaincy at the Port of Great Yarmouth, Ivan King retired from a portfolio ministry, Peter Lillystone retired from Benfleet

Welcome to New EBA Team

Vicky Baker : CYF Networker, Gina Cox and Sharon Chan will job share the eco-church enabler role

Chris Duffett: Pioneer Networker and Becky Crew, PA to David Mayne

In Memoriam

We take a few moments to reflect on ministers and those connected to the EBA who have passed away during this last year, you can see them listed on page 1. As I read out the names let us thank God for their faithful service and pray for friends and family who mourn their passing.

Revd Rodney Sawtell, Revd Barbara Tickner, Revd Pat Heap, Revd Glyn Jones

Close of AGM at 4.35pm