



River Church Sutton

Trustees' Annual Report

1 January 2024 to 31st December 2024

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Independent Examiner's Report

Charity Contact information

River Church Sutton

Charity Registration Number: 1104168

Principal office

River Church Sutton
Highfield Hall
320 Carshalton Road
Sutton
SM5 3QB

Trustees

Steve Musters
Roz Ullman
Simon Waters
Ed Rodriguez

Independent Examiner

David Pestell ACA
Peach Accounting

Bankers

Santander Business Banking Centre,
287-301 St. Vincent Street,
Glasgow
G2 5NT

Objectives of the charity

- i) To advance the Christian faith and express God's love through practical support and compassion for those in physical, mental and spiritual hardship, without discrimination or passing judgment.
- ii) To promote such charitable purposes as which benefit the local community and those overseas, bringing hope through the message of Jesus Christ.

Achievements and performance

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

Review of activities

2024 marked the church's 20th anniversary. A special celebration was held in February, welcoming back founding members and leaders. It was an encouragement to reflect on how the church has grown in size and influence in the local community.

Worship and Discipleship

- **Sunday Services** remained the main expression of church life, continuing to grow in size and diversity. Teaching focused on the names of God, identity in Christ, and a series on 1 Peter, emphasising unshakable hope in uncertain times.
- A **Weekend Away** at Otford Manor was a highlight of the year, with focused teaching, worship, and fellowship. People came to faith, were baptised, and grew spiritually.
- **Kids' Church** expanded, requiring more trained volunteers and space for multiple groups.
- **Youth Work** grew significantly, with highlights including the *NewDay* summer camp, where some young people made faith commitments. Several were baptised at the church weekend away.
- **Midweek Groups** met both in person and online, providing Bible study, prayer, and activity-based fellowship.
- **Prayer** remained central, beginning with a week of prayer focused on justice and mercy, with ongoing weekly and monthly gatherings.
- Two **Alpha Courses** ran during the year, providing a safe environment for people exploring the Christian faith.

Mission and Community Engagement

- Internationally, the church continued to support **IGC Church (Philippines)**, began financial and prayer support for **Raizes Church (Brazil)**, and developed links with churches in **Sri Lanka** and **Uganda**. Support for **Newfrontiers** also continued, particularly in the areas of church planting and leadership development.
- **Highfield Hall** remained a vital community hub, hosting toddler groups, dance classes, exercise classes, creative workshops, and children's parties. The free badminton club encouraged fitness and friendship, while hall hire provided a valuable revenue stream.
- As part of the **New Ground** family of churches, the church gave financial support towards leadership training and church planting, while also benefiting from training and accountability.

- The church supported **Sutton Community Works**, both financially and through volunteers, contributing to Sutton Foodbank, Foodshop, Street Pastors, School Pastors, and homeless ministries. Free office space was also provided at Highfield Hall. This year, the church hosted a **winter shelter** for rough sleepers and supported three major donation drives for those in temporary accommodation and need.

Church Life and Events

- **Men’s Ministry** included regular “Curry Nights” for fellowship and encouragement.
- **Women’s Ministry** hosted several conferences throughout the year.
- **Seasonal events** included summer picnics, BBQs, International Sundays, and well-attended Easter services. Christmas was a particular highlight, with guest speaker Adrian Holloway at the main carol service, many responding to the gospel, hampers distributed to local families, and a carol service held in a local care home.

Future plans

Looking ahead to 2025 we plan the following:

- To continue to build community and serve our borough through acts of service.
- To continue to encourage and equip members to participate in every part of church life – gathering, serving, giving, praying and reaching out to those around them.
- To develop our building to accommodate growth – particularly for kids and youth.
- To develop our coffee shop ministry as a signposting and support hub.
- To continue to raise leaders and develop small groups

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document

Trust Deed dated 29 October 2003 as amended on 13 June 2016

River Church Sutton is a registered charitable trust, number: 1104168.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

The policy and operating decisions of the charity rest with the trustees who meet regularly to monitor the activities of the charity. New trustees are recruited and appointed by the existing trustees and receive relevant training.

Organisational structure and decision-making policies

River Church Sutton is a charismatic evangelical Church, which has been established in Sutton since 2004. The trustees delegate responsibility for the day-to-day running of the charity's activities to the Leadership Team personnel. Trustees approve an annual budget each year, with non-regular items outside of budgeted amounts that exceed £250 requiring additional trustee approval.

Related party relationships

River Church Sutton is a separate and self-governing church, but is also part of the New Ground group in the NewFrontiers family of Churches and a member of the Evangelical Alliance.

We enjoy great working partnerships with several other local churches in the borough through which Sutton Community Works was founded.

Financial risk management

The Trustees have carried out a risk assessment regarding the Church's operations and are continually taking action to ensure that the risks are minimized as much as possible.

Reserves Policy

The Church's Reserves Policy is to retain approximately 3 months of essential operating expenditure, which would be approximately £30,000.

Principal funding

River Church Sutton receives the majority of its income as donations from members who have informally or formally committed to regular giving. Ongoing financial support is encouraged of new and existing members, but such support is not a requirement of membership and there is no pressure to give.

The Church also holds 'gift days' from time to time to support specific projects or fundraising targets. A majority of church members use the HMRC 'Gift Aid' scheme where possible. Hall hire also contributes to our income. We offer competitive rates and prioritise charitable and community focused events.

Financial review

The financial statements show total incoming resources of £228,693, a decrease of 20% on 2023 (£288,967) due to large gifts in the previous year. Underlying annual growth is c10% (2019: £185,321) when removing exceptional gifts. The Church has continued to grow its income from charitable activities through hall hire and the coffee shop introduced in 2023.

Expenses for the year totalled £200,657, an increase of 4.8% on 2023 (£191,555). This was driven by increased staffing costs of £24,594 and offset by savings on hall repairs of £15,137. All other costs were well controlled and not materially different to 2023 despite high inflation in the period.

The result was a surplus of £28,037 for the year. Total accumulated reserves stood at £392,085, of which net current assets account for £137,512 (2023: £115,554), demonstrating that the Charity has the liquidity to cover its reserves policy and debt obligations referred to below.

At the time of signing the report, the interest rate continues to be high at 4.5% which is unlikely to decrease materially in the short term due to inflation sticking above the governments intended target. The impact of increased rates has already been felt by the Church in the 2023 and 2024 accounts and has shown to still be in a surplus.

Note that the charity has no restricted funds which restrict assets from being used to manage debt during this period of high interest.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Chair - Steve Musters

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Income and endowments from		
Donations	151,445	222,251
Charitable activities	76,365	66,271
Investment income	883	445
Total	<u>228,693</u>	<u>288,967</u>
Expenditure on		
Charitable activities	200,657	191,555
Net income	<u>28,037</u>	<u>97,412</u>
Reconciliation of Funds		
Accumulated Funds Bfwd	364,048	266,636
Accumulated Funds Cfwd	<u>392,085</u>	<u>364,048</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Note	2024	2023
Fixed Asset			
Tangible Assets	2	521,261	521,094
Current Assets			
Debtors	3	9,369	8,034
Cash and cash equivalents		<u>144,734</u>	<u>125,819</u>
		154,103	133,853
Current Liabilities	4	(16,592)	(18,299)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		<u>137,512</u>	<u>115,554</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u>658,773</u>	<u>636,648</u>
Non-Current Liabilities	5	(266,688)	(273,311)
Net Assets		<u>392,085</u>	<u>363,337</u>
Accumulated Funds		<u>392,085</u>	<u>364,048</u>

1 Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity is entitled to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost.

Building and improvements are held at cost and revalued periodically at the discretion of the board of trustees.

Equipment and other assets are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life of the asset concerned at 25% per annum on a straight line basis.

Taxation

The Company is a registered Charity and, in the opinion of the trustees, is exempt from corporation tax on its surpluses on financial activities in accordance with section 486 of the corporation tax act 2010.

2 Tangible Assets

	Buildings and improv.	Equipment and other assets	Total
Cost			
At 1 January 2024	517,298	9,197	526,495
Additions	-	3,288	3,288
At 31 December 2024	517,298	12,485	529,783
Depreciation			
At 1 January 2024	-	5,401	5,401
Charge in the year	-	3,121	3,121
At 31 December 2024	-	8,522	8,522
Net Book Value			
At 31 December 2024	517,298	3,963	521,261
At 31 December 2023	517,298	3,796	521,094

3 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Hall Rent	694	680
Gift Aid Receivable	8,675	7,354
	<u>9,369</u>	<u>8,034</u>

4 Current Liabilities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade Creditors	1,991	4,556
Deposits Held	2,160	1,770
Tax and Social Security	5,007	2,158
Accruals	510	2,891
Capital Lease Obligations	6,924	6,924
	<u>16,592</u>	<u>18,299</u>

5 Non-current Liabilities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Capital Lease Obligations LT	266,688	273,311
	<u>266,688</u>	<u>273,311</u>

6 Average Number of Employees

During the year the average number of employees was 5 (2023: 3).

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations		
Gift Aided Giving	106,592	170,050
Non Gift Aided Giving	17,612	12,456
Tax Reclaimed	27,241	39,745
	<u>151,445</u>	<u>222,251</u>
Charitable Activities		
Rental Income	70,106	63,421
Other Income	6,259	2,850
	<u>76,365</u>	<u>66,271</u>
Investment Income		
Interest Received	883	445
	<u>883</u>	<u>445</u>
Total Incoming Resources	<u>228,693</u>	<u>288,967</u>

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONT)

	2024	2023
Wages and Salaries	£	£
Salaries, Wages and Benefits-in-Kind	106,987	92,222
Social Security Costs	4,385	2,696
Pension Costs	10,439	2,299
	<u>121,811</u>	<u>97,217</u>
Property Costs		
Rate and Utilities	1,808	1,604
Light and Heat	10,638	10,346
Repairs and Maintenance	5,001	20,138
	<u>17,447</u>	<u>32,088</u>
Conference Expenses		
Registrations	3,796	2,129
Travel and Subsistence	9	15
	<u>3,805</u>	<u>2,144</u>
Church Activity Costs		
Evangelism	532	432
Books and Publications	114	0
Childrens Work	1,793	78
Hospitality	1,396	1,488
Gifts and Donations	14,477	15,900
Coffee Shop Expenses	4,036	4,600
Miscellaneous Expenses	274	548
	<u>25,475</u>	<u>25,653</u>
Church Running Costs		
Telephone and Internet	1,413	1,511
Subscriptions	995	754
Insurance	2,905	2,814
Office Supplies	897	951
Audio/ Visual	3,299	3,481
Professional Fees	1,077	1,210
Depreciation	3,121	2,299
	<u>13,764</u>	<u>13,350</u>
Finance Costs		
Interest Payable	18,355	21,103
Total resources expensed	<u>200,657</u>	<u>191,555</u>
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	<u>28,037</u>	<u>97,412</u>

Director:
David Pestell, ACA

25 September 2025

The Members
River Church Sutton
Highfield Hall
320 Carshalton Road
SURREY
SM5 3QB

Client Ref: RIV01

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of River Church Sutton

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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 gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Pestell

David Pestell ACA
Director

