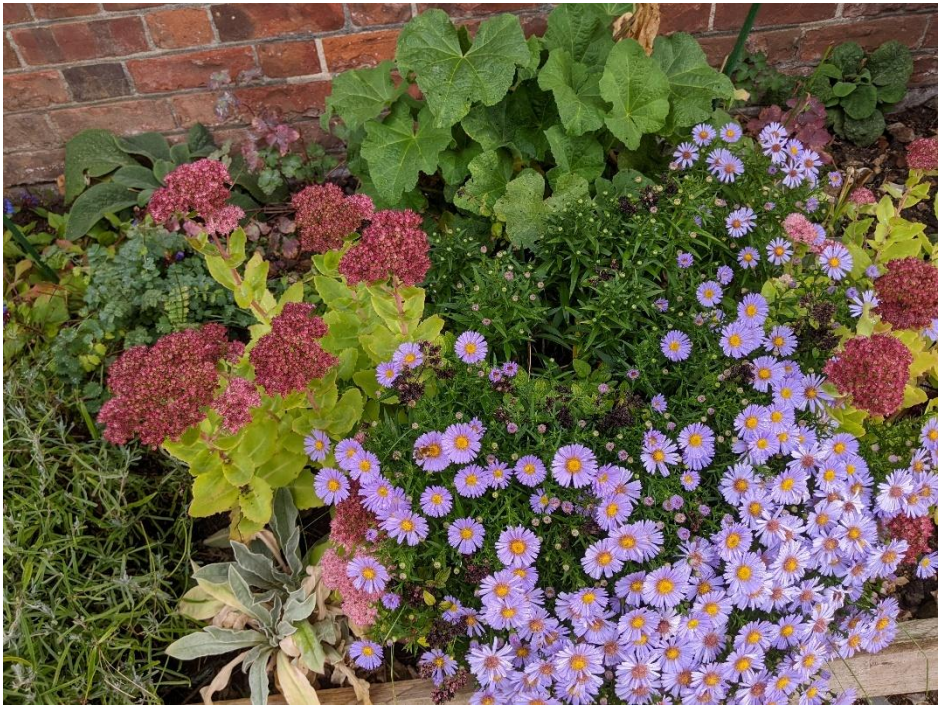




wymondham
baptist church

Wymondham Baptist Church

2024 Annual Reports



Preface from our Pastor

Our verse for the year was from 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18. In essence it speaks about seeking God in all things, talking to Him and praising Him for all He does no matter what. This report comes to you and I pray that you can see the thread of how God has blessed us beyond measure over the past year and how indeed we should praise Him. I believe the reason we can be so upbeat and hopeful for our futures is because our first and foremost practice is to seek Him! To look to Him to set out our path and the growing prayer life at WBC.

Though this was based on the verse for the year my desire is that we have now set the culture of us as a fellowship and now continue to live out this verse forevermore. As you read the following report I hope you will be greatly encouraged and excited. It is my belief that God has so much more in store for us going forward. So let's continue to rejoice and pray to Him and give thanks to Him in all circumstances.

Blessings

Paul.



Wymondham Baptist Church

Annual Reports 2024

Verse of the Year 2024:

“Rejoice always, Pray continually, Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Vision Verse -

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.” - Isaiah 54:2

Reports

Pastor	Page 5
Prayer Life at WBC	Page 8
Pastoral Care	Page 9
Roots Community Café	Page 10
Thrive@Roots	Page 11
Sunday Youth Church	Page 12
Friday Night Youth	Page 13
Secretary	Page 14
Church Administrator	Page 16
Safeguarding	Page 17
Finance Team	Page 18
Music in Worship	Page 21
Buildings, Garden and Manse	Page 21
Outreach and Mission	Page 23
Falconer Trust	Page 25
Home Groups	Page 26
ECO Church	Page 27
Café Church	Page 33
Home from Home	Page 34
Building Project	Page 35
External Fund Raising Team	Page 36
Windmill House	Page 38
Gallery 2024	Page 39

Pastor

For my annual report I wish to give you some highlights of the things we have seen in the past 12 months. Cathy and I record events that happen in the church's life throughout the year.

January - At the start of the year we launched our verse for the year and focused our minds on what God had in store for us. We began the year with an ECO themed worship walk, and we were also blessed with a visit from Alan and Megan Barker as you will read about further in this report. Our sermon series for January and February was called 'I will build my church' looking at the type of church that we believed Jesus is building here at WBC and recognising that unless He builds the house we labour in vain. We also commenced our monthly praise and worship evenings, these were all based on the theme of prayer styles and we began by looking at why we praise.

February - we were visited by the regional minister David Mayne as he attended Roots Community Cafe. He was very encouraged by what has been an exceptional growth in this important ministry. We held our first Cafe Church of the year. Also this month we started hosting a new group called Menscraft. This is run by the local council and is a safe space for men to explore their wellbeing. Our praise evening' focus was adoration.

March - as the spring began to take hold we took time to reflect on the national day of Covid memorial. We started a new sermon series looking into the life of Moses, the making of the man. I attended the regional ministers conference where it was good to see what God is doing in the wider life of the Baptist church. We held a very successful quiz evening with funds raised for the building project.

Sadly this month saw the death of David Fisher, whom though only with us as a church for a short while, had a massive impact on us, especially those in his home group.

We held our Easter services which included a meditation/ prayer stations event on Maundy Thursday. We also took part in the walk of witness with out brothers and sisters from the Wymondham church network and an all age service on Easter Sunday

April - we began the month by having the stone worked cleaned on the north elevation of the church in preparation for any future building works. Though the walls did not come up as clean as we would have liked it was clear to see the marked difference. There were also meetings with the architect to push

forward on the planned works. Various events took place including Uniform Swap, Craft and Crumpets and an ECO celebration as we continued our good work as an ECO church. We also held a deacons' election with Gill Price being re-elected and Keith Hilton and Mathew Mutakonya coming on to the leadership.

May - the whole leadership team embarked on some appraisal training and began to gel as a group working together. I had the privilege of being grilled by children from Browick Road school which was a good time and great to be able to talk about who we are as a Baptist church. I also preached at Witard Road Baptist church as we continued building a good relationship there. We also held our first film showing again raising funds for the building project.

June - at the very start of the month we held a service focused on GEM and the work that Rachel Spencer carries out. We were visited by representatives from the EBA with regards to our Home Mission grant which is always a good opportunity for us to talk about the work we do. ECO church and Roots led us in taking part in the Big Green Week. We held another event which this time was led by a gospel choir and a great evening was had by all. We also held baptism classes for those who felt led to explore if baptism was right for them. This month also saw the Baptists Together conference take place.



July - we held several uniform swaps during the Roots sessions and also took part in Wymondham in Bloom with judging taking place. Robbie organised an afternoon tea fundraiser which was excellent. Sadly this month we lost long standing church member Jack Copper as he died. He was a very special man and is missed enormously by us all. We held a baptism service at the end of the month with 4 people being baptised and it included the dedication of Emily. It was a fantastic celebration and a joy as Lara, Val, Olivia and Freya shared testimony and took the plunge. This is exactly why we exist.

August - the home groups led the services through the summer and as always it was good to see more people involved in the life of the church. For many churches summer is a time when not much happens, NOT so at WBC! We held a summer concert featuring the Hemsby singers as another fund raising activity. Roots was busy with young families and again held uniform swaps.

We held the celebration service for Jack and a time of fellowship took place afterwards.

Sept - we started the new term as such with a church BBQ. The weather was fantastic and during this month we started to see more growth in the church with attendance on Sunday mornings increasing. We held our TWAM collection which is always well supported by the community. There was a dedication service for Remy held on a Saturday morning with family and friends enjoying the service and also making use of the garden afterwards to have refreshments.

Ruth worked hard and took part in a meeting with other churches in town to network and share ideas and encourage one another.

We held another cafe church session.

Oct - we focused on another mission partner as we heard about the work of the Falconer trust via Neil. We also held a Sponsored Bible Readathon, with people from all over the place reading scripture live via webcast and again raising funds for our building project.

Once more we held our Shoebox Sunday service with stacks of boxes again sent out across the world this year.

Nov. - Uniform Bank opened again at Roots. The Leadership Team had an Away Day led by Vic Wright. It was a really pivotal moment in the way we are working together and was a very encouraging time.

I attended the BU Mission Forum learning about mission in the wider context of Baptist life, and I also attended a NAMS meeting in Southend.

At the end of the month we hosted and took part in Safeguarding Training.

Dec. - saw me leading Children's Work in all of December. this was a fantastic time and I believe a real witness to the youth of WBC but also to the whole fellowship as it showed how important our children are to the life of the church. I had great fun leading the youngsters and learning from them. They then led an all age service on the Sunday morning immediately before Christmas with a pop up nativity. It was so good and the whole church - a enjoyed the time together. That evening we held our traditional Carol service.



Early in December we held another event with the Hemsby Singers Christmas Concert.

And finally, we celebrated together on Christmas morning where we were blessed with a few visitors.

So.....as you can see from the long list we are a very busy and active church!!! Lots of good things going on and I haven't even covered the teaching that has taken place each Sunday throughout the year! But a highlight from that for me did include a sermon series looking at the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This alongside my time with the youth in December was my favourite part of my role as we explored together each other's gifting. It was really encouraging to see the way the whole church embraced this time and the release of some people from years of misunderstanding.

This alongside the baptism services are what I love. To explore together our faith, our journey, and learning from each other. It has, as always been an honour, a privilege and very humbling to be your pastor. I look forward to the future with excitement.

Blessings

Paul Smith

Prayer Life at WBC

This year's aim is once again to encourage and build us up in our personal prayer lives, and especially to inspire the whole church to experience the power of praying together.

- **Tuesday Power Hour** - this weekly prayer time now regularly has 6-10 pray-ers. Members of the group share in leading the sessions and we are always encouraged and inspired by how the Holy Spirit leads us every time.
- **Weekend of prayer and fasting for WBC vision, 8th-9th June** - prayer pointers and guidance on the purpose and practice of fasting were shared. A prayer gathering in church concluded the weekend. We prayed through scriptures which we believe are relevant for the coming months and years, from Ezekiel 47 and Haggai 2.
- **Worship Walk, Sunday 29th December** - we looked back with gratitude over 2024, committed 2025 to the Lord with faith and

expectation. The walk was a time for reflection, a time to discover more of the wonder of God through the natural world that He's created, and a time of fellowship.

Monthly prayer meetings were started but could not be sustained due to lack of numbers. We still believe that corporate prayer is the engine room of the church and are trusting the Lord to ignite a 'passion for prayer' (in WBC vision document) and for seeking His face during a year of change and challenge ahead. The Leadership Team is seeking to lead by example by reorganising our monthly meetings to include more space for reflection and prayer.



We wrote last year of the huge need for prayer for crises facing individuals, our town, our country and our world - the needs grow ever more complex and challenging as we go into 2025. As God's people, we believe our prayers bring about change as we intercede for lives to be turned around, saved, delivered, healed. Like Jesus' disciples, we come to Him and ask,

"Lord, teach us to pray".

Vera Cooke and Gill Price

Pastoral Care

During the past year we have aimed to provide pastoral care to those within the fellowship and to others in the community.

There are many people who have been involved in caring for others. The main contact for many in the fellowship will be their Homegroup leaders, who are able to provide support within their small group. These leaders are supported by Vera through quarterly meetings together

We also aim to care for others in the community through Roots. Vic, Alan and others are always available to provide a listening ear and any help that we can offer. This has led to Roots helping people practically, as well as emotionally and spiritually.

Vera and I are in the process of updating the Pastoral Care policy which can give us guidelines and protection when seeking to help others. This policy will be available in the office, or from Vera and I, for anyone to refer to.

During the coming year Pastoral Care will be co ordained by Vic Wright and myself, details of this will be released during the coming weeks. But for now we want everyone to know that we are here to pray, help and support. Please let us know if you would like any support, we cannot help if we don't know.

Ruth Rallan continues to co ordinate a rota to provide meals for those in the fellowship who have a temporary need.

Shirley Marwood, Christine Spencer and others continue to take Communion into the homes of those who unable to come to church on a Sunday. If you would like to receive home communion please contact me and I will arrange a visit from the team.

Thank you to all those who are involved in these ministries and to all those who look out for and care for others, it is much appreciated by myself and the rest of the leadership.

Gill Price

Roots Community Café

Roots continues to grow, I can't believe we have been running for nearly 8 years but God has continued to guide us on His path and we reach our community in many ways each week.

Roots is interested in God's people and although we don't see great big conversion stories each week we do see small changes in people's lives and witness the difference made to those who need something more than the world can offer them to get through their day.

We do make a difference and show Gods love to those who need it most, all the volunteers play their part and we give thanks to everyone who sacrifices their time and energy to do God's work through this ministry.

We have seen Esther and Conner join the Roots team and give thanks to God for continuing to provide the volunteers we need to carry on. Margaret has stepped back due to age but her parting message was of great encouragement to the whole team, she said she was so blessed by the time

she spent with us as a team and those who visit Roots and she would miss the love and family feel we welcomed her with.

Our food mixer has broken and Grace and Kate managed to secure a grant from One Stop to purchase a new one which we will be able to do very soon.

Again there has been an increase in donations to the Pay it Forward board including a couple of grants we were awarded thanks to Cathy.

Shopping bills for Roots have again increased and we will therefore be reviewing our prices at Easter 2025.

The plan for Roots during the building work is yet to be sorted, we may have to close for a period of time whilst the extension work is carried out, prayer for what that looks like and how we still reach those more vulnerable Roots users would be very much appreciated.

We have had a number of comments in the book and would encourage others within the church to take a look through and read for yourself the amazing work Roots is doing.

Emma Smith

Thrive@Roots

We have seen a few less attend since the high school changed their short day but we have still reached a good group of youngsters each week and feel Thrive is still an important branch of Roots to continue with.

We see a 12 year old attend each week with her young sister who she is responsible for until her mum finishes work. We are able to offer a safe and warm place for them both along with a snack and drink from the Pay it Forward board.

We continue to pray for the youth and thank God for the seeds we are able to plant in their hearts.

Emma Smith

Sunday Youth Church

Group: School years Reception-Year 6

Ramona, Ruth and Tracy continue to lead the middle group of children on a rota basis, supported by Daisy. The group extends over seven school year groups, so we have opportunity to be a continuous influence over several years of these children's lives. At the same time, that wide range presents the challenge of preparing lessons to appeal to children from ages 4 to 10. In the last year we have seen several of the children move up into the next group, which means we have lost familiar faces.

However, several new children have joined us this year, and seeing them begin to relax, getting to know us and starting to open up, reminds us that we do not know the

full story of what challenge any of our youngsters face in their lives. We lead the lessons trusting that God is working in them, and praying that He will use our



words and our time together to speak to the children in ways that speak to their everyday lives.

The curriculum we use is built of three separate but linked lessons around a specific theme. Modern life means that the children's attendance is unpredictable, and absence can affect the overall learning.

Leading the children's group is a blessing for the adults, but building a firm foundation of faith is a responsibility that we feel should be shared not just with parents, but with the church as a whole.

We therefore present four prayer requests to the church:

Pray for the children, recognising that growing up is hard anyway, and life today throws challenges at them which we will never understand.

Pray for all the youth leaders and parents, who share the responsibility of supporting the children in developing an individual relationship with God.

Pray that as God sends families to us, the right people will step forward to support all the youth work. Across all the youth groups we are too few, who have each been doing this for a very long time.
Pray for the wider church, keeping in your mind and heart that together we are creating the children's earliest experiences of life in Christian fellowship.

Tracy, Ramona and Ruth

T412

T412 has continued during the year under the leadership of Emma and Grace.

Friday Night Youth

Emma and I have been running Friday night youth group for around 11 years now! We have been supported by Jamie Burke for many of those years and in the last year we've also been joined by Jason O Dell.

It is a real blessing to look back and see how some of our young people have grown, not just physically, but also spiritually. It is often the case that you do not notice growth until you look back. Our numbers on these evenings fluctuates, as they have done throughout the years, where there were points in the past year when we were really low on numbers and to be honest we considered the viability of the group. However, it was on reflection when we looked at how God has worked through the young people in the past we felt it wasn't time to give up yet. We have since seen our numbers on the increase. Some weeks we can have up to 17 young people & just of late we have seen some new people join us.

But for us it is the growth in the young people's faith which has been so encouraging. The evenings consist of the young people having 45 minutes of free time where they can meet up, play various different games or just chill. Then we have tuck, where they take it in turns to serve one another. For the final half an hour we spend doing some teaching. Since the start of the year

we have changed things up whereby we now play a worship song via video, then they play a team game based on the theme for the evening, some Bible study and a memory verse for the session and we close in prayer, reflecting on what we have been studying. We have also enjoyed the Christmas party which the group ask for every year and so enjoy. God has been evident in the group as we see them sharing prayers, asking questions, encouraging each other and in the way they engage with the studies.

Going forward we would ask for your prayers in the continued growth both in numbers and the youngsters' faith, for energy to keep going, and for the wisdom to know when it's time for us to stop, if that is indeed what we should do, but more importantly that we disciple others to help take this group forward.

Finally thank you for allowing us the space and the support.

Blessings

Paul, on behalf of the Friday night youth team.

Secretary

It was my great privilege to take up the role of WBC Church Secretary in September 2024 and my first task is to extend gratitude to Cathy Finch for her outstanding work as co-opted Church Secretary during 2023-24. Cathy undertook this role for many months while continuing her responsibilities as Church Administrator and within the Finance Team and we are immensely grateful - thank you, Cathy!

Enabling Paul's sabbatical

Early in the year, we developed WBC's Sabbatical and Spiritual Refreshment Policy in preparation for Paul's sabbatical in 2025. We are delighted to be able to support Paul in this well-deserved time of refreshment and rest, renewal, study and 'pilgrimage'. The Leadership Team has prayerfully planned support for Emma and Paul's family, and pastoral support for the fellowship. We look forward to the insights Paul will bring back to us and see this as an opportunity for us to mature and grow as a church.

Leadership Team

At the AGM in March, we were pleased to welcome Keith Hilton and Mathew Mutokonya as Deacons on the Leadership Team, leading on 'Youthwork' and 'Buildings and Premises' respectively. We were delighted that Gill Price was re-elected for another term as Elder. This year Vic Wright has stepped down as Elder and Neil Starling as Deacon. Our thanks to them for their faithful service on the team and we're so glad they're still very much involved in WBC church life and ministry!

Our Leadership Team's aim is to keep the spiritual life of the church at the heart of all we do, keeping our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. At our Leadership Team Away Day in November - kindly facilitated by Vic Wright and hosted by Attleborough Baptist Church - we decided that we should increase time for reflection and prayer in our monthly meetings. We see prayer as vital in the upcoming year of change and challenge.

Building extension project

Throughout 2024, the Building Project Steering Group worked hard to get us ready for the next project phase. David Frith undertook extensive preparatory work for building to be able to commence in 2025, such as finalising architect's plans, checking out the building foundations. Kate Kinsey and Grace Burke focused tirelessly on external fundraising, bringing us close to our £520K target. Paul Smith, Cathy Finch, and Keith Hilton have also been major contributors to the group. We can only marvel at the specialist skills, experience and dedication that God has provided in these fellow Christians: 'God is not unjust; He will not forget their work and the love they have shown Him as they had helped His people and continue to help them.' (Hebrews 6:10)

Internal fundraising for our vision continued to be a great team effort, with some fabulous fundraising events including concerts with St Mary's Singers Hemsby and Happy Day Gospel Choir, Craft and Crumpets, Bible Readathon, London Marathon, Quiz Night, Afternoon Tea, Pilgrim's Progress film showing. Thank you to those who organised and supported these and many more individual acts of fundraising and giving. WBC also hosted joyous celebrations for our A Rocha Silver Eco Award and a Volunteers Celebration.

Reaching out...

Throughout the year, WBC premises welcomed various groups and activities such as Rosedale's bereavement courses, Trussell Trust Foodbank, Shelter advice sessions, Menscraft, Kett's Books Author event, Book Club, School Uniform Bank. And of course Roots Community Café, served thousands of people during the year, and Home from Home welcomes increasing numbers, and both are meeting people's needs on many levels.

These outward-facing activities are set to expand further with the new building extension, allowing us to reach out to those who do not yet know the Lord Jesus and who need a helping hand from Him through us. We aim to share our building and provide a safe and comfortable space for other helping organisations. It will also be a base from which to launch witness outreach initiatives beyond our walls, wherever God leads us.

Looking ahead with confidence in our God...

The building extension work will significantly impact our fellowship in the coming year, which will be exciting and no doubt challenging too! As Paul reminds us, the building extension is a means to achieve the WBC vision rather than an end itself. We believe the Lord is equipping us to 'fish for people' (Matthew 4:19) and that 2024 has been a year of significant preparation: not just in terms of building and finance, but also us as a fellowship. Through united working and praying together, our hearts are being drawn into ever closer fellowship with God and with one another as 'stand firm in one Spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel'. (Philippians 1:27b)

Vera Cooke

Church Administrator

During 2024 I have done much the same as in previous years. I have been present in the Church Office most Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. The Office is now rearranged following the break-in and the new layout works well. The fire alarm is regularly tested and tests recorded. I have tried to make sure other routine items are covered and actions recorded.

Each week I prepare the Notice Sheet giving details of upcoming events and details of the Sunday morning service. If you have an item you wish to be put in the notice sheet please let me know.

One of the tasks that I undertake is the preparation of rotas for refreshments and with Robbie the welcome team. Thankyou to all who help with these tasks - we always need more help here, particularly with serving of refreshment after the service. If we don't get enough volunteers to serve on this rota we may have to stop serving tea/coffee after the morning service.



Bi-monthly I prepare the Rooted Life magazine. I am always looking for items to include so please continue to supply me with book reviews, details of things you have been involved in, experiences you have had etc. etc.

I have tried to keep the website up to date with the activities that are happening at WBC, please let me know if you notice something is out of date and I will endeavour to swiftly put it right.

Recently I have encountered major difficulties with the IT in the office, so please bare with me if I have missed an email or not responded to you. Hopefully over the next few months these problems will be resolved!!

Cathy Finch

Safeguarding

Myself and Ramona continue to act as the designated church safeguarding officers, since Vic Wright stepped down from the leadership team Jason O'Dell has taken on the role of safeguarding trustee.

Please remember safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole church, if you have any concerns please speak to myself or Ramona.

We held both level 2 and 3 safeguarding training courses at WBC in November 24 and had 19 delegates from church attend.

We thank those who gave up their Saturday to attend this vital training, this shows that the church members are aware of the importance of safeguarding and the need to do it to make sure we can continue to offer the ministries such as Youth work, Home from Home, Roots and all the other many things we do to show God's love to others.

Emma Smith

Treasurer

During 2024 we have once again see God at work with out finances. The budget agreed at our January 2024 church meeting was challenging with a big increase in giving needed to meet our budgeted expenditure. Thankyou for your sacrificial giving to the General Fund and indeed to the Building Fund. We have received grants from South Norfolk DC and NCF Surviving Winter Fund, this has helped us to meet our electricity bills. We have experienced difficulty in getting our account with our electricity provider clear but have managed to meet the bills that we have been presented with.



During 2024 we have continued to tithe all that has been given by the fellowship. These tithes have been given to BMS, Falconer Trust and GEM in support of Rachel Spencer and the tithe on the Building Fund giving to

There have been a number of fund raising events in support of our Building Fund. These have helped us to share in social events as well as raise money and spend time with the local community.

We have increased our Reserve Fund by £100 a month, thus the reserve over the year has increased by £1,200. This keeps our reserve in line with our policy to hold in hand sufficient to cover three months salaries and utility costs.

We have reported monthly to the Leadership Team so that they can monitor spending and income. Our books this year are being audited by a local

accountant as we prepare for more monies passing through our accounts during 2025. The full audited financial report is available to anyone who wishes to have a read and this report will be presented to the Charity Commission.

Mary Wright and Cathy Finch - Finance Team

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.12.2024

	As at 31.12.2024	As at 31.12.2023
Fixed Assets	0	0
Current Assets:-		
Cash in Hand - Church	105.00	95.00
Cash in Hand-Roots CC	200.00	150.00
Church Bank A/c	25,984.70	12,527.14
Church Savings A/cs	55,622.21	23,446.66
Roots Bank A/c	13,598.95	14,764.90
TOTAL	95,510.86	50,983.70
Represented by:-		
Unrestricted - General Fund	967.01	4,610.65
Designated -		
Fellowship Fund	124.59	124.59
Kitchen Fund	150.00	356.92
Reserve Fund	13,700.00	12,500.00
Roots C.C.	13,798.95	14,914.90
Electricity Reserve	2,559.82	0
Maintenance Reserve	3,000.00	0
Restricted -		
Eco Church	67.20	516.85
Alpha	245.00	245.00
Building Fund	59,739.64	17,293.57
Home from Home	1,158.65	421.22
TOTAL	95,510.86	50,983.70

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted And Designated funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	2023 Total Funds
INCOME:-				
Donations	65,119.64	23,317.87	88,437.51	58,085.38
Income from Charitable Activities	30,045.20	88.00	30,133.20	25,709.56
Other income	34,487.31	47,055.45	81,542.76	48,760.57
TOTAL INCOME	129,652.15	70,461.32	200,113.47	132,555.51
EXPENDITURE:-				
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	32,215.30	521.99	32,737.29	29,760.22
Other Expenditure	96,643.54	26,205.48	122,849.02	103,633.87
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	128,858.84	26,727.47	155,586.31	133,394.09
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE Before transfers	793.31	43,733.85	44,527.16	(838.58)
TRANSFERS:-				
Gross transfers between funds - in	10,743.19	1,250.00	11,993.19	11,483.52
Gross transfers between funds - out	(9,743.19)	(2,250.00)	(11,993.19)	(11,483.52)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	1,793.31	42,733.85	44,527.16	(838.58)
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	32,507.06	18,476.64	50,983.70	51,822.28
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	34,300.37	61,210.49	95,510.86	50,983.70

Music in Worship

The music team currently consists of Neil, Owen, Katie, Lara and Liz. We are very pleased to welcome Liz as our newest member, playing bass and violin. We are also grateful for the work of the Tech Team on the sound desk, without whom we would not be able to function!

At the end of 2024 Mary and Vic stood down from the worship team, after many years of faithful and dedicated service. We are deeply indebted to them both for all they have contributed to the worship ministry of the church, including the hard work behind the scenes as well as on Sunday mornings.

Over the last few months we have been sharing out the responsibility of choosing songs for Sunday worship. Our hope is that we are able to choose music which facilitates an awareness of God's presence, and enables each person to express their heartfelt worship. This is always challenging, as different people have different musical preferences, and different ways of expressing their worship - there is no 'one size fits all'! We do hope, however, that everyone is able to experience God in whatever is offered on a Sunday morning.

Neil Starling

Buildings, Garden and Maintenance

Church Building

In view of the effort being put into the planning of the proposed extension, much of the maintenance on the church building during 2024 has been very much on a "make do and mend" basis during the past 12 months.

There are several major schemes currently under consideration, including solar panels, LED lighting, heating and the removal and transfer of one of the two meters we currently have. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the fabric of the church building which will require some redecoration to be carried out.

The project to install the LED lighting and the removal of one of the electricity meters will now be carried out during the Easter break. This has been possible by anonymous donation from a church member specifically earmarked for this work.

Two projects are currently in progress. There has been a problem with mould in the tower at the front of the church building, this is partly caused by the lack of air flow.

The church meeting in November approved the that remedial work, including redecoration be carried out at a cost of £4,400, to deal with the mould problem. This work will be carried out during the first quarter of 2025.

The second project is the replacing of the barge boards and cap at the end of old school room. Penny and John Seal have very kindly offered undertake this work. Timber has been purchased and is being prepared for installation.

As with all old buildings constant maintenance is required, the floor in the old school room and the roof both the school room and over the toilet/kitchen/office areas will need our attention soon. Work is on-going to ascertain the extent, cost and the scheduling of this work.

Grants are available for us to apply for some of the work that is required.

Minor repairs carried out in 2024

1. Repair of pew seating at rear of church.
2. Replacing three light fittings in school room.
3. Replacing two light fittings in toilets.
4. Replace toilet seat in lady's toilet.
5. Beading around stage re-fixed and made safe

Ongoing Projects in 2025

1. Decoration of main church doors.
2. Decoration of lobby areas.
3. Work in preparation for the anticipated commencement of the building work on the extension.

It is planned to invite church members to participate in working parties to undertake this work

Garden

Regular hedge trimming and grass cutting during the spring and summer along with autumn scarifying and aeration has been carried out and improvement in the general condition of the grassed area is there to be seen.

Projects undertaken in 2024

1. Purchase and erection of shed to store the outdoor toys, this was funded by the Church ECO Group.
2. Paved area laid to accommodate circular table.
3. Wildflower area and bird feeding station Installed.

Future Projects

1. Provision of new seating area.
2. Removal of *Colocasia esculenta* (Elephants Ear) to create a new storage area for waste bins.
3. Replace table benches

Manse

Work has continued in replacing windows and doors at the manse, this will continue during 2025.

Keith Hilton

Outreach and Mission

Many of our Mission and Outreach activities and connections are covered in other reports, but here are others that are not:

Rachel Spencer

Rachel has been working in Paris with GEM (Greater Europe Mission) seeking to bring the gospel to a nation which is deeply secular, though with a significant Muslim population in the region where she is living. However, she has made the decision to move back to the UK to develop her ministry. She writes:

“Things will be changing for me in the Spring of 2025. After close to 8 years in France I will be returning to the UK for an extended period of time. Although I plan to return to France in the future, at the moment I’m not sure when that will be. I will be based in East London, and will continue to work for Greater Europe Mission in partnership with Urban Expression, an organisation that is called to “mission in the margins”, reaching people in urban communities who face economic, social, and personal challenges.

I’ve decided to make this move for several reasons. One is that it will be good to be closer to my parents as they deal with various health issues. I’m also feeling the need for a break from ministry in France especially after the last couple of years which have not been easy. I will be joining a strong and supportive Christian community in London, and can take time to work out what I need for an eventual return to France. And finally I’m excited to learn from Urban Expression and from the leaders of the East London project, as they have built something that I would love to recreate in France one day (I will write again to tell you more about the actual project in the new year).

I will continue with my PhD, and am looking forward to being able to plug in to the various missiology networks in the UK, which are far more extensive than they are in France. I will make fairly regular trips over to Paris for research, and to keep up the relationships that I have here.

As I will continue to be employed by Greater Europe Mission in London, I will continue to need the financial support that makes it possible for me to do this work. If you support me already I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider continuing to do so. As ever, I’m very grateful for all your support, prayers, and interest in my work.”

At WBC we support Rachel’s work through our church tithes as well as our prayers.

Alan and Megan Barker

Alan and Megan Barker are currently based in Nepal working under the umbrella of BMS. Megan works as an occupational therapist, and Alan works in project management.

In recent months Megan has been involved in several ‘wheelchair distribution camps’, meeting the needs of disabled folk in different parts of Nepal. Reflecting on the wheelchair distribution camp in Chaurjahari, a side benefit for Megan was being in the hospital staff accommodation and getting to know some of the team there and being encouraged by their work and enthusiasm.

It was quite tiring for her getting everything ready as, although the wheelchairs had arrived, they were not fully unpacked and ready to go, but the local team rallied round to help. Part of the work has been in areas devastated by recent earthquakes, where there is great need.

Over Christmas Alan and Megan were able to spend time with family, who all came to visit them in Nepal.

In addition to their work in Nepal, Alan and Megan also have a wider role with BMS and that side of things has been quite slow until recently but has become busier in the last few months. Alan has run online seminars with a BMS partner in Uganda. They have since run an in-person workshop with another partner in Nepal, where they looked at organisational planning and reporting. More online sessions are planned, this time with a BMS partner organisation in Mozambique. At the end of February they are heading off to Bangladesh and India to visit BMS partners there and to learn about what they are doing and to share some ideas on strategy, planning, leadership and development. It is hoped that all of the workshops will open the way for them to be more actively training and supporting at least some of these partners in their important work.

At WBC we support Alan and Megan's work through our church tithes as well as our prayers.

Neil Starling

The Falconer Trust

The Falconer Home in Kabulamema, Zambia currently provides a home for around sixty children of all ages from 2 years to mid-teens.

In June 2024 Neil visited the Home, along with one of the trustees, Dennis Webb. These visits are important, because it enables the Trust to see first hand the needs of the Home, and discuss with Simon and other staff important matters regarding the future. It is also a great way to encourage, and to meet the children who are at the heart of the work.

During last year's visit we discussed the need for an irrigation system at the Home's farm. This is because of the severe drought which has blighted much of southern Africa in recent times, causing crops to fail, and bringing about food insecurity. Since returning, we have been greatly blessed to receive a

large amount of funding for the project, and installation of equipment is now underway. A 10-minute video about the project can be viewed on YouTube from this link:

https://youtu.be/jemNz5-f_7c

Neil and Dennis will visit the Home again in May/June, and are looking forward to seeing first-hand the progress made at the farm, as well as other work going on, including the building of a girls' dormitory and an ablution block.

The Trust is very grateful for the financial support given by WBC through its tithes.

Neil Starling

Homegroups at WBC

Having grown our homegroup structure, all six homegroups have continued to be a great blessing to all 50+ people in them in 2024. The newer groups are now established and homegroup leaders meet once a term for mutual encouragement and support. Those of us who co-ordinate homegroups learn a lot from their feedback, to help us offer as best support as possible.

Our pastor Paul Smith updates leaders on the church's vision and we see homegroups as key in offering pastoral care and 'connectedness' during the upcoming year of change 2025. Even those who are unable to attend either homegroup or church very often are kept in touch, visited and supported with friendship, love and sometimes by practical help. Our Bible study theme for spring 2025 is 'I will build my church' to remind us all that the church is the people, not the building!

WBC homegroups are a network of loving, genuine relationships which support pastoral care and discipleship at WBC. We are hugely grateful to all our homegroup leaders for their commitment and their key role in making this happen.

Vera Cooke and Gill Price

ECO Church

We have now had 3 years of affiliation with the A Rocha charity and with Eco Church. This affiliation goes hand in hand with WBC's vision and mission.

The vision of Eco Church is as follows: 'for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully' (taken from Eco Church website).

At Wymondham Baptist Church, the church vision is centred on elevating and worshipping God in all that we do, engaging with and serving our wider community and looking after our environment and buildings.

Eco church encourages us to express our care for God's creation in the following areas:

- in our worship and teaching
- in looking after our buildings and land
- in engaging with our local community and in global campaigns
- in the personal lifestyles of our congregation

So, how did we honour God through our Eco Church projects in 2024?

We were delighted to be awarded a Silver Eco Church Award at the beginning of 2025 which is a reflection of the increased awareness and emphasis on creation care in which we are all engaged, both as a church and as individuals.

Thank you everyone who has made this possible



Worship and Teaching

- The year started and finished with a worship walk, the first on January 1st and the second on December 29th. Both were short walks around the town and Abbey and gave us all a time to reflect on the glory of God's creationeven in the depths of winter



- Over the Easter weekend, we invited members of the fellowship to create an Easter garden which were displayed in the church from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday. Each garden was so different and each one focussed on a different aspect of the events of Easter weekend. We were amazed by the time, thought and creativity that were put into every garden...they were absolutely beautiful and really enhanced our Easter worship and reflections



- The weekly Power Hour prayer group now has regular 'eco' spots to pray for climate and creation issues both at a local and global level

Buildings and Land

- Inside the building we are limited in what we can achieve, given the age of the building but as a church, we are doing what we can and we are hopeful that our new building project will enable us to lower our energy use further through greener sources

- We have moved towards more eco friendly cleaning products and toilet paper
- In the garden, the raised bed was planted with strawberries this year for everyone to enjoy, interspersed with herbs
- In one area of the garden, a new wildflower area was created to attract more bees and insects.



- New hanging birdfeeders were put up
- New signs were put up on both gates to the garden to invite local residents to come in and enjoy the peace of our garden



- We are continuing to replace some of our existing shrubs with a wider variety of pollinator friendly plants
- We have a Garden Log located in the church porch and would encourage anyone to write in it anything that they see or hear in the garden

Engaging with the local community and global campaigns

- In April, we were invited to take part in the Wymondham Arts Festival and to organise an 'eco' event. The seed swap stall and craft activities based around nature (welly planting, pebble painting, flower art, and making butterfly feeders and bug hotels) were popular and well attended. We also invited several local groups to share and update us on the work that they are doing to look after our environment in and around Wymondham. Thank you to Greening Wymondham, Sustainable Wymondham, Wymondham Nature Group, Hedgehog Havens, Toadwatch and Val Keel from Wreningham for making such a valuable contribution to our event



In addition, we used the event to celebrate achieving our Silver Eco Church award with a large display in church which showed how we are trying to look after God's world in all areas of our lives

For this event, Vera produced a fantastic leaflet for us to share

with others about Eco Church and why we are so passionate about caring for our planet.

This leaflet will be used at all Eco Church events at WBC as a way of sharing God's message of love to each one of us



- Nicki Waterworth has attended several EBA/CBA BUEN Zoom meetings (Eastern Baptist Association/Central Baptist Association Baptist Union Environmental Network). This is an opportunity to hear what is going on in the wider Baptist church, to pray and to encourage each other on our eco journeys.



Lifestyle

- We still have our recycling point in the corridor. Items that can be collected vary but the latest information is on the board. The latest addition to the scheme is a box for recycling ink cartridges which is situated in church
- As in previous years, we displayed our Easter and Christmas cards on a communal board which was very well used. Not only does this cut down on the number of cards bought and sent, but it also allows us all to read the heartfelt messages from the senders

- This year, we have started a Uniform Swap scheme. We have a supply of good quality, used uniform from several of the town's schools. Anyone who needs to can come and take items that they need at no cost during Roots hours. They do not even need to bring anything to swap!
- We continue to include useful eco tips, suggestions and articles in Rooted Life and are always on the lookout for any other ideas for inclusion
- We are attempting to save as much of our used coffee grounds as possible to be composted either in the church garden or elsewhere



Finances

We started 2024 with a balance of £516.85 and income during 2024 was as follows:

£45.00 - New Years Day Walk and lunch
£43.00- Arts Festival Silver Award celebration

Expenditure in 2024:

£26.13 -New Years Day lunch
£95.00 - ECO Silver plaque
£24.30 - Notice board
£12.00 - Uniform storage boxes
£53.20 - Bird table and food
£244.99 - Shed
£66.37 - Sand and plywood
£15.66 - Bird food

Balance at the end of 2024: £67.20

Plans for 2025

- A Rocha has recently updated its Eco church survey. The questions and categories are now more rigorous to reflect the worsening environmental situation. The Eco team at WBC is currently working through the new survey to see what suggestions and ideas we can take forward
- **WBC Environmental Lifestyle Survey.** We are also currently working on producing an annual survey that will help us to understand how we are doing as a church and how we could do more in our 'creation care'. We are hoping that this survey will be completed both by regular worshippers and by organisations using the church
- **23rd March:** This Sunday will be an all-age service with an environmental theme to it. Hannah Gray will be our visiting speaker. She belongs to a small church in North Norfolk, is a volunteer speaker for A Rocha and is our EBA co-ordinator for the BUEN Zoom meetings
- **12th April:** We will be hosting a Seed Swap and Bring and Buy Plant Sale at WBC from 10.00am - 12.00pm



- **7th - 14th June:** participation in the annual Great Big Green Week

- Autumn: A worship walk
- November: WBC Eco Church calendar for 2026

And finally!

As a fellowship, we are hugely supportive and encouraging of each other and once again, we would like to thank everyone who has supported the Eco Church activities and events over this year, both with their time, skills, and finances. It is very much appreciated.

The team meets about every 6 weeks, and we would be delighted to see new faces or to hear from anyone who has ideas for future projects.

Nicki Waterworth on behalf of the Eco Church Team

Café Church

The first Café Church service came to WBC in 2019, not long after we opened Roots Community Café. It is something that God very clearly told me we should deliver, and I can't quite believe we are still here over 5 years later.

Café Church is designed to 'bridge the gap' between attending the café and attending our usual Sunday morning services. It offers something that is familiar and possibly less intimidating to those who don't usually come to church. Using the story and themes of a film we deliver a godly message in an often-creative way. The team, which also includes Vic W, Owen and Matthew are very proud to have delivered yet another successful year. In 2024 we have taken you through the stories of Charlie and the chocolate factory, The Lion King, The Plank and Harry Potter.

We are a team of mainly novices, who at times get very scared and wonder why we have volunteered to stand up the front and speak. We fully appreciate the opportunity we are given and the trust that the church members have invested in us to lead the service in this way. Attendance numbers are in the region of 75-85, with a few people continuing to only attend church because it is Café Church week.

Café Church sessions require hours of planning and a lot of volunteers to make them possible. We thank all those who have helped us over the year, with the food prep, with the slides and sound, setting up tables and chairs, welcoming, children's craft and the clearing away. But most of all we thank you for supporting us in prayer. You are great cheer leaders, often encouraging us to continue what has become a successful and established part of the WBC service calendar.

Looking ahead to 2025 we are very pleased to have Jan H join the team. I first saw her in action during the summer programme of services and I was so entertained and wowed by her skills, that I knew she would be perfect for Café Church. I thank her greatly for saying yes!

Grace Burke and the Café Church team

Home from Home

At the beginning of 2024 we were opening our doors as a Warm Space on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. The numbers coming along at this time were very often quite few, however we continued to offer a warm welcome to whoever came along. The afternoon was spent playing games, doing jigsaw puzzles, drinking tea and coffee and generally chatting. We stopped meeting from Easter 2024. In the summer we asked for more help and I am so pleased to report that we gained some additional helpers - Kate, Rose, Val



and Penny are my regular helpers, and so we opened in October 2024 meeting every Thursday afternoon as we felt that there had been some confusion as to which Thursdays we were meeting earlier in the year. Since this time we have welcomed new people most weeks and now

each Thursday afternoon the church lounge is busy with different people joining us - some from the church and some from outside the church. We regularly have visitors brought by JCS (Norfolk) Ltd who offer a caring service to those in our community suffering from dementia. As well as a warm space Home from Home offers somewhere for folk to spend





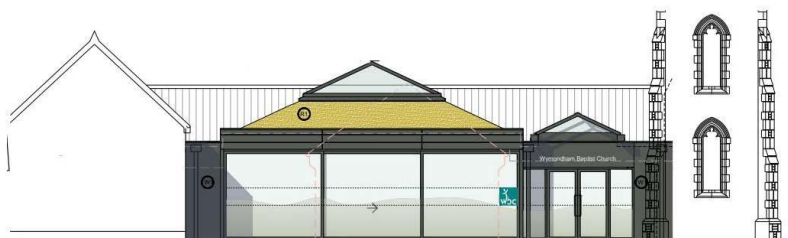
time together, reducing their loneliness. Before each session we spend a short time in prayer committing our afternoon to God as we seek to offer friendship and God's love to those who come in. We offer tea and coffee, cake, toast, soup and other nibbles as well as a listening ear, things to do and friendly conversation. We will continue to offer this warm space until Easter and are thinking about whether we can offer

something else during the summer months and what we should offer next Autumn, Winter and Spring when hopefully the building work will be going on. Please pray that those who come along will be aware of God's love that is available to everyone.

Cathy Finch on behalf of the Home from Home team

Building Project Team Extension

Give thanks for the very significant progress made in 2024. We raised the necessary finance to carry out the detail design work and obtained a grant to help towards the costs.



So we started this work in April 2024 with the architect and structural engineer putting flesh on the bones of the planning permission. This was supported by trial pits dug in the car park to understand the quality of the foundations of the existing buildings and the nature of the underlying ground conditions. Input from an energy consultant was also received to clarify the heating proposed for the extension and to advise on the possibility of solar panels. The detailed design was essentially completed in November, with acceptance of

our proposals for “building regulations plan approval” (a bit of a mouthful but basically agreement on how we demonstrate we comply with the relevant regulations during construction).

The detail design work then feeds in to the tender documents to be supplied to prospective builders at the end of January 2025. The detail work has come in under budget and we have also received over £18,000 from the Pride in Place grant received from South Norfolk Council towards this work. We give thanks for the work of the professionals and the grant provider.

That we are now in a position to go out to tender is a tribute to the fund raising of the church, both internally and externally. The amount raised or promised towards the total budget project cost of £520,000 stands at £429,000 at the year end, which is amazing. We do still have a “funding gap” of £91,000 we need to close before we can proceed to construction. Thank God for his provision so far and pray that we will find the remaining funds needs to enable a start on site in the Summer of 2025.

By the time you read this report we would hope to know the outcome of the tender process, and God willing with the funding too, which would then see us start on the actual extension in the Summer of 2025.

A more detailed report is available from the Church Office for those who would like to read it

David Frith

WBC Building Project External Fund-Raising Steering Group (Creating a place for Everyone)

During 2024, the group has meet monthly, with the objective of applying for grants to raise funds for the building extension.

By December 2024, the external funding steering group has:

- Reviewed in excess of 120 potential funders - NB we need to meet the criteria for a capital project, be community focussed, supporting vulnerable people, amongst many other conditions.
- Applied to over 30 grant awarding bodies.
- Received awards from nine grant awarding bodies and had grants refused by five.
- Received £350,138 in grant awards (see the summary below).
- Secured funding to support Phase 2 - feasibility study of the building project.
- Revised the project programme (timeline) for the building of the extension which we hope will commence in summer of 2025 - subject to all the funding being secured.
- Described the impact of the extension over the coming years (Outcomes). This will enable the church to track the changes over time.

A summary of the Grants received is outlined below:

South Norfolk Councils Pride in Place (Phase 2 feasibility study funding)	£18,138
Congregational & General Charitable Trust	£20,000
Community Action Fund	£15,000
Paul Bassham Charitable Trust	£2,000
Geoffrey Watling	£5,000
The Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust	£5,000
Laing Family Trust	£5,000
Norwood and Newton Settlement	£30,000
Greater Norwich Growth Board Infrastructure Fund	£250,000
Grants Total	£ 350,138

Members of the steering group have presented to the Leadership team throughout 2024 and also at the church membership meetings. NB Approval was sought and given to proceed approaching grant award bodies in the spring of 2024.

Next steps

- Await the outcome of the remaining applications - approximately twelve.

- Continue to support other external funding grant applications to further the work of the Vision for WBC.

I give thanks for the work of others, notably Ray, Grace, David, Cathy, Keith, Paul and the Leadership Team for the help, support and prayers for the group. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

Kate Kinsey

Windmill House

The team from WBC made 6 visits to Windmill House during 2024 to lead a worship service for the residents and any staff or visitors who were in the lounge. As always we were made very welcome and usually had a room full of people waiting for us.

Many of the residents love to sing familiar old hymns with us, others are living with quite advanced dementia and may have difficulty communicating but hymns and Bible stories they knew when young still bring back memories.

Highlights of the year were just after Easter when we took some of the Easter Gardens with us to show the residents, Harvest with a little display of produce, and the Carol Service when I took a pop-up Nativity scene based on paintings by Old Masters.



Vic's drawings on the hymn sheets and shown on the television screen together with a Bible and a cross helped to create some visual signs that we were having a church service. Sadly we learned that Fran Annis who was the Wellbeing Lead for many years and was our main contact at Windmill House, left

just before Christmas.

Her role has been taken on by Eva who had been working alongside Fran and had already been looking after us on some of our visits.



Thank you for supporting this ministry in your prayers and please pray that we continue to bring hope and encouragement to those who share in the services.

Jan Hodges

GALLERY FROM 2024



ECO Event



Church BBQ



Dedication



Volunteer Event



Visit from St, Mary's Singers