

I B Networks Trust
Report of the Trustees
Year Ended 31 July 2023

The Trustees present their annual Directors' Report and independently examined financial statements for the year ending 31st July 2023. This complies with the requirements for Directors' Report and Accounts under the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements also comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, and the Company's Articles of Association. They further comply with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard FRS 102 applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

OUR STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Irish Baptist Networks (now most often referred to as I B N) operates under the legal structure of a Charitable Company registered with HMRC as I B Networks Trust Ltd (Company Number XT16937). It is also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (Charity Registration Number NIC100323).

1. The Company was set up by a number of Baptists from Ireland who accept the legal accountability for the Company as Members of the Company. The Members appoint a Board of Directors to manage I B Networks Trust. The Directors' names are as *listed*.
2. The appointment of Members and Directors of I B Networks Trust Ltd. is covered by the Articles of the Company.
3. The Directors held the Annual Meeting of I B Networks Trust for 2022/23 on the 20th February 2024.

I B N Management Arrangements

1. I B N is managed through a Steering Group comprising I B Networks Trust Ltd. Directors and others (see point 3 below).
2. The Steering Group of IBN and new Members/ Directors of I B Networks Trust Ltd are appointed from those persons who have identified their commitment to I B N.
3. Persons serving on the Steering Group who are not Directors of I B Networks Trust Ltd are appointed or reappointed at an annual I B N meeting.
4. The Steering Group may from time to time propose names of new Directors for the Company.
5. The Steering Group met in person 7 times over the financial year 2022/3, with Zoom arrangements facilitating those not able to be present.

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OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Trust is established to advance Christian faith and practice for the public benefit through the encouragement of fellowship with, and understanding of, the Baptist family around the world. In planning our activities, we keep under ongoing review both our Aims and Objectives and also our stated public benefit as approved in our NI Charities Commission registration.

I B N is now the public profile under which the Trust operates. I B N exists to promote the building of meaningful relationships primarily, but not exclusively, with other Baptist believers globally. This is done by encouraging and facilitating wider fellowship and relationships between Baptists across the island of Ireland and the global community.

I B N is a small volunteer organisation which seeks to be a voice to Baptists in Ireland for the kingdom ministries of a wider family of Baptist believers. I B N also shares information and perspectives from Ireland with the wider Baptist family. In its activities IBN works in partnership with other like-minded groups of believers who share a gospel commitment. Dr Tuivo Pihli, an Estonian Baptist leader, has described Baptists as those who should be "...networking under the Lordship of Christ". We are seeking to do this!

Our activities normally include arranging conferences, consultations and other events which promote theological reflection, and we also focus on responding to people in need, primarily internationally. We now have well-established international links as an Affiliated Network of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), www.ebf.org, which expresses Baptist witness across Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and central Asia. I B N sends delegates to the Annual Council meeting of the EBF. In September 2022 the EBF Council meeting was held in Riga, Latvia. The EBF is one of six regions of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), www.bwa.org, which operates globally and of which I B N is an Associate member. I B N is also a participant organisation of the Fellowship of Baptists in Britain and Ireland (FBBi), which brings together representatives from the Baptist Unions of Wales, Scotland and Great Britain and their mission agency - BMS World Mission. Through these links we engage with, learn about and contribute to the shared life of the wider Baptist family.

THE TRUST'S ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

We seek to encourage networking with local churches by providing them with opportunities to engage with relevant issues. We are always glad to welcome visiting speakers. 2022/23 was still not a typical year (being affected by Covid restrictions) and our activities were reduced.

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We had a limited programme of events, but we enjoyed an in-person Annual meeting. One of the few positives to emerge from the Covid pandemic has been a greater ability to use digital means to enable friends and partners globally to participate in events. This is proving to be invaluable.

The I B N Steering Group was encouraged by the interest shown in, and support for, the ministries and activities enabled through IBN. We continue to operate as volunteers and were grateful for all the support given to the Directors and Steering Group members.

During the year, we benefitted from a more active website, www.ibnetworks.org; this is regularly updated with reports and news. We spent some time reviewing our I B N logo and strapline and at the Annual Meeting we presented our new IBN logo and strapline... and our website will be refreshed in our new corporate colours.

Despite fewer regular events, support for some of our key partners became a major focus of our 2022/23 activities. At our Annual meeting, which was held in Hamilton Road Baptist Church in Bangor, we welcomed Lina Toth (Baptist College, Scotland) and Jonathan Rea (New Ireland Arts). "Praise that will Last" was the theme for a wonderful evening of songs and stories of how worship and praise have sustained and shaped God's people in all kinds of situations...an inspiring and profoundly moving event.

In September 2022 Stephen Adams, along with Paul and Christine Fleming, represented I B N at the European Baptist Federation (EBF) Council meeting in Riga. Christine and Stephen joined in an on-line November 2022 meeting of the Fellowship of Baptists in Britain and Ireland (FBBi), and an in-person meeting in March 2023. Stephen also participated in several on-line meetings of the FBBi Mission Community.

Since January 2023 I B N have been supporting a new 'church planter' working in Chernihiv, Ukraine. He leads a new Church plant reaching out to their local community, including providing humanitarian relief. In March 2023 we arranged a "Virtual Visit" to meet ILYA VYSOTSKIY and some of his team of young leaders. Daniel Trusiewicz, Mission Co-ordinator from EBF and Roman Wecherkowsky, Secretary of Mission in Ukraine Baptist Union, also shared in the virtual visit.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT in 2022/23

UKRAINE

KIEV CHURCH PLANTING PROJECT:

Since January 2023 we have supported a Chernihiv church planting project, led by Ilya Vysotskiy, as mentioned above. We are committed to raising £330 a month. This church plant is engaging with younger people. I B N works through EBF Mission Partners (MP) who are overseeing the support of Ilya in co-operation with the All-Ukrainian Union of

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Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches. We receive 6-monthly reports, and post them on our website; see <https://www.ibnetworks.org/projects> Our in-year MP expenditure was £2980.

UKRAINE RELIEF:

Our support for Ukraine started just days after the invasion in February 2022. We are so grateful for churches and individuals who have supported the I B N appeal during this financial year. We sent £20,200 to support the Winter War Appeal by EBF.

TURKEY/SYRIA EARTHQUAKE:

After the earthquake in February 2023, which damaged a wide area of 140,000sq miles and affected about 14 million people, I B N launched an Appeal, and gifts of £25,000 (from 8 churches and personal gifts) were promptly sent to EBF to support the immediate response both in Turkey itself and from Lebanon into Syria.

LEBANON:

We continued our support for LSESD in Lebanon with £3,500 being sent to LSESD (now known as Thimar) for support in their "areas of greatest need", as they continue to face the financial meltdown of the Lebanese pound.

I B N sends its profound thanks to all those who have practically supported the wider Baptist family in Europe and the Middle East, who are going through the most testing of times.

For more information and reports, visit the Irish Baptist Networks website: www.ibnetworks.org, or contact the Hon. Secretary: stephen.adams@ibnetworks.org

A comment from our Chairman Dr. Hadden Wilson:

Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine, Yemen . . . so many arenas of death and suffering are graphically covered daily on our television screens and yet it all seems at a safe distance. The threat to our standard of living due to rising prices and the long NHS waiting lists, seem more pressing issues. But for how long?

Some of our political and military leaders are saying we must change our mind-set and get the nation into a state of preparation for a looming potential war. How should followers of the Lord Jesus Christ rise to this rapidly worsening situation?

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I was eight years old when the second world war ended. And some memories remain vivid. The sounds of the alert and all-clear air-raid sirens, the searchlight beams over Belfast, walking with parents and neighbours to the safety of the Castlereagh hills during the local blitz and looking down on the fires in the city centre. My parents and relatives were just simple, ordinary believers. They believed in a sovereign God who is working out His plan and if they were afraid it didn't show.

The bible says that the hearts of people will fail as a consequence of fear in the last days. The Christian Church can and must radiate a spirit of hope and confidence in the developing storm. We know that the future is JESUS. The whole created order in earth and heaven will acknowledge his Lordship. The kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

*In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here;
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?*

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Mrs Jennifer Harvey joined us as an IB Networks Trust Director in February 2023. We thank each Director for their valuable service.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

Stephen Adams Trustee

Date

20th February 2024.

R. E. Stephen Adams

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Report of Trustees
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The trustees, who are also the directors of I B Networks Trust for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

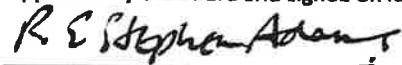
Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- 1: select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- 2: observe the methods and principles in the charities SORP;
- 3: make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 4: state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- 5: prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:



Stephen Adams

Trustee

Date: