

Winchester Baptist Church

Annual report for the year ended 31 March 2009

Statutory Information

Charity name	Winchester Baptist Church
Address	Swan Lane Winchester SO23 7AA
Charity registration number	The charity is exempted from registration under Subsection 5 of Section 3 of the Charities Act 1993
Leadership Team	The Revd E Huffman (Minister) Mr T Williamson (Associate Minister (Youth)) Mrs E Stacey (Pastoral Co-ordinator for Mission to Seniors) Mrs J Marshall (Administrator) Mrs C Bailey (Secretary – until 19 November 2008) Mr E Jackson (Secretary – appointed 19 November 2008) Mr D Hook (Treasurer – appointed 21 January 2009) Mr G Bartlett Mrs C Breakwell Mr W Isaac Mrs H Mann Mrs S McAulay Mr C Turner
Property Trustees	The Baptist Union Corporation Limited Baptist House 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT
Bankers	The Royal Bank of Scotland 67-68 High Street Winchester SO23 9DA
Independent Examiners	Mrs J Oakes Mrs S Aitkenhead

Annual Report for 2008/09

The Leadership Team presents its Annual Report for 2008/09.

Charitable Object

The Church is governed by a set of Church Rules which state that the Church exists to

- worship God
- uphold His Word and Sacraments
- support and encourage the spiritual growth of His people
- demonstrate the love and righteousness of God within society
- proclaim the Gospel of salvation.

The Church occupies premises which are held by the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd, on Trusts which are entirely compatible with the above object.

Organisational Structure and Decision Making processes

People are accepted into membership of the Church in accordance with the Church Rules, which require them to profess repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit and for their lives to bear evidence of their Christian profession.

The Church Members Meeting normally takes place six times per year and has responsibility for the overall policy of the Church. In accordance with the Church Rules, the members appoint Elders and Deacons who, together with the Minister and Associate Minister (Youth), Pastoral Co-ordinator for Mission to Seniors and Church Administrator (who are also appointed by the Members), and collectively known as the Leadership Team, are responsible for the day to day running of the Church's work and witness and the financial and legal aspects of the Church. All Elders and Deacons are appointed for a three year term of office, but may be re-appointed for further such terms. All members are encouraged to take an appropriate part in the spiritual and practical tasks involved in the furtherance of the Church's charitable objective.

Relevant matters may be submitted to the Church Meeting by the Leadership Team for guidance or decision, or may be raised by members in the Church Meeting for further consideration by the Leadership Team. Though the Church Rules permit decisions to be made at Church Meetings by appropriate majorities, the Church seeks to work by consensus wherever possible.

The Church attaches importance to the training and development of its Leadership Team and of future leaders. The Minister is coming towards the end of an MA course in Missional Leadership and the Associate Minister (Youth) has started a similar course. A former student who graduated in 2007 is in the second year of an internship with particular responsibility for work amongst students. The intern observes meetings of the Leadership Team.

The Church is affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and to the Southern Counties Baptist Association. It is a member both of 'Churches Together in Winchester' and of 'Mission Winchester', groupings of churches working together for Christian unity, evangelism and spiritual renewal in the city.

Objectives and Activities

In order to achieve the charitable objective which is set out above, the Church provides a variety of activities both to its membership and to the community generally. The aim is to show the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed and to bring people into a closer relationship with Him as living Lord.

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 morning at 10.00 a.m. and most Sunday evenings at 6.30 p.m. A youth congregation, The Edge, meets weekly on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. and there is a 'Silver Service' for seniors at 1.30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. There are also occasional services at other times which are advertised on the Church Notice Board and on the Church's website at www.winbap.org.uk. There is a full children's programme during the Sunday morning services. The Church seeks to be a friendly and welcoming community and anybody is free to attend any of these services.

The Church runs a number of house groups for the growth of faith, discipleship and fellowship in the homes of some of its members. Further details of these can be obtained from the Leadership Team on request, or at the Sunday services of worship.

The Church runs various events for children, young people, students and seniors, with the purpose of assisting the community and demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ. These events include a weekly pre-school play group ('Friday Fun') and a weekly youth club for teenagers ('Friday Club'). From time to time the Church runs courses, entitled 'Alpha', for people interested in discovering more about Christianity, and courses for those seeking assistance with money management. 'Beta' courses are run for new Christians who want to deepen their faith.

The Church premises are made available throughout the week to a variety of outside organisations. These include an Age Concern lunch club which caters for 40 older people over two days each week, a Live at Home Scheme Friendship Club of about 40 people who live alone and meet together fortnightly, family conferences run by Hampshire Social Services, the local Residents Association, a local Horticultural Club, theatre and operatics groups, Hampshire Music Group, who hold county-wide auditions, and the Southampton Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Therapy Group.

Members of the Church are actively involved in a broad range of activities with other Christians in Winchester, including evangelism ('Woman2Woman'), prayer for healing for members of the public in Winchester High Street each Saturday ('Healing on the Streets'), the provision of counselling services ('Olive Branch'), and various initiatives to help the disadvantaged (Winchester Churches Night Shelter, Winchester Basics Bank, Winchester Churches Family Project and Winchester Churches Housing Group). The Church also supports these activities financially. The Church helps to fund, and provides an office base for, Winchester's City Centre Chaplain; the Minister sits on the Chaplain's management group.

In addition to activities formally linked to the Church, members also serve as volunteers in other local charities and organisations including the Langley House Trust (rehabilitation of young ex-offenders), Naomi House (children's hospice), Community Responders (responding to medical emergencies before the arrival of an ambulance), Winchester Prison (visiting, supervising the children's play area for prisoners' families, and leading worship on Sundays), Royal Hampshire County Hospital (administering Communion), and work with people with special needs.

The Church operates a system to ensure that all people working with children are appropriately vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Achievements and Performance

Thirteen people became Church members during the year, four of them having publicly affirmed their faith in Jesus Christ and nine having joined from other churches. One member died during the year and two moved to another church in Winchester. The number of members increased to 177. Five people were baptised on profession of faith. The number of people, and young families in particular, worshipping at the Church continued to increase, and the Church sanctuary was regularly full at the Sunday morning worship service.

One Alpha course was run during the year, which seven guests attended. One of them now attends the Church regularly. Over 100 members took part in a six-week training course (entitled 'Breaking News') on how to share their faith with their friends and neighbours.

Attendance at the Silver Service averaged over 50 each month. Eleven seniors completed a nine-part study of John Bunyan's book 'Pilgrim's Progress'; this proved to be an effective way of helping those who were finding faith or having their faith rekindled to understand more fully what it means to be a Christian. The main annual outreach event to seniors not already connected with the Church again took the form of a 'Holiday at Home' held on two days during the summer. About 30 seniors attended each of the all-day events, which had a Royal Garden Party theme and involved craft, singing, quizzes, games and a concert, concluding with a devotional talk. Other events specifically for seniors included a Sunday afternoon 'Songs of Praise' service in October. Church members continued to make regular visits to two blocks of sheltered accommodation near the Church, using a Memory Box to get those with dementia more involved.

An average of 24 families attended 'Friday Fun' each week; nearly all of them having no other connection with the Church. There is a waiting list of families wanting to attend regularly. Friday Club also reached capacity: the numbers attending regularly grew from 24 to 57 over the course of the year, four fifths of them otherwise unconnected with the Church.

The launching of 'Healing on the Streets' in June 2008 represented a substantial increase in regular involvement with the community. A group of Church members spends 1½ hours in Winchester High Street each Saturday offering to pray for people with any kinds of needs. About 350 people were prayed for between June and March. Many reported feeling helped, with a deep peace after prayer, and about 15 came back later to say that their situations had markedly improved.

Having completed a training course with Christians Against Poverty, three members of the congregation started running courses in money management in the autumn of 2008. These courses are open to all members of the public as well as to Church members. Two courses have been run so far, providing assistance to ten people.

The Church's child protection arrangements were improved and strengthened during the year. Also, a policy was adopted to regulate the consumption of alcohol on Church premises.

There is clear evidence that the Church is respected and valued by the wider community which it serves. For example, towards the end of the year, the Church, along with other churches in the city, was invited by the city police force to consider setting up a Street Pastor's Scheme in partnership with the police, the City Council and other statutory agencies, to get involved in responding practically to the problems of crime and violence by engaging with young people on the streets.

The Church does not measure the success of its activities only in numbers, including financial numbers, but also in less tangible areas like fellowship and encouragement. The Leadership Team recognises that these are difficult aspects to measure, but it believes that 2008/09 was a year of

positive growth in these areas too. A wide range of social events was organised including termly Sunday lunches for 100 people and various other smaller social events involving the local community which embraced about 200 people over the year. Through Woman2Woman the Church took a leading role in organising women's interdenominational social events three times during the year with 150 women attending each event. All these events provided opportunities to build friendships, thus increasing the supportive network both within the Church and with its local community. The six house groups also provided a valuable support network for those attending.

Financial Review

The Church continues to raise the funds which it needs to carry on its activities from within its own membership and congregation, supplemented by a small income from hiring out the Church premises to outside organisations. No wider public appeal for funds was made during the year, nor any grant requested from charitable or official bodies.

The Church started the year with reserves well in excess of immediate day to day requirements and, with the agreement of the Church Meeting, spent some of the excess funds on the internal and external maintenance and redecoration of the Church premises.

The Church has a policy of supporting financially other charitable organisations with Christian aims and objectives compatible with the Church's own charitable purpose, in particular the Baptist Union Home Mission, the Baptist Missionary Society and a number of organisations in which members have an involvement. In addition to restricted giving, the Church donated some 20% of its general income to such causes during the year.

The financial results for the year, together with a summary of the accounting policies adopted, are set out in the accompanying financial statements.

The Leadership Team has established a Reserves Policy, which is to maintain reserves at a level consistent with safeguarding the Church against unexpected significant items of expenditure, to safeguard the employment of its staff and to provide working capital to smooth peaks and troughs in short term cash flow. The Leadership Team is satisfied that it has sufficient reserves at the Balance Sheet date, together with ongoing income anticipated, to enable the Church to function effectively in the coming year.

Future Plans

During the coming year the Church will be adopting a Church Constitution and applying to the Charity Commission for charity registration. The Elders will be undertaking a comprehensive review of the Membership List and recommending appropriate deletions to the Church Meeting. It is proposed to take on another intern when the appointment of the current one comes to the end in the summer.

A large number of Church members will be involved in a ten week evangelistic event at Winchester Cathedral between April and June, organised by many of the churches in the city, called 'Just 10'. The Church plans to run one or more 'Alpha' courses following this event. The Leadership Team will give consideration to whether the Church should join in the Street Pastors initiative and will make an appropriate recommendation to the Church Meeting.

The Church expects to launch a pilot implementation of a new small groups structure. The Leadership Team anticipates devoting some time to considering how to continue to adapt the Church premises to better meet the needs of the growing congregation. The Church's biennial

weekend away – a time of teaching and fellowship for about 140 people – is scheduled to take place in Dorset in April.

The Church's health and safety policy will be revised and formalised, and a comprehensive assessment will be undertaken of the major risks facing the Church and appropriate mitigating measures put in place. A policy will be adopted to safeguard vulnerable adults who attend Church services and other events and activities on the premises.

Approved by the Leadership Team on 14th May 2009 and signed on their behalf by:

Edward Jackson (Church Secretary)