



EMPOWER (BRAINTREE DISTRICT)

Trustees report and accounts
For the year ended 31st March 2025

Registered charity number 1073418

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EMPOWER (Braintree District)

Report of the trustees for the year ended 31st March 2025

The Trustees present their annual report for the year ended 31st March 2025.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act and the statement of recommended practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

Structure Governance and Management

The Charity was registered in January 1999. The Charity was renamed EMPOWER (Braintree District) during the year to more appropriately define its aims in supporting both students and schools. Under the constitution the power to appoint Trustees, of which there shall be at least three, is vested in the existing Trustees.

The trustees who served during the year were:

David Bland

Barry Cheesman

Denise Cheesman

Andrew Knight

Cathy Mann

Irene Webber

Summary of Objectives

The objects of the Trust are:

- a) to advance the Christian faith particularly amongst children and young people in the schools, colleges and other educational establishments in Braintree and the surrounding area.
- b) to advance education in the said locality.

Public benefit

The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit general guidance issued by the Charity Commission. In this respect, we are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. Furthermore, we believe that the range of services delivered demonstrate the clear and obvious public benefit of our activities.

Activities

Over the past twelve months, Empower has continued to work in the primary and secondary schools around the Braintree and Halstead areas. The work consisted of:

Assemblies

Over the year, the Empower team presented to 40+ schools (roughly 7,500 children), typically every six weeks. Topics covered a wide range of issues, presenting Christian values at their core in a relevant educational style.

Lessons

Mostly taking the form of interview-style lessons, our secondary schools team worked closely with RE Departments to aid GCSE students through Years 10 and 11, along with helping to cover modules on Christianity for younger years. Lessons of a similar delivery were presented to the Braintree area primary schools, with both primary and secondary school team members collaborating on topics related to Creation and Science. Such is the popularity of Empower's delivery of lessons, this opened up opportunities for a number of projects which are outlined in this report.

Lunch Clubs

These continue to be popular in a number of primary schools, so much that registers and a queuing system have been implemented in some cases. The weekly secondary school club at Notley High continues to see a regular weekly attendance of around 20 students spanning all year groups. A further weekly lunch club was established at Tabor Academy which is proving to be popular with a number of students from different year groups. The content of the groups varies between schools, some having a more laid-back content while others have specific Christianity-focused activities. In all of them, the team embraces the opportunity to engage in conversation with students who attend, and teachers who may be present.

Mentoring

Empower's demand for mentoring in secondary schools has increased year on year due to the raised awareness of mental and emotional distress being experienced by many young people. For this past year, the charity has mentored around 200 young people across five secondary schools, ranging from regular weekly sessions for those battling ongoing issues (eg trauma at home, behavioural difficulties, poor mental health) to times spent with those in a brief season of difficulty (eg exam worries, transition to a new school). We were most grateful to receive some new funding for our work in Halstead which enabled us to employ an additional part time mentor to work specifically in that area. We have also extended our mentoring offer to include group bike maintenance sessions for secondary school boys.. This was well received by the participating school which paved the way for a second visit later in the year. As a result, we will be offering it to additional schools in the coming year.

Project: A-Cross The World

Returning for its fifteenth year, A-Cross The World (ATW) was presented in its traditional face-to-face format to all the local primary schools in the Halstead area and North Braintree. ATW was a well-organised exploration of different representations of the cross by Christian communities around the world. Schools were pleased to see the lessons achieve many objectives laid out by the Department for Education and are keen to host this project again in the future.

Project: Anam Cara

We delivered our Anam Cara reflection room project into a local Halstead Area secondary school during Summer 2024. Using a classroom space for an entire week, Anam Cara had a number of 'stations' that students could visit during their planned lesson, all intended to evoke personal reflection. As has been the case in previous schools, the project proved to be hugely successful for the week and has prompted interest from other schools who hope to host the project in the coming year.

Project: GSUS Live

After a three-year wait, Empower was privileged to host the GSUS Live project in three local secondary schools. The interactive classroom sessions took students on a tour of three significant life issues, offering advice to computer characters to help prompt a positive outcome. Empower has hosted the project on a number of occasions and hopes to be able to have a return visit from GSUS Live in a few years.

Other Projects

Our primary schools team delivered an effective series of modules on Creation during the Spring Term in addition to expanding on other lessons topics throughout the year.

Staffing

The appointment of our new Halstead focussed secondary schools mentor in September 2024 substantially increased our mentoring capacity in the area. We are delighted to say that we have just been advised that additional funding has secured their employment for another 12 months.

Trustees

We are delighted that Cathy Mann agreed to rejoin the Board of Trustees during the year. As a retired headteacher, she brings very valuable experience to the Board and additional support to primary schools workers in particular.

Funders

The Trustees are so grateful to all those individuals and groups that have made this important work possible. Whilst every supporter is vital to our work, we acknowledge specifically the support of:

The Saffron Community fund, via The Essex Community Foundation

The Little Braxted Community and Educational Trust, via The Essex Community Foundation

The Hinckford Deanery

The Bishop Radford Trust

The Dulverton Trust, via The Essex Community Foundation

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to major risks. The reserves of the Trust are maintained at a level which will support the continuance of the activities for a minimum of three months.

We consider this report to be an accurate and fair account of the Charity's activities during the 2024/25 financial year.

On behalf of the Trustees,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Barry Cheesman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barry Cheesman

Independent examiner's report on the accounts to the trustees of EMPOWER (Braintree District) on accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

N K Smith FCA

19 Highbury Way, Great Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 0HE

11 July 2025

EMPOWER (Braintree District)

(charity no 1073418)

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

31 MARCH 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Current assets		
Bank accounts	<u>50,140</u>	<u>26,825</u>
Unrestricted funds		
Brought forward	26,825	38,274
Net results	<u>23,315</u>	<u>-11,449</u>
Carried forward	<u>50,140</u>	<u>26,825</u>

Signed by one trustee on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature: *A. M. Webber*

Print name: IRENE M. WEBBER

Date of approval: *14th July 2025*

EMPOWER (Braintree District)

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Income		
Donations		
Gift aided	20,416	14,520
Churches	15,091	15,437
Business	4,560	4,560
Schools	9,202	650
Personal	4,842	6,278
	<u>54,111</u>	<u>41,445</u>
Other		
Grants received	21,500	3,500
Miscellaneous	5,202	3,148
Tax refund	5,019	3,764
Interest	798	388
	<u>86,630</u>	<u>52,245</u>
Expenditure		
Salaries	54,534	56,990
Schools work	2,013	1,935
Office expenses	1,739	1,338
Sundry expenses	1,577	59
Accountancy	490	460
Employees' expenses	1,583	1,487
Pension cost	1,379	1,425
	<u>63,315</u>	<u>63,694</u>
Net results	<u><u>23,315</u></u>	<u><u>-11,449</u></u>

Note

Grants received consist of the following:

Great Yeldham PCC	15,500	0
Essex Community Foundation	6,000	0
The John James Charity	0	2,000
Rank Foundation	0	1,500
	<u>21,500</u>	<u>3,500</u>