

IB NETWORKS TRUST

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

The trustees present their Annual Directors' Report and independently examined financial statements for the year ending 31st July 2024. This complies with the requirements for a Directors' Report and Accounts under the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Companies Act 2006 and the company's Articles of Association. They 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 2023/24 on 13th March 2025.

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 3 times over the budget year 2023/4, with Zoom arrangements facilitating those not able to be present.

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 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

IB NETWORKS TRUST

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

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 Toivo Pilli, 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 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 2023, the EBF Council meeting was held during the SENT 23 EBF Conference in Stavanger, Norway. 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 network with local churches by providing them with opportunities to engage with relevant issues. We are always glad to welcome visiting speakers.

We had a limited programme of on-line events, and 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 global friends and partners to participate in events. This is proving to be invaluable. Since March 2024 we have been having quarterly prayer and information times with our friends in Thimar, Lebanon, as things have got progressively worse in their country. Yet God is using the churches as a means of hope in a range of ministries and relief programmes.

The I B N Steering Group has been 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 and our website has been refreshed using our new corporate logo and colours.

Despite fewer regular events, support for some of our key partners was a major focus of our 2023/24 activities. At our annual meeting, which was held in Finaghy Baptist Church in Belfast, we welcomed Revd. Alan Donaldson, EBF General Secretary. He spoke on the current challenges facing brothers and sisters across Europe and the Middle East, and he thanked IBN for the generous support for a range of emergency relief appeals.

In July 2022 Stephen Adams represented I B N at the European Baptist Federation (EBF) Council meeting which was held during the EBF SENT 23 Conference in Stavanger, Norway. Christine Fleming and Stephen Adams joined on-line meetings of the Fellowship of Baptists in Britain and Ireland (FBBI) in December 2023 and March 2024. Stephen also participated in several on-line meetings of the FBBI Mission Community.

I B N continue to support a new 'church planter' working in Chernihiv, Ukraine. He leads a new Church plant reaching out to their local community and providing humanitarian relief. In May 2024 we arranged a "Virtual Visit" to meet ILYA VYSOTSKIY and hear at first hand of the challenges they face in their ministry. Daniel Trusiewicz, Mission Co-ordinator from EBF and Roman Wecherkowsky, Secretary of Mission in Ukraine Baptist Union both also shared in this virtual visit.

IB NETWORKS TRUST

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

PRACTICAL SUPPORT in 2023-24

UKRAINE

CHERNIHIV 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 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 £3960

UKRAINE RELIEF:

Our support for Ukraine has been maintained since the war started 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 £8,700 to support the Winter War Appeal by EBF.

MIDDLE EAST War Relief:

After October attack by Hamas leading to a full-scale war between Israel and Hamas, with devastating consequences on the population in Gaza, IBN launched an Appeal, and gifts of £8,000 (both church gifts and personal gifts) were sent to EBF to support the relief effort.

LEBANON:

We continued our support for THIMAR (formerly LSESD) in Lebanon with £8,560 being sent to THIMAR for support in their holistic ministries, as they continue to face a range of serious challenges. I B N thanks 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.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT... HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

*Alexander Pope coined this phrase some 300 hundred years ago but until very recently I could not have completed the quotation. Could you ?
"Hope springs eternal in the human breast man never is but always will be blessed."*

What was on Alexander Pope's mind when he penned these words? Could he have reasoned that while the curse of the fall prevailed the ultimate blessing is withheld?

While the Lord Jesus Christ has broken the curse through his death and resurrection the full delivery of his victory is still to come. The whole creation still groans awaiting its deliverance out of bondage and we still await the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Scripture clearly anticipates these mind-blowing blessings but many fall into Pope's category of "will be" rather than "not is".

Nevertheless, we can like the ancient patriarch, Job, relish promised blessings with faith building certainty as he did when he wrote: "I know that my redeemer lives and one day will stand upon the earth and though worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God, I and not another."

Let "Hope spring eternal" in our breasts as we delight in the great blessings already enjoyed and look forward with joyful certainty to those still to come. We trust our humble efforts in practical support and prayer have been a temporal and eternal blessing to those we have supported over this and recent years.

Hadden Wilson

IB NETWORKS TRUST

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

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

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Mrs Heather Browne joined us as a Steering Group member and has agreed to become an IB Networks Trust Director from December 2024. We thank each Director for their valuable service, and especially David and Dorothy McMillan who step down as Directors in December 2024.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:



Mr S Adams

Trustee

Date: 13th March 2025