



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

INSPIRE – CONNECT – RESOURCE

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FROM THE MODERATOR

Following the successful appointment of Revd. Clare Hooper and Revd. Hayley Young as Regional Minister Co-Team Leaders in July 2023, January 2024 commenced with the Regional Team and Trustees committed to inspiring, connecting, and resourcing the Association's churches, ministers, chaplains, and pioneers.

Having navigated the missional and pastoral complexities of the Ministerial Rules Consultation in 2023, the headline challenge for Baptists Together—and therefore SCBA—in 2024 was the equally, if not more complex journey through a national Financial Model Review. This necessary process nationally brought into sharp focus SCBA's unsustainable year-on-year deficit budget.

In the summer of 2024, after months of prayerful discernment and careful consideration of the team structure, the Trustees concluded that the roles of Mission Development Lead and part-time General Regional Minister would no longer continue. Although not what they would have wished, we remain deeply grateful for the gifts and dedication that Jim Thomas and Steve Barber brought to these roles. These decisions were made solely due to the financial realities facing both SCBA and the wider Union. The Trustees also re-evaluated the Association's administrative support. In August, Amy Allen's role was updated to Association Administrator with a change in hours to reflect evolving needs.

At the AGM in November, Martin Hogben, Ann Andrews, and Andy Perryman were appointed as Trustees. David Ford was elected as SCBA's Treasurer. Jason Collis concluded his service as a Trustee.

During 2024, we were again delighted to be able to support 9 churches and missional initiatives through Home Mission Grants, as well as offering support to 18 individuals with grants to pursue training or mission opportunities. We are greatly encouraged by the number from SCBA churches that are involved in The Learning Collective, 11 churches, as well as the numbers of individuals exploring Recognised Local and Fully Accredited Ministry.

2024 was a year of significant change, challenge, and celebration for SCBA. We are hopeful that the new foundations laid during this time will continue to support our mission and ministries to flourish in 2025 and beyond.

Reverend Chris Brockway
Moderator of SCBA & Minister at ChristChurch BC in Bournemouth



FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2024 from Rev Clare Hooper & Revd Hayley Young, Regional Minister co-Team Leaders

We began the year on a strong and encouraging note with the Ministers' Conference, focusing on the theme of covenant—reflecting on how we relate to one another, learning from the rich history of our association, and looking ahead with hope as we continue to walk with one another.

One of the highlights this year has been our partnership with Fuelcast in producing a series of short videos aimed at helping local churches understand Home Mission and for congregations to be inspired by the ministry that is happening across our region. As a team, we continue to engage deeply with the findings of Project Violet, thoughtfully considering the requests for change and identifying the necessary adaptations and changes needed in order to be an association where all feel supported in fulfilling their response to God's call on their life.

We're also thankful for the rhythm of sabbaticals this year, with three of our team members taking well-deserved time for rest and renewal. We are especially grateful to the rest of the team who ensured continued support and presence across the association during these times.

With our trustees, we've taken important steps towards ensuring long-term financial stability for the association. This has involved difficult decisions regarding changes within the team, all with the aim of placing the support of churches and new missional opportunities at the very heart of what we do. We believe these adjustments will give us the flexibility needed to serve well going forward.

Nationally, we've continued our involvement with the Baptist Union Assembly and Council, ensuring that the breadth of experience and perspective within our association are represented. Locally, we've supported Newly Accredited Ministers, hosted leaders' days, delivered mentoring training, hosted Visions of Colour and continued the regional support for ministers and leaders through gatherings and encouragement.

It's also been a joy and privilege to take part in several ordinations and inductions throughout the year—celebrating new seasons of ministry and the ongoing work of God across our association.

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



FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2024 from Rev Simon Gray, Regional Minister & Operations Lead:

It has been encouraging to see an increased number of people exploring and discerning a call to ministry. As a result, we held a number of Ministerial Recognition Committee days and were able to commend people to begin formation for both National Accreditation and as Recognised Local Ministers.



A few churches have continued to ask for us to lead Kind and Gentle Spaces for their leadership teams and church members. It has again been positive to see conversations with people holding a range of convictions in a meaningful way.

It has been good to see clusters continuing to support ministers and leaders, offering spaces for fellowship and encouragement. In particular it has been great to see a new cluster starting for church leaders in the Fareham / Gosport area and the reforming of one in the Portsmouth region.

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 2024 from Rev Jane Day, Tutor in Community Learning

It has been an absolute joy to facilitate The Learning Collective (TLC) during the past year. The SCBA has hosted two hubs (Newbury and Poole), alongside a hub in the CBA and an online hub. For me, TLC models associating across Baptists Together at its very best as we invest in relationships, build community, and learn from each other. In June 2025, we will celebrate our first cohort and welcome a new cohort of learners, of which some will continue to train as Recognised Local Ministers.



Our plans are well underway for September 2025, and it is most likely we will have 8 hubs across three Associations, such is the demand! Prayers welcomed as we seek to encourage local leaders.

FROM THE REGIONAL TEAM

Highlights of 2024 from the Safeguarding Lead

In the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024, in addition to more general questions, SCBA supported several 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. The Association Safeguarding Advisor, Keith Baldwin, left his role at the end of October. Whilst a new advisor is appointed Jo Hayes, the Safeguarding Lead for the South-East Baptist Association has been providing support and advice to SCBA churches.

Highlights of 2024 from Amy Allen: Administrator

The highlight of my year, as always, is the Ministers' & Leaders' Conference, where this year, we had over 100 in attendance. We continue to enjoy a good relationship with the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Cheltenham, and this serves for a relaxing and enjoyable time for those that come. I especially enjoy the interaction with the ministers, leaders and their spouses that also join them, and it is always a great time had by all!



The Leaders' Days are also a good opportunity to get out of the office and meet those we serve as an Association, and there are always new people to meet that have never attended before, which is great.

Back in the office, I continue to enjoy working on the website and have now managed to get to grips with the online booking and payment system, which makes events so much easier, particularly the conference. I find the variety of work that the website brings is fascinating and there is always something new to learn.

It has been a busy year and it is never quiet in the SCBA office!

FOCUS GROUPS IN SCBA

Leader, Ministers and Development Group

The work of the Leadership and Ministerial Development Group focussed on a number of things in 2024. The Findings of Project Violet, a three-year research project exploring the experiences of women in ministry, were published in 2024 and this was rightly took precedence in some of our work. There was a Leaders' Day in November with Helen Cameron, one of the two co-researchers, who helped us think about how we could respond to the findings as local churches. The LMDG meeting in October was shared with the whole Regional Team and was devoted to how we might respond to the Project Violet findings as an Association. This is an important an ongoing piece of work.

Recognising that we have recently experienced particular tensions within Baptists Together more widely, we responded with a Ministers and Leaders Conference that explored the theme of covenant, with a number of different speakers, and how we might be better at walking together within churches and between churches. Our second Leaders' Day was led by Jo Williams on the theme of transforming conflict which has led to ongoing work with Jo on how we can handle differences and tensions better.

Other training within the Association included Visions of Colour days, and The Learning Collective launched its second year with an overall cohort now of over 40 people. We continue to focus on people and those who are sensing some call from God, encouraging them to respond to this whether that be towards being better able to serve in their local context, becoming a Recognised Local Minister or an ordained minister. One of the changes in 2024 saw the end of partnership Ministerial Recognition Committee interviews (where these were shared with three other Associations and happened over two or three days); as an Association we now hold these interviews over one day in the Association which gives more flexibility and does not have the financial cost to candidates.

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, with 11 grants being awarded during the year. The group works in close coordination with SCBA's BUC representative which enables information to be shared regarding the sale of church buildings following church closures. The group also oversees the Association loans which have been given to churches, monitoring the repayments. A member of the group also gives advice to the Home Mission Grants Group in their discernment process.

FOCUS GROUPS IN SCBA

Children, Youth and Families Group

The CYF Working Group continued to support the training needs of CYF within SCBA by facilitating the delivery of several Youthscape Essentials courses across the association. The group also enabled the training of multiple CYF workers to accompany churches as they reflect on and develop their engagement with CYF ministry and mission.

The format of CYF gatherings have continued to evolve, now taking the form of smaller, more regular meetings that have fostered a more relational approach. In partnership with SWBA, the group also organised a CYF-focused retreat, providing support for CYF workers in continuing ministerial development (CMD) and reflective practice.



Clare has also had the opportunity to join several youth groups to do a session that looks at participation of young people in scripture and what that could look like in our churches.

Home Mission Grants Group:

I became the moderator of the Home Mission Group for the SCBA midway through 2024 following the retirement of Revd Richard Lane. We extend our gratitude to him for his dedication and efforts in supporting the growth of the kingdom through Home Mission. We have reviewed Home Mission forms, application timelines, and grant durations based on feedback from churches and ministries, aiming to facilitate rather than impede.

It is a real joy to meet with churches, ministries, ministers and pioneers in the association and hearing how God is working in and through them. It is a huge privilege and responsibility to allocate the funds that we are given to support others.

Home Mission is the financial lifeblood of the Association and the Union. The more we dare to give, the more we can do to make a difference in lives and communities in our association. All so that we can glorify God and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit."

Revd Paul Burnish

EVENTS IN 2024

Conference

In February, 101 Ministers and Leaders attended our three-day conference in Cheltenham. This examined the theme of “Covenant”. There was input from Rev Chris Brockway, Rev Anthony Clarke and Rev. Lyn Green, each examining different areas of covenant, local, regional and nations. 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 two leaders days.

In June a leaders’ day, was attended by 67 ministers and leaders, led by Rev. Jo Williams, reflecting on how as churches we manage differences and handle conflict. In November, the leaders’ day and AGM was attended by 74 leaders and ministers and was led by Dr. Helen Cameron, where the Project Violet requests for change were considered and churches encouraged to reflect on their responses.

In addition, the children, youth and families workers continued to meet in person in 4 different locations for support.



Safeguarding Training in SCBA in 2024

Our 7 trainers delivered 19 training days in churches across the SCBA region in 2024, covering both levels 2 and 3. The sessions were well attended and reached approximately 40 church groups.

During the summer our trainers attended online training themselves enabling them to deliver an updated level 2 presentation, which we rolled out to churches across autumn. The national team plan a similar update for the level 3 material in 2025.

Although rare, there have been occasional requests for online training and this too will be addressed in 2025. It will follow a similar format to the training days, being trainer-led so live.

Sadly, our Safeguarding Advisor Keith Baldwin felt it necessary to step away from his role in autumn and we are grateful to the SEBA advisor Jo Hayes for her support whilst interviews took place to appoint a new advisor. One of our current trainers, Melanie Pike, was appointed, so congratulations to Melanie and welcome to the role.

Thank you too to all our trainers, without whom creating an environment of Excellence in Safeguarding within our churches would be an almost insurmountable task and to those churches who have opened their doors to us across the year.

Ann Andrews



MISSION GRANTS GIVEN IN 2024

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.

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 2024

The SCBA has various grants that support different aspects of mission, ministry and CMD/Sabbatical Support.

We have given £2,500 in total to support 5 people (including under 25 years olds) to go on mission opportunities. The places people went on mission were Lausanne, Uganda, and an internship with Soulscape.



Toby & Oscar in Uganda

We gave out £2,000 in Mission Grants to 4 churches to support new projects, including equipment for a new Messy Church (please see below) and craft equipment for a new Cafe.

We gave out £2,995 in CMD/Sabbatical Grants to 9 ministers and pastors to further their learning and development, including funds towards a doctorate and funds towards a conference during a sabbatical.

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 £1,070 of this fund out to ministers in 2024.

To find out more information about our grants visit our website here:

www.scba.org.uk/associationgrants

Messy Church at Boscombe Baptist Church

Boscombe Baptist Church holds its first Messy Church with the support of an SCBA Mission Grant on Sunday 9th March.

We had 32 people attend (plus leaders), most of which were not church families but members from the community. We had the theme of 'who is God?', with 5 craft tables set up around the room around this theme. We had a globe with the sea around it where families could make clay or lego creations of animals or themselves or buildings etc - anything in creation to add to the scene, with a question of 'I wonder what your favourite part of God's creation is?'. Each craft had an 'I wonder' question to go alongside it, and they made cress pots, coloured wooden love hearts, made crocodiles, and created pictures of light. After 40 minutes of craft time, we gather together for a talk, where the children chose things out of a box saying 'who is God?'.

With each item there was a Bible verse attached and we looked at what this verse told us about God. As a response they all put their handprints on a banner to signify that God knows and loves each one of them. We sang 'Our God is a great big God', which was led by 2 of our church children, and played a game before all sitting down to eat together. During the meal time, we had more 'I wonder' questions on each table, and I asked one boy what he had learnt about God today. He replied that He had learnt that God loves him no matter what. That made the whole day worth it! It was such a joy to be able to serve the community and run church in a different way to bring in new families, and we couldn't have done this without the grant. We all have Messy Church t-shirts as well so everyone knows who is on the team, and we are excited for our next Messy Church.

Lisa Calvert, Families and Communities Worker

FINANCE INFORMATION FOR 2024

Summary Accounts (Full accounts are available on our website at www.scba.org.uk/reports)

SOUTHERN COUNTIES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		£'000's			
INCOME		2023		2024	
BU Home Mission Grant		216	23%	253	54%
Donations, Legacies & Grants		13	1%	13	3%
Events & Leaders Conference		21	2%	21	5%
Investment		49	5%	58	12%
Other Income		649	68%	121	26%
TOTAL INCOME		948	100%	466	100%
EXPENDITURE		2023		2024	
Mission (HM Grants, CYF & Pioneering)		153	25%	132	23%
Staffing		375	61%	359	63%
Leaders Conference and Events		43	7%	29	5%
Support and Governance		41	7%	42	7%
Other		6	1%	8	1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		618	100%	570	100%
DEFICIT / Surplus		330		-104	

BALANCE SHEET		£'000's	
		2023	2024
Fixed Assets		955	1,423
Current Assets			
Loans		176	125
Cash in Bank		1,703	1,199
Total Assets		2,834	2,747
Liabilities		-49	-66
NET ASSETS		2,785	2,681
Funds			
Restricted		397	399
Unrestricted			
Designated		25	19
General		2,363	2,263
TOTAL FUNDS		2,785	2,681

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 Chris Brockway	Moderator of Trustees
Revd Dr Anthony Clarke	Regent’s Park College Representative
Mrs Ann Andrews	<i>(from November 24)</i>
Mr Jason Collis	<i>(to November 24)</i>
Mrs Emma Green	
Revd Martin Hardwidge	
Revd Martin Hobgen	<i>(from November 2024)</i>
Revd Clare Hooper	Regional Minister co-Team Leader
Revd Matthew Huckle	
Mr Andrew Johnston	
Revd Jonathan Keyworth	
Revd Andrew Perryman	<i>(from November 2024)</i>
Ms Janet Quarry	
Revd Christopher Walker	
Revd Hayley Young	Regional Minister co-Team Leader

Regional Ministry Team:

Revd Clare Hooper	Regional Minister co-Team Leader & CYF Missional Developer
Revd Hayley Young	Regional Minister co-Team Leader & 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	Administrator
Mr Keith Baldwin	Safeguarding Adviser <i>(to October 2024)</i>
Ms Joanna Hayes	Interim Safeguarding Adviser <i>(from November 2024)</i>



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