



scba
inspire connect resource
southern counties baptist association

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

INSPIRE - CONNECT - RESOURCE

WWW.SCBA.ORG.UK

FROM THE MODERATOR

Alongside continuing to support the existing Regional Team members and their ministries, the primary role for the Trustees at the start of 2023 was to successfully complete the recruitment, shortlisting and interview process (which began in 2022) to appoint a new Regional Minister (Team Leader). Having been unanimously commended by the Trustees, Revd. Hayley Young and Revd. Clare Hooper were commended, then appointed, as Co-Team Leaders at an Extraordinary General Meeting on 08 March 2023. Their co-ministry formally commenced on 01 July 2023. The Trustees are keen to celebrate the Revd. Clare Hooper who very capably served as acting Team Leader following the retirement of Colin Norris in 2022.

In March 2023, Judith Wheatley stood down as Moderator. After a period of discernment, Revd. Chris Brockway was appointed as acting Moderator from June, being fully appointed by the Association at the AGM in November. Revd. Matt Huckle, Ms Janet Quarry and Revd. Chris Walker were also appointed as Trustees at this meeting. Mrs Ann Andrews stood down as a Trustee having served two terms. Mr Andrew Johnson stood down as Association Treasurer (albeit continuing to serve as a Trustee). There remains a vacancy for the role of Treasurer.

In partnership with Clare and Hayley, the Trustees shared in a review of the Regional Team's mission and ministry priorities during the latter part of the year, concluding that we would focus on communication, life cycle of churches and mission strategy.

Throughout 2023, the Regional Team and Trustees were significantly focussed upon how best to support churches, Ministers, chaplains and pioneers to navigate the missional and pastoral complexities of the Ministerial Rules Consultation. At the same time, we were thrilled to be able to support eleven churches and missional opportunities through Home Mission Grants.

In summary, 2023 was a year of significant change, challenge and celebration for SCBA. We look forward to seeing how the new foundations laid in 2023 support our mission and ministries to flourish in 2024.

Reverend Chris Brockway

Moderator of SCBA & Minister at ChristChurch BC in Bournemouth



FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

As always it has been an absolute privilege to continue to walk with our churches and to see the breadth of mission that is taking place in SCBA. As we look back at 2023 a highlight was the conference where Rosa wonderfully taught on God's rich tapestry and demonstrated a thoughtful and inspiring engagement with scripture. It was good to gather together, to encourage and support one another.

We've had the opportunity through running the Kind and Gentle spaces to begin to begin to put into practice our intention of working in pairs rather than serving our churches solo. We really appreciate all those that have said yes when asked would you mind facilitating this with me.

We ran a workshop for our NAMS, chaplains, CYF workers and pioneers on creative facilitation techniques and are beginning to draw on these techniques in how we come alongside churches to create a space for them to discern what might be next. Our hope is that the way that we facilitate spaces means that all voices can be heard and that all feel able to contribute. It's still early days but were looking forward to how this evolves.

Co-leadership has been a new experience for us both, maybe the theme of God's rich tapestry was prophetic for us. Our differences are obvious, we have different strengths and weaknesses and we model contrasting styles of leadership. But God's tapestry is richer because of our differences and we hope that together we are able to serve the breadth of our association faithfully so that through our churches and pioneering ministries more people both hear and encounter the Good News of God's kingdom, because that is the bottom line for both of us.

Blessings Clare and Hayley
Co-Team Leaders Regional Ministers for SCBA



FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2023 from Rev Simon Gray, Regional Minister & Operations Lead:



Setting up of Missional Steering Groups at Sandhurst and Central (Southampton). These are both very different contexts, but it has been encouraging to see individuals from other local churches coming alongside to support the congregations and explore with them what God is calling them to next.

Kind and Gentle: These have been run with ministers and leadership teams. It has been positive to see conversations with people holding a range of convictions in a meaningful way.

Welcome to SCBA: This was the first of these events for ministers, chaplains and pioneers who had moved into the SCBA area in the past 2 years.

Overall, it has encouraging to see the diversity of churches and the way in which they are faithfully seeking to serve the Lord and engage with their local communities.

Highlights of 2023 from Rev Jim Thomas, Regional Minister: Mission Development Lead



2023 saw the creation of a new SCBA Mission Strategy to help churches work together in order to reach their communities. This involved the formation of a new Mission Resourcing Team; the running of the MELC ('missionally engaging in local community') course and the creation of the SCBA Smaller Churches Hub.

We were also thrilled to have been able to offer Home Mission grants to 13 churches, in order to help them further develop their mission and ministry.

Pioneering ministry continued to be a priority in 2023, with some new initiatives being started and others moving towards becoming independent charities in their own right.

We were also able to help several churches in transition, with the implementation of a Missional Steering Group to help them face the future with confidence.

FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2023 from Rev Steve Barber, Regional Minister:

2023 saw continued recovery and growth for several of our churches following the challenges of covid. Of particular note is the welcome many have given to new immigrants from Hong Kong, African nations and elsewhere. A couple of our churches have been radically transformed by this growth, several others have being deeply encouraged by the freshness of faith the new arrivals have brought.

These churches continue to wrestle with the challenge of not only welcoming but fully integrating those new to their communities. Alongside welcoming immigrants, several of our churches have continued to support asylum seekers, issuing a prophetic statement about God's love for all within their communities.



The last distribution of funds from the Charlton and Otmoor Fund took place in 2023, with missional grants awarded to many local churches and projects in the Oxford area – this has been a fantastic way of utilising funds from a closed church to produce new life.

Whilst clustering varies across our association, it has worked well in some areas. Ministers have found encouragement and support from others, resources have been shared, a commitment to pray for each other has been central, and some clusters even go away on an annual retreat together. Where clustering has been effective, support for churches encountering difficulties has been easier to find, as it has often flowed out of existing trust and relationship.

Highlights of 2023 from Rev Jane Day, Tutor in Community Learning

The Learning Collective (TLC) began in September 2023 in partnership with Regent's Park College, SCBA, and CBA. We have a cohort of just under 50 learners who meet at Newbury BC, Parkstone BC, Marston Moretaine, and an online group. Students are invited to engage with pre-work before each module which includes inviting them to have conversations, engage in reading or watching an online video or something else. They are then offered some teaching from different practitioners across Baptists Together on a range of subjects such as mission, pastoral care, reflective practice, Baptist history, and much more. Those who are working towards becoming a Recognised Local Minister (three from the SCBA), have the added fun of assignments, alongside a spiritual formation group. Bookings are now open for September 2025 and if you would like to know more please do contact Jane Day. Jane can be contacted at jane.day@regents.ox.ac.uk



FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2023 from Keith Baldwin: Safeguarding Lead

In the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023, in addition to more general questions, SCBA supported 18 churches with safeguarding incidents.

There continued to be a high number of contacts from churches which is a result of a higher profile and understanding of safeguarding within churches. As is highlighted elsewhere in this report, churches continue to engage well with the training offered.



Highlights of 2023 from Amy Allen: Administration Manager

As always, one of my highlights of the year is the Ministers' and Leaders' Conference and in 2023 we had 110 ministers and leader join us in Cheltenham. Though this takes a lot of pre-organising, it is always with a sense of teamwork and seeing everyone enjoy themselves makes it all worthwhile.



I have continued to work on the SCBA website and during 2023 was able to build in a directory of all of the church in our Association, including contact details and links to the appropriate websites. This was a large piece of work and one that needs continuously updating but now it is in place should hopefully be useful to end users.

I have enjoyed continuing to get to know the new team, in particular the co-Team Leaders, Hayley and Clare who started July. Though I have known Clare and Hayley since I began this role over 11 years ago, it is about building new relationships in a different way, and I have found it interesting finding different ways of working.

FOCUS GROUPS IN SCBA

Leader, Ministers and Development Group

The LMDG meetings in 2023 focussed on a number of things. We are always interested in people, who are sensing a call to ministry and leadership, engaging in some kind of preparation of moving into the Association. The Explore the Call events went well and saw a good number of people exploring chaplaincy, youth ministry and pioneering as well as working in a local church context. This was very encouraging. We saw fewer people going through the ministerial recognition process than in previous years, but more people exploring the possibility of becoming a Recognised Local Minister.

We want to encourage all in our churches to hear the call of God for whatever it may be. We contributed to and reviews events that were held in 2023. There was an excellent Ministers and Leaders Conference with Rosa Hunt, who input was very much appreciated. Then Steve Tinning led a really helpful day exploring justice issues from all his perspective working for the Baptist Union in this area and Lisa Kerry offered real insight into the nature and work of ministry.

The Learning Collective training was launched in September 2023 in partnership with CBA and 26 people from SCBA joined the course. The LMDG had set three strategic priorities and we took some time in 2023 to review these: Pivoting Younger, Encouraging Diversity in Leadership, and Localplus.

Children, Youth and Families Group

The CYF working group continued to work on their response to the strategic review by looking at the training needs and preferences of the association and beginning to explore how to equip more people in accompanying churches as they think through their engagement with CYF ministry and mission.

The CYF gatherings changed from 2 half days in 2 locations to a couple of hours in 4 locations, lending themselves to a more relational approach with a broader geographical reach.

Staffing, Finance and Administration Group

The SFA group met 6 times during the year. A key area of these meetings is to ensure that the finances are well managed and income and expenditure is monitored against the budget. Grant applications for support and CMD grants are reviewed by this group. The group works in close coordination with SCBA's BUC representative which enables understanding of the processes followed for the closing of churches. The group also oversees the Association loans given to churches, both in agreeing any loans and also monitoring the repayments. This group is very grateful to Andy Johnson, who as Treasurer, has chaired the meetings for a number of years. Whilst he stepped down as Treasurer in November, he remains an active member of the group. A member of the group also gives advice to the Home Mission Grants Group in their discernment process.

FOCUS GROUPS IN SCBA

Home Mission Grants Group:

The year started off with the Home Mission Community Day on January 21st.

The Home Mission Community Day is an opportunity for all those churches (and their leadership teams) who are in receipt of a Home Mission grant to join (on Zoom) and tell their story. This is a real encouragement to hear the stories, and to hear about the good and sometimes not so good times.

This day is very much part of the process of receiving a HM Grant.

In 2003 the committee met by zoom to discuss the ten applications, some of which were in anticipation of an appointment at some point in the near future.

From the perspective of the Moderator – I think that this is an exciting group to be part of. Not only do the members of the group get to visit and chat to the churches / University Chaplains / Missional Listeners / new forms applying of church applying, we also get a birds eye view of what is happening albeit on paper. For recurring applications we are able to trace their HM history.

We prayerfully discuss the applications as a group and are encouraged by the sacrifice that many of these ministries show.

Once all the visits have been done and reporting back has happened then the final recommendations are made.

It is essential that there is a Regional Minister involved as very often there is information which only they are privy to. We are grateful to Rev Jim Thomas for his wisdom and insight in this process.

Our thanks also to Amy who puts all the HM paperwork together.

It was also in 2023 that Rev Hayley Young became our Regional Minister / Joint Team Leader and was great to have her input at the end of the 2023 grant application process.

Blessings

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Richard Lane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Richard Lane (Rev)

EVENTS IN 2023

Conference

In February, 111 Ministers and Leaders attended our three-day conference in Cheltenham. This was led by Rev. Rosa Hunt from Cardiff Baptist College, and examined the theme of “God’s rich tapestry”. The way that Rosa encouraged those present to engage with scripture was very much appreciated. There was also the opportunity at the Gala dinner on the Tuesday evening to say thank you to Colin Norris as he stepped down from the role of Regional Minister Team Leader for the Association. It was good to see a number of guests who came for the evening in order to do this.

The first day of the conference saw an opportunity for children, youth and family workers, newly accredited ministers, pioneers and chaplains to meet together reflecting on their own contexts and praying together.



Leaders Days

During the year we held three leaders days on a variety of themes.

In March, the day was combined with an Extraordinary General Meeting. 43 Ministers and Leaders attended with Revd Wale Hudson-Roberts, Justice Enabler for Baptists Together, introducing the new ‘Visions of Colour’ anti-racism course for ministers and churches.

In June a leaders’ day, was attended by 54 ministers and leaders, led by Rev. Steve Tinning, for the Joint Public Issues Team, helping churches engage with some current political issues.

In November, the leaders’ day and AGM was attended by 76 leaders and ministers and was led by Rev. Lisa Kerry, Team Leader for the Central Baptist Association, who spoke on ‘Ministry in the Goldfish Bowl’, examining issues around power and expectation in ministry.

Safeguarding Training

In 2023, the 8 strong Safeguard training team ran 25 events across the region. Approximately half of those events were run by teams of 2 trainers and the remainder by individual trainers. All were attended by members of more than one church with the result that we reached at least a third of SCBA churches with training through the year. SCBA are grateful to those who happily give up their time to deliver training and to all those who recognise the importance of safeguarding within our church communities sufficiently to host and attend the sessions.

The National Safeguarding Core Group, which includes our SCBA safeguarding advisor, Keith Baldwin, meets quarterly to review training and spent 2023 focusing specifically on the levels 1 and 2 training with the intention of providing updated material for 2024. A new level 2 course will be available by autumn 2024, once trainers themselves have been retrained.

Please pray for the safety of our churches and for the region's trainers. If you, or anyone you know may be interested in becoming a trainer, do please contact one of the regional team, who would be happy to pass those details on.



MISSION GRANTS GIVEN IN 2023

Anderson Baptist Church, Reading: A joint English and Nepalese speaking fellowship seeking to be a community which shares the good news of God's love for all.

Barton Community Church, Oxford: Seeking to be an authentic community bringing hope to the heart of Barton through making Jesus known.

Burmese Mission Church, Oxford: An international church, streaming across the world and evangelising on the streets of Cowley, Oxford.

Colwell Baptist Church, Isle of Wight: A family-friendly church joining in with the mission of God, in reaching out to make disciples and to make a difference in God's world.

Freemantle Baptist Church, Southampton: A small community of Christian believers sharing the love of God with their community by working alongside the families living there.

Gosport Waterfront Baptist Church: Seeking to present the gospel message of love and peace through Jesus Christ to a new generation and in a new and fresh way for the 21st century.

Orchard Baptist Church, Bicester: Planting a Pioneer in a self-build house on a new housing estate to be a presence amongst the new residents.

Shinfield Baptist Church, Reading: Aiming to be a church where Jesus grows greater and a community transformed by the Kingdom of God.

Southampton University Free Church Chaplaincy: Offering a listening ear, one step removed from the University, to people of all faiths and none, serving the students, faculty and staff.

Stow on the Wold Missional Listener: In partnership with Chipping Campden Baptist Church and Rural Ministries, "Finding ways to join with God in and around the community."

The Meeting Place: Using an Old Baptist Chapel to reach out to the community and running community sessions including after schools club and Dangerous Dads.

GRANTS GIVEN IN 2023

The SCBA has various grants that support different aspects of mission and ministry. We have given £3,000 in total to support 6 people (including under 25 years olds) to go on overseas mission. The places people went on mission were Cambodia, Moldova, Kosovo, Uganda, Indonesia and Budapest.

We also have a pastoral fund that is used by the Regional Team Leader to help ministers in a time of need. We have given £700 of this fund out to ministers in 2023.

To find out more information about our grants visit our website here: www.scba.org.uk/associationgrants.

Charlton-on-Otmoor Fund:

In 2015 New Road received £190,000, from the sale of Charlton on Otmoor Baptist Chapel, which it planted 200 years ago. Drawing on its history of supporting and planting churches over the centuries, the Church Meeting at New Road decided to use this money to fund new work around the county.

A group was formed to oversee the Charlton-on-Otmoor Living Legacy Fund. The make up the group has changed in the 9 years since the Trust was started with a mix of people from the Southern Counties Baptist Association and New Road Baptist Church.

The Fund has been available to Baptist Churches in Oxfordshire to 'engage in new and imaginative expressions of mission' with their local communities. With an emphasis on 'new and imaginative', the Fund has encouraged churches to break new ground, to experiment and try new ways of mission. The sort of things that other trust funds may not look at. It's offered 'seed money' of up to £1,000 for small projects, 'small grants' of up to £5,000 which might include changes to a building to make a project happen, 'people and place grants' of up to £15,000 over 3 years which has funded salaries and running costs and, in the last 3 years, a few larger grants have been awarded to churches engaged in significant social justice projects.

All the money has now been spent and the Fund has been closed. Over the years thirteen churches have been supported from Bloxham to Barton to Bicester, from Witney to Woodstock to Wolvercote, from Cowley to Kings Sutton to Kidlington, from Oxford to Henley to Didcot and Littlemore. You can read more about how this fund has supported mission on our website here: www.scba.org.uk/goodnews

FINANCE INFORMATION

Summary Accounts (Full accounts are available on our website)

SOUTHERN COUNTIES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	£'000's			
INCOME	2022		2023	
BU Home Mission Grant	296	69%	216	23%
Donations, Legacies & Grants	27	6%	13	1%
Events & Leaders Conference	18	4%	21	2%
Investment & other Income	50	12%	49	5%
Other Income	40	9%	649	68%
TOTAL INCOME	431	100%	948	100%
EXPENDITURE	2022		2023	
Mission (HM Grants, CYF & Pioneering)	157	30%	153	25%
Staffing	311	59%	375	61%
Leaders Conference and Events	27	5%	43	7%
Support and Governance	29	5%	41	7%
Other	7	1%	6	1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	531	100%	618	100%
DEFICIT / Surplus	-100		330	

BALANCE SHEET	£'000's	
	2022	2023
Fixed Assets	1,302	955
Current Assets		
Loans	214	176
Cash in Bank	947	1,703
Total Assets	2,463	2,834
Liabilities	-97	-49
NET ASSETS	2,366	2,785
Funds		
Restricted	303	397
Unrestricted		
Designated	737	661
General	1,326	1,727
TOTAL FUNDS	2,366	2,785

CHARITY DETAILS

Charity Name: Southern Counties Baptist Association
Charity Registration No.: 1091066
Company Registration No.: 4279837

Registered Office: Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XD

Trustees:

Revd Judith Wheatley	Moderator of Trustees (to July 23)
Revd Chris Brockway	Moderator of Trustees (from August 23)
Mr Andrew Johnson	Association Treasurer (to November 23)
Mrs Ann Andrews	(to November 23)
Mr Peter Brookes	(to November 23)
Revd Dr Anthony Clarke	Regent's Park College Representative
Mr Jason Collis	
Revd Simon Ford	(to November 23)
Mrs Emma Green	
Revd Martin Hardwidge	
Revd Clare Hooper	Regional Minister co-Team Leader (from July 23)
Revd Matthew Huckle	(from November 23)
Mr Andrew Johnston	(from November 23)
Revd Jonathan Keyworth	
Revd Dr Colin Norris	Regional Minister Team Leader (to January 23)
Ms Janet Quarry	(from November 23)
Revd Christopher Walker	(from November 23)
Revd Hayley Young	Regional Minister co-Team Leader (from July 23)

Regional Ministry Team:

Revd Dr Colin Norris	Regional Minister Team Leader (to January 24)
Revd Clare Hooper	Regional Minister co-Team Leader (form July 23) & CYF Missional Developer
Revd Hayley Young	Regional Minister co-Team Leader (from July 23) & General RM
Revd Stephen Barber	Regional Minister (Part-time)
Revd Simon Gray	Regional Minister: Operations Lead & General RM
Revd Jim Thomas	Regional Minister Mission Development Lead (Part-time)

Staff Team:

Mrs Amy Allen	Administration Manager
Mr Keith Baldwin	Safeguarding Adviser