



TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024

(A company limited by guarantee, number 135934,
Registered Charity No. 1133373)

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024

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UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST

(A company limited by guarantee, number 135934, Registered Charity number 1133373)

TRUSTEES' REPORT

(Incorporating the Report of the Directors)

The United Reformed Church Trust ("the charitable company") is the corporate charity trustee of the funds of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church ("URC") and is responsible for reporting its financial activities. The directors, who are also trustees of the charitable company, submit their report and the audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December, 2024, which incorporate the funds of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Corporate Trustee Registered Office: 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Directors

The directors who served during the year and to the date of this report, unless otherwise indicated, were as follows:

Name	Ex officio	Appt/Resigned
Ms Catriona Wheeler (Chair)		Resigned Chair 05/12/24, Board May 2025
The Revd Nick Mark (Chair)	Designated Safeguarding Trustee; appointed Chair 05/12/24	
Dr Stephen Thompson (Deputy Chair)		
Alan Yates	Honorary Treasurer of the URC	
The Revd Dr John Bradbury	General Secretary	
The Revd James Breslin		
The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins		Resigned 7/05/24
Mrs Victoria James	Chief Operating Officer	Resigned 31/01/25
Mr Clifford Patten		
Mr David Greatorex		
Mr David Lathbury		
The Revd John Macaulay		
The Revd Julian Macro		
The Revd Sarah Moore	Clerk of General Assembly	Appointed 1/10/24

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones

Most of the directors are appointed as members of the charitable company by the General Assembly of the URC and then as directors by the company under the provisions of its Articles of Association, to serve for up to four years (with a possibility of renewal for one further period of four years), having been nominated through the representative processes of the Church.

There are four directors who serve ex officio, their appointment or election to their positions having followed nomination. The directors receive no remuneration but may be reimbursed their expenses of attending meetings.

Most newly appointed directors are already familiar with many aspects of their role through serving on Assembly committees or synod bodies, but they are provided with relevant documentation and encouraged to sign up to receiving regular information from sources such as the Charity Commission. Training is provided via general external courses and events

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

where possible, and training is given in conjunction with quarterly meetings in specific areas of governance as needs arise, to assist in the performance of their duties.

United Reformed Church Resources Committee

Finance committee continued its work until General Assembly 2024, at which point the Resources Committee came into being bringing together the work of the Finance Committee and 3 other committees (Communications, Church House Management Group and the Human Resources Advisory Group). The Resources Committee is a Committee of General Assembly but also has delegated authority from the URC Trust specifically relating to matters of finance, employment and property).

Convenor: The Revd Michael Hopkins

Deputy Convenor: Mr Tim Llewelyn

Secretary: Mrs Victoria James (Chief Operating Officer)

URC Treasurer: Mr Alan Yates

Deputy Treasurer: Mr Vaughan Griffiths,

Chief Finance Officer: Mr John Samson

Members: Mrs Jane Humphreys, Ms Joana Marfoh, The Revd Nick Mark, Mrs Lisa McAvoy, Mr Steve Tringham

Others with governance responsibilities within the Church

General Assembly Moderator: The Revd Tim Meadows

Immediate Past Moderator – The Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson

Business Committee Convenor – The Revd Mark Robinson

Deputy General Secretary, Discipleship – The Revd Adrian Bulley (until August 2024) and The Revd Jenny Mills (from August 2024).

Deputy General Secretary, Mission – The Revd Philip Brooks

The Chief Operating Officer – Victoria James

Deputy Treasurer – Vaughan Griffiths

The key management personnel of the charity are the members of the General Secretariat which is made up of the General Secretary, two Deputy General Secretaries and the Chief Operating Officer.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

Trustees of subsidiary charity at the date of this report:

United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited

(Exempt charity, registered under Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, number 15986R)

Chair: Mr John Delahunty

Secretary: Irmani Smallwood – Interim CEO.

The Board (appointed for a renewable term of three years): Mr Richard Abraham, The Revd Geoff Felton. The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith, My Gary Goggins, Mr David Greateorex, The Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller, The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, Mrs Victoria James, Mr Clifford Patten, The Revd Paul Whittle, Mr Alan Yates,

Legal Advisers

Slater Heelis Solicitors
Lloyds Bank Buildings
16 School Road, Sale
Chester M33 7XP

Anthony Collins Solicitors
134 Edmund Street
Birmingham
B3 2ES

Actuaries

Aon Hewitt Limited
Carnegie House
Peterborough Road
Harrow
Middlesex HA1 2AJ

Independent Auditors

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
9 Appold Street
London EC1M 7AD

Bankers

HSBC Bank plc
City of London Corporate Banking Centre
60 Queen Victoria Street
London EC4N 4TR

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The company

The General Assembly of the URC in 2006 appointed the United Reformed Church Trust, the charitable company, as the corporate trustee of its funds. Following consultation with the Charity Commission in December 2009 the charitable company adopted new memorandum and articles and was registered as a Charity. The memorandum and articles were revised further in 2013.

Church Governance

The governing body of the URC is the General Assembly. The authority under which the General Assembly acts was given by the resolutions passed at the Uniting Assemblies of 1972, 1981 and 2000; and the United Reformed Church Acts 1972, 1981 and 2000 enabled those resolutions to be given legal effect in relation to the finance and property of the Church. These Acts of Parliament together with the Basis, Structure and Rules of Procedure for the time being of the URC (as contained in sections A - C of the Manual of the URC) contain the foundation documents of the Church, known as the Scheme of Union.

Each General Assembly appoints members to Assembly Executive, although those appointed to represent synods are nominated by the synods concerned. The purpose of Assembly Executive is to enable the Church to deal with important issues that cannot wait until the next General Assembly.

Charitable Assets

The charitable assets of the URC are held by the charitable company as charity trustee. It manages those assets and applies them in accordance with General Assembly resolutions for the work of the URC, and ensures they are expended in a compliant fashion.

Employees

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

There is a commitment by the URC to employment policies which follow best practice, based on equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability. The Trustees are updated on all employment policies at least annually, but more frequently if the circumstances require it.

Employees are provided with information on matters of concern to them, and the Church consults them regularly, so that their views can be considered when making decisions likely to affect their interests. Employee involvement is encouraged, for example by a staff association and periodic staff meetings for employed team members. These help create a common awareness of the charity's priorities and of the financial and economic factors affecting it.

Remuneration

Remuneration of lay key management personnel is set in the same way as that of other equivalent staff and is overseen by the Remuneration Committee, as a sub-committee of Resources Committee. All ministers, whether in Assembly-appointed roles or in pastorate ministry, are paid the same basic stipend.

The pay of lay staff is assessed by the Remuneration Committee when a post is created, having regard to comparable posts in the charity sector and among Church bodies in particular; it is then reviewed and confirmed by the Resources Committee. Any reassessment of a post's remuneration is by the same process.

The stipend level is reviewed annually by a sub-committee of Ministries Committee having regard to a formula, based on inflation. A recommendation is then made to the Resources Committee. Similarly, the Remuneration Committee considers any annual increase for lay salaries, taking account of the recommendations regarding stipends, external data and benchmarking against other faith organisations.

The work of these two groups in terms of remuneration of lay staff and ministers is reviewed by Resources Committee each year and by the URC Trust in the budget setting process before final confirmation by Assembly Executive on behalf of the Church.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The charitable objects of the Charitable company are to advance the Christian religion for the benefit of the public in accordance with the doctrines, principles and usages, and the Scheme of Union of the United Reformed Church.

- **Public benefit**

Having regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission, the Charitable company provides public benefit by carrying out its objectives and by advancing the charitable purposes of the funds that it holds as charity trustee. Some of the broad strategies are set out in the following paragraphs, and further details and examples are given under Achievements and Performance. In addition, the Church at General Assembly level acts as an umbrella resource body for the 13 National and Provincial Synods and approximately 1,240 local churches, whose charitable assets are held by separate charities and/or charitable trust companies.

- **Worship and partnership**

The URC is part of the Church universal. As such its aim is to proclaim the love of God in Jesus Christ in word and deed. A main strategy to achieve that aim is the provision of public worship in viable congregations across the three nations of England, Scotland and Wales. This is increasingly carried out in partnership with ecumenical colleagues, particularly the Methodist Church with whom we have over three hundred shared congregations. It also takes new forms through the 'Fresh Expressions' initiative offering Christian worship, teaching, fellowship and service in non-traditional venues and styles. We have a number of 'pioneer ministers', developing pastoral and worshipping communities outside the usual frameworks of church tradition and habit.

- **Discipleship & Mission**

A suite of discipleship resources and courses seek to assist individuals and churches in

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developing their discipleship practices. Alongside this, preaching of the Gospel, pastoral care for, and building up of, communities by ministers, lay preachers and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) continue as key vehicles for increasing the effectiveness of local witness and service. The Commitment for Life programme continues to encourage churches to pray and campaign for the eradication of global poverty.

Subsidiary charity

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited's (RMHS)

objects are for the benefit of the community to advance the Christian religion in accordance with the principles, usages and the Scheme of Union of the URC, in particular by providing for retired ministers and widow/ers or civil partners of ministers of the United Reformed Church who are in need, for various reasons, housing and associated amenities, or assistance to enable them to provide this for themselves.

Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreements are being finalised to clarify the relationship and interdependencies as well as services provided by the URC Trust and the Church to the RMHS and vice versa.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievements and Performance

It is acknowledged that all that is achieved through General Assembly decision making and the implementation of those decisions through the team working from the Offices of Assembly, is only possible through the Ministry and Mission contributions. This represents huge generosity and commitment from local churches and synods. The trustees are grateful for this.

General Assembly met from 12th-15th July 2024 and Assembly Executive met from 9th-11th February and online on 26 November 2024. These important meetings of the Councils of the church have continued to address key strategic and missional matters for the Church, work which the charitable funds of the URC enable.

The **Church Life Review** is ongoing and has moved at pace in 2024 which has been an exploratory phase involving extensive consultation in key areas. This has placed the Church in a strong position to move forward in the following key areas: -

- a) An exploratory consultation event demonstrated that there is an energy and willingness to establish well-resourced support services so that we are coordinating consistent support for local churches, including the use of a Resources Portal. It is expected that this will ultimately cover finance, property, compliance, health and safety, human resources, payroll, IT.
- b) After effective and broad consultation, a working group has explored in detail different models of resources sharing which will be key to enabling the other aspects of the Church Life Review.

For the other aspects of the Church Life Review relating to lay work and new worshipping communities, a conference, 'Conversations at the Crossroads' was held in January 2025, which is covered in more detail in the Future Developments section.

The Church Life Review also prompted a review of governance to ensure that the structures and approach in the Councils of the Church are of an appropriate size for the denomination. This work has involved developments which improve risk management and therefore are relevant to the URC Trust as the developments assist the Trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities. Key aspects of these governance developments have been: -

- a) A Conflicts of Interests Statement was adopted by General Assembly with policies and procedures for all General Assembly Committees. The URC Trust also adopted an updated Conflicts of Interest Policy. The nature of the Church structures means that there is a complexity to Conflicts of Interest management and this was therefore a key development in 2024.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

- b) All General Assembly Committees now have Terms of Reference which means there is greater clarity and transparency about the delegated authority levels which exist throughout the Councils of the Church. This has also enabled a more robust process for consulting with the Trust prior to decisions being taken by the Councils of the Church.
- c) The Resources Committee was formed in July 2024 which, as noted above, is a Committee of General Assembly but also has delegated authority from the URC Trust on matters relating to finance, employment, and central properties. This committee has taken over the work of 4 Committees (Human Resources Advisory Group, Church House Management Group, Communications and Finance) which is enabling a more coordinated and strategic approach.
- d) A new safer recruitment process is in place for all volunteer appointments into the governance structures of the URC Trust and the Councils of the Church.
- e) A new Nominations Committee with updated terms of Reference was formed in July 2024. This committee oversees the safer recruitment process and is committed to ensuring that all the decision-making bodies are diverse and representative of the Church.
- f) A review of our risk management process which will be implemented in 2025.

Ecumenism has always been key in the life of the United Reformed Church. In 2024, we have built stronger relationships with our Methodist colleagues and are committed to ways in which we can work together operationally. In 2024, we employed a Buildings and Facilities Manager who works across the URC and Methodist office buildings in London (such arrangements are supported and managed through a Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement). We remain open to other opportunities where they achieve effective economies of scale or serve the significant number of local churches which are Methodist/URC Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

As is noted earlier in the report, the charitable assets of the URC are held by the charitable company as charity trustee. It manages those assets and applies them as directed by General Assembly for the work of the URC, and ensures they are expended in a compliant fashion. As such the work of the Committees is relevant to the URC Trust. The achievements and performance of the different committees can be summarised as follows:-

- **Children & Youth**

For 2024 the Children and Youth theme was Story, Story, Story. Every church received a resource book full of engaging ideas for all ages, and a free Holiday Club 'Sparks and Stories' was offered, supported by small grants for local churches. The weekly free online resource Faith Adventures was developed to include an accompanying youth resource.

URC Children saw the creation of two sets of Prayer Prompt Cards for 4-8s and 8-12s; and the first Children's Workers Conference. A new family Advent resource was created, along with church resources, and 5,000 packs distributed. URC Youth held Youth Assembly (alongside the Youth Leaders' Gathering) at Whitemoor Lakes for the last time, set up a review of the Youth Exec, and promoted the SCM Honest Church campaign. We also ran the Youth Venue at Greenbelt Festival for the third time.

We continue to host the Youth Ministry Roundtable, and CTBI have agreed to adopt this as a formal ecumenical network. Out of this has grown plans for a residential for young adults. With Children's Ministry Network we have been working hard to create new training courses. We helped launch Intergenerate UK as a new network for this area of ministry.

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We offered Godly Play, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Makaton, Widget and Youthscape Essentials training courses, monthly 'Talking About' sessions and a set of conversation starter materials on disability awareness.

- **Education & Learning (E and L)**

There has been a lot of work to develop quality opportunities for learning to everyone in the URC as they walk the Jesus Way and share the love of God through their lives. We built on the positive relationships with the Resource Centres For Learning (RCLs) and the Training and Development Officers' Network (TDOs) and have created a Transitional Forum to help joined up thinking between learning in the synods and the RCLs. The RCL Principals with the Secretaries for Ministries and E and L created a document clearly setting out the expectations of what was required for initial ministerial formation (EM1). This clarity on expectations was well received and enables parity across the institutions.

We have continued to offer Discipleship Development Grants and this has seen imaginative and creative opportunities and events being offered for people in synods and local churches, giving encouragement to others to explore new ways of doing things. Learning for the whole people of God is our focus and ensuring people know what is on offer is important. The Lay Preacher Advocates have begun work on developing a Lay Learning Gateway so all opportunities can be found in one place on the website. This is an exciting piece of work in progress and continues the emphasis on making learning accessible for all. The development of two new Stepwise streams is almost complete.

The E and L committee decided that current learning opportunities emanating from Church House such as Stepwise (the URC's Discipleship Development Programme), the Church Leadership Programme and the management of the URC Learning Hub could be better offered through our RCLs, and began putting plans in place for that transfer. E and L also worked closely with Ministries to eliminate the duplication in relation to ministerial formation. From the Academic Year 2024/25, the Secretary for Ministries took over responsibility for Education for Ministry (EM) 1, 2 and 3, and all training for accredited ministries.

Additionally, there has been a consultative exercise with the RCLs to explore how issues of funding can be addressed long term. There is more detail in the future developments section.

- **Ministries**

The committee is concerned with the specific recognised and accredited ministries which provide leadership for the Church, including Church Related Community Work, Eldership, Lay preaching including Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers and Locally Recognised Worship Leaders, Lay Pioneering and the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, but also recognises that each of these has a duty to enable discipleship in others. Recognising the challenges of our demography, we continue to work with our Synods developing strategies that use our ministers most effectively in providing leadership in local churches. To this end, in 2024, General Assembly agreed to a new lay ministry of Elders in Local Leadership. In 2025, as part of a collaboration with the Education and Learning Committee, the Children's and Youth Work Committee and the Worship, Faith and Order Committee, Ministries is looking at a new commissioned ministry of Children's and Youth Workers. Ministries continues to look at other forms of ministry that can be funded by the M&M fund.

- **Safeguarding**

The safeguarding central team worked collaboratively with other departments across the denomination on several areas this year including Ministries and Children and

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Youth, where our work overlaps and joined up working has the best outcome. This has included areas such as training, policy development and team meetings.

We added the role of Case Work Supervisor to the team in 2024 which has had the benefit of being able to support synod safeguarding officers who work in isolation in synods to have someone central to support them and ensure compliance across the denomination. The engagement with this role has been variable from synod to synod but all know that the role is there for their support.

The team continued to keep abreast of changes in legislation and lessons learnt from reviews from other faith organisations, which are discussed at the Safeguarding Committee and recommendations are brought for changes needed as the URC. We also continue to use the data collected from the Annual Church Safeguarding Returns to shape our agenda on safeguarding.

- **Mission**

Once again there was a large presence at the Greenbelt faith festival at Boughton House, near Kettering. The URC provided an affordable café venue, with music and talks to explain the ethos of the denomination. An online service was held from Greenbelt in conjunction with the online congregation of yoURChurch.

The URC responds to issues of public policy and social justice through its shared involvement with the ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). In 2024 the team focused on supporting churches and congregations in the context of a general election year.

Following on from the 2022 official recognition of our historic involvement in the transatlantic slave trade in the form of a formal apology, the denomination delivered anti-racist training to key groups across the URC. Global and Intercultural Ministries continued to focus on racial justice – within the URC, ecumenically, and in wider society. As part of the Legacies of Slavery work, a pilgrimage to Jamaica was organised in which the written apology was handed over in person. Other global work mainly focused on the Partners in Mission Programme, supporting individuals from overseas serving in the URC, and being sent by the URC to serve in partner contexts.

Mission staff continued to support the work of synod mission enablers and pioneer ministers, especially in the light of an Assembly Executive resolution to offer a pioneer minister to each Synod with the aim of creating new worship communities in the URC.

Commitment for Life is the URC's global justice programme. We partner with Christian Aid and Global Justice Now. We enable local congregations to deepen their prayer, insight and advocacy for global justice. In 2024 the programme continued to focus on three partner regions: Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, but added to that we had specific appeals during the year for Gaza and Myanmar which attracted vital donations to these war-torn regions.

Mission staff members continued to develop good ecumenical and interfaith relations. There was a major report to General Assembly with accompanying resolutions on the Gaza crisis. We have supported our global ecumenical partners, Council for World Mission, Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe, World Council of Reformed Churches and World Council of Churches. Once again there were several events linking the URC with partner churches in the Pfalz region of Germany.

- **Equalities**

Much of the work of the committee is in the promotion and encouragement of inclusion, equality and diversity within the denomination. This is achieved through established links with the other Assembly committees as well as by being alert to the work undertaken on Assembly's behalf by bodies such as the JPIT and by members of staff but particularly the work around racial justice and intercultural ministry.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

In 2024 the committee has continued to explore ways to support members of the Trans community within and across the church. New resources will be available to churches and synods in 2025. Another area of focus in 2024 has been to support churches in providing good and appropriate information on their websites about building accessibility.

Communication is key when there is much activity in the life of the church but also as a consequence of the amount of change and therefore different channels are used by the Communications team who work from the Offices of General Assembly. They also seek to highlight mission and evangelism activities undertaken by local churches and to celebrate these. We were once again able to deliver the Community Project Awards in 2024 with Congregational, now awarding £9,000 in prizes to projects.

The denomination has previously made a bold commitment to achieve **net zero** by 2030 and while this was driven by the Mission Committee, it must be addressed throughout the Church for it to be achieved. The church continually looks for ways of reducing its carbon footprint and actively recycles wherever possible. It also encourages individual churches to be as 'green' as possible and promotes the Eco-Church award scheme. Throughout the governance structure of the Church we continued to embrace online meetings where possible to reduce our carbon footprint. Where in person gatherings are necessary, we have robust policies about modes of transport to be followed.

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING

This report represents the greenhouse gas ("GHG") emission quantified by the business for the financial year ending 31 December 2024.

The report has been prepared under the Companies (Directors' report) and Limited Liability Partnerships (Energy and Carbon Report) Regulations 2018, under which we are required to disclose our UK Energy use and associated GHG emissions. Specifically, we are required to report UK energy usage and emission derived from purchased electricity, gas and transport.

UK GHG emissions:

	2024 (Kgs CO ₂ e)	2023 (Kgs CO ₂ e)
Scope 1	-	-
Scope 2 – Location-based	26,346	30,679
Scope 2 – Market-based	-	-
Scope 3	45,500	47,450
Total Location-based emissions	<u>71,846</u>	<u>78,129</u>

Kgs CO ₂ e / employee	1.21	1.33
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Energy consumed in UK operations:

	2024 (kWh)	2023 (kWh)
Fuel combustion: natural gas	-	-
Purchased electricity	127,245	148,157
	<u>127,245</u>	<u>148,157</u>

Methodology

The report has been prepared in reference to the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard. An 'operational control' approach has been used to define the GHG emissions boundary. This approach captures emissions associated with the operation of all buildings and business travel, to the extent required under the reporting scope. It includes the business travel of staff in respect of the Retired Ministers' Housing Society, URC staff and central appointments, but

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excludes travel by volunteers. It also excludes the building costs of synod offices, local church buildings, minister manses and homes provided for retired ministers.

Emissions have been calculated using the conversion factors published by the UK Government on 8 July 2024.

There are no material omission from the mandatory reporting scope.

Energy efficiency initiatives

The Church has taken steps to improve the energy efficiency of its operations and reduce its carbon footprint. The actions taken include:

- Encouraging online committee meetings where possible
- Limiting international travel
- Using trains instead of flights for travel into Europe

Additionally, the Retired Ministers' Housing Society have embarked on a project to improve the energy efficient ratings of its properties.

Resourcing the work of the United Reformed Church

All the above must be set in the context of the financial resources of the URC, which continue to be carefully managed in an uncertain economic climate. Detail of the latest year is given in the financial review below, broader trends also need to be considered. Among these are:

- Giving to central funds of the URC from our local churches and synods dropped by £100k in 2024.
- The investments of the URC continued to produce a steady income stream and the accounts show investment income of £2,332k (which included income from mixed motive investment property). There was modest growth in investment values and the accounts reflect an unrealised gain on our investments of £1,680k for the year, an increase of about 2.7%.
- The valuation of the Ministers' Pension Fund at 1 January 2024 reflected a surplus of £4.6m and the new Schedule of contributions signed in November 2024 noted that no further deficit contributions were required at this point. For FRS102 purposes, the fund showed a surplus of £29.3m at 31 December 2024. This surplus has not been recognised in the accounts as there is no unconditional right to that surplus. Work to achieve a buy-out of the pension scheme is progressing well with the aim to achieve this in the first half of 2026.
- The United Reformed Church Final Salary Scheme saw the liabilities decrease by £1.1 million while asset values decreased by £2.9 million. The scheme remained in surplus for FRS 102 purposes amounting to £1,688k.

Managing the Assets

Investments & Investment Policy

The charitable company acts as corporate charity trustee of the central funds of the United Reformed Church. The powers of investment are given under the memorandum and articles of association of the charitable company. The Investment Committee of the Church, which reports to the charitable company, keeps under review the investment policy and monitors the performance of the fund managers. All investments are held in pooled funds that aim to comply with the ethical policies agreed by the Church through its General Assembly.

The Investment Committee continued to monitor the investments throughout 2024.

Properties

The charitable company is responsible for the management of the properties included in its balance sheet.

Risk Management

The charitable company continues to monitor the risks with which the central administration of the Church is faced. The risks which are deemed as having the highest impact and likelihood are given particular attention.

There are areas of risk which are constant areas of attention: Those risks fall broadly into three areas:

- risks associated with serious reputational damage particularly with regard to safeguarding matters
- risks associated with societal changes, the general economic situation and consequent reduction in resource.
- risks associated with governance when the work of the General Assembly committees are so interconnected and interdependent.

Reputational matters are taken very seriously and the Church has a process in place whereby anyone concerned that a matter may receive unfavourable publicity refers that matter to the communications department who will advise on its handling or, if the matter is particularly sensitive, will handle it directly. The General Secretary is made aware of all issues and will intervene personally if appropriate.

The Church continues to closely monitor the level of M&M giving and regularly discusses with the synods the outlook for this giving. The Church also monitors the number of stipendiary ministers and controls the number of new ministers coming into service through Certificates of Eligibility. There is also a review currently going on to reduce the costs of the General Assembly Office to help reduce deficits.

The safeguarding of children and adults at risk is seen as a key responsibility of the Church. *Good Practice 6* was launched in October 2023 and is now well embedded in the life of the Church. Local churches are required to report annually on safeguarding matters to their synod's safeguarding officer. A Safeguarding Advisor at the Offices of Assembly, together with the synods' own safeguarding officers, is available to offer advice and guidance to churches. DBS/PVG checks are mandatory for all active ministers and key officers including all who work with children.

Further details about safeguarding are to be found in the 'Safeguarding' section on page 8.

The Business Committee was given a new remit during 2023 and this enables an increased overview of the work of General Assembly committees. This changed remit alongside the work which is ongoing in relation to the Church Life Review play a significant role in managing the governance related risks.

There are specific areas of risk which are the focus of work for 2025 and these include:-

- Reducing the overall financial deficit which will involve numerous strands of work
- Developing a new approach to ministerial discipline

Future Developments

The work on Governance will continue in 2025. This is relevant from a risk management perspective but is also necessary to improve coordination to bring efficiencies and to better release energy and resources for mission and evangelism. There is an expectation that we will have brought our legal services in house in 2025, and that this role will be supported by a Head of Governance Services. A key area of their work will be a new Ministerial Discipline Process. At Assembly Executive in February 2025 it was agreed that a working group would continue to engage with Ed Morgan KC as they prepare new rules and processes for a revised procedure. It is anticipated that the new process will be implemented in 2025.

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We will continue to refine the structure of the General Assembly Committees. The principles of this were agreed at Assembly Executive in February 2025 and will come to General Assembly in July 2025 to be implemented thereafter. This will make the decision-making processes more efficient and will require a smaller volunteer base. It is anticipated this will also bring improvements in risk management. Alongside this work on the Committees of General Assembly, we will also explore the URC Trust becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a view to that coming into effect in 2026.

With the planned changes to the General Assembly Committee structure and the changes the Church Life Review will bring, it is right that the staff structures and associated roles are reviewed. As well as this strategic need there is also a financial driver. The restructure was announced to the staff team at the end of February 2025 and it is anticipated that formal redundancy consultations will take place during May and June 2025. Any changes will therefore take effect before the end of 2025.

Following the risk management review in 2023 and 2024, training will be offered to all General Assembly committee convenors and secretaries to equip them in following the developed approach and to support the envisaged committee changes.

It was noted above that safeguarding is an area of continual development which is essential to our risk management. Such development will continue in 2025 with a denomination wide quality audit tool and an updated safeguarding training matrix. The current strategic safeguarding plan concludes in 2025 and a working group is looking at the development of a new plan.

As the URC continues to seek to be meaningfully intergenerational, work continues to support the discipleship of children and young adults. Plans for 2025 include Junction 25 ecumenical weekend for 18-25s, first Youth Assembly at a new venue, new residential for 11-14s, launch of Children's Ministry Essentials training, resources to support baptism and communion, resources to foster creative connections with 18-25s, further development of intergenerational focus, and taking proposals for a new formal ministry to General Assembly.

A significant focus of 2025 will be strategic and operational work that will help address the financial deficit. This work will be in the following areas:-

- General Assembly to set priorities which will shape activity and resource allocation. This will also assist the Trustees in fulfilling their duties.
- A review of staffing levels and structures
- Implementation of a budget management policy
- Examining the ministerial and lay education needs to enable us to address the funding levels provided to the RCLs.
- Service Level Agreements with RMHS and Westminster College.
- The Ministerial Pension Scheme which was closed to future accrual in February 2023, is anticipated to move to buy in with an insurer in 2025 and then to buy out in 2026.

Section 172 of the Companies Act

In summary, as required by Section 172 of the 2006 Companies Act, the Directors must act in a way they consider, in good, faith, would be most likely to promote the success of the charitable company for the benefit of its members as a whole and, in doing so, have regard (amongst other matters) to:

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

- the likely consequences of any decision in the long term
- the interests of the charitable company's employees
- the need to foster the charitable company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- the impact of the charitable company's operations on the community and environment
- the desirability of the charitable company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct and
- the need to act fairly as between members of the charitable company.

To achieve these aims, the Directors are kept informed of the long-term ambitions and needs of the Church as expressed by General Assembly and Assembly Executive and take this into consideration when making decisions. The Church has a Resources Committee and Remuneration Committee that attend to employee interests and pertinent matters from these are brought to the attention of the Directors. The Church has a policy of paying all suppliers in a timely manner with invoices and expense claims generally settled within a week of receipt. The Directors are guided by the Church's environmental policies and wherever possible, will ensure that their decisions are made within this framework. The Church's reputation is a high priority for the Directors and they seek to ensure that no decisions are made which would adversely affect this. They are kept up to date with guidance for charity trustees and training is provided in areas where this is deemed necessary. Furthermore, the Church's legal advisor attends the Directors' meetings and provides input into discussions where legal issues are involved.

Financial Review

The financial statements show the consolidated income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of those trusts and other funds that the charitable company administers and holds as charity trustee for the benefit of the URC under the overall authority of the General Assembly. These represent the assets of the URC that the charitable company manages on its behalf and applies towards its charitable purposes. They include the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited (RMHS).

The Resources Committee of the Church is responsible for the general financial oversight of funds administered for the benefit of the URC, its long-term financial planning, and the preparation and control of its budget under the authority of Assembly Executive, General Assembly and the charitable company. The Committee ensures that proper procedures are in place for the maintenance of accounting records, controlling and monitoring the budgetary process, and the preparation of financial statements in compliance with applicable United Kingdom law and accounting standards. To this end the Committee meets with the auditors at least once a year. The Committee may take such decisions with regard to the finances of the Church as are necessary within the policies set by the General Assembly.

Reserves Policy

The Consolidated Balance Sheet on page 24 shows the disposition of the various charity funds totalling £133,394 as at 31 December 2024 (2023: £131,174). The term "reserves" describes that part of a charity's income funds that is freely available. Much of the funds are invested in property or restricted in use. The unrestricted fund net assets readily available are £16,347k (2023: £14,212k). The Resources Committee reviews the policy annually and have taken a risk-based approach to setting a reserves target. The Committee felt that the main risks facing the trust related to income from church and synod giving not reaching the budgeted level and, although none are known of at the moment, the possibility of a legal claim arising which would create a financial cost to the church. In addition, it was felt prudent to have reserves to cover at least 6 months expenditure.

The Committee also considered the guarantee to the ministers' pension fund (see notes 22 to 23) but felt that the risk of this now being called up was minimal. The restricted reserves held in the Pension Deficit Fund (see note 21) were considered sufficient to cover any liabilities that may arise in respect of the pension fund.

Based on the assessment above, the Committee felt that the Trust should aim to maintain its reserves of at least £12.5m.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

The current level of reserves held is well above this target level. With the Church Life Review likely to make significant changes to how the church operates, there is likely to be a need to use some of the reserves to implement the changes, but as yet, it is difficult to estimate what form this would take and the level of funding needed.

Grant making

Grants are made on the recommendation of the relevant committee. Each application is assessed on its individual merits.

2024 Financial Results

The results for 2024 are set out in more detail in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities on page 22. This shows that there was, overall, an increase in funds in the year of £2,220k. The following table shows the breakdown of the results for 2024 compared with those for the previous year.

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	16,216	16,316
Donations, grants and legacies	2,533	7,593
Income from charitable activities	1,022	816
Investment income	2,332	2,210
Other income	2,261	1,759
Total income	24,364	28,694
Expenditure:		
Charitable activities	24,654	26,641
Total expended	24,654	26,641
Net (expense)/income from operating activities	(290)	2,053
Gains on investment assets	1,638	4,910
Net income	1,348	6,963
Actuarial (loss)/gain on pension schemes	833	4
	2,181	6,967

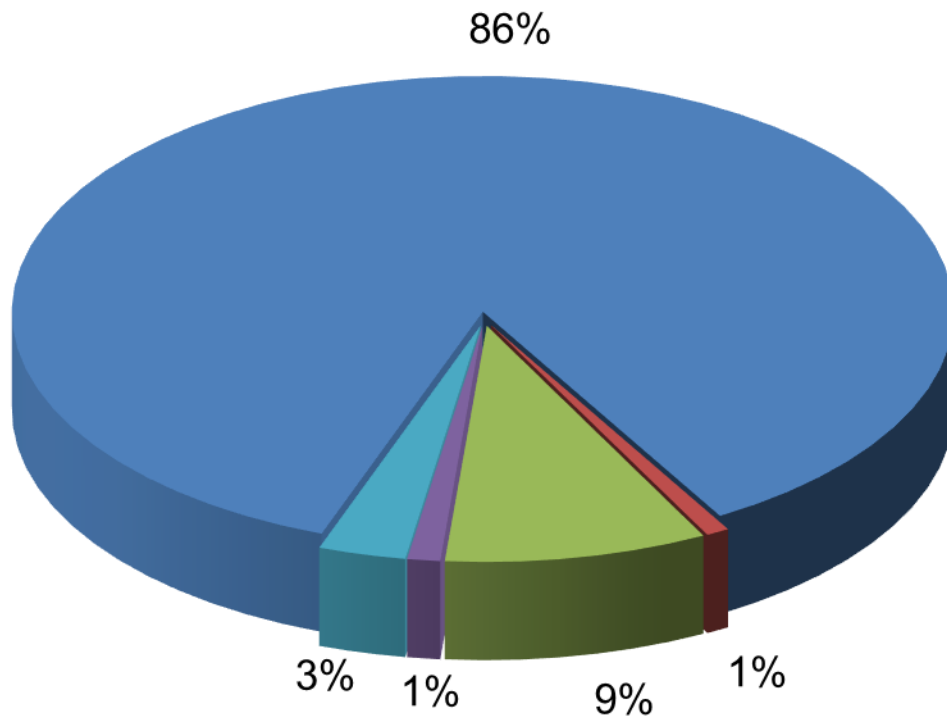
Ministry and Mission Fund contributions

The pie chart on page 15 gives a visual picture of total unrestricted income, showing that 86% of our unrestricted income comes from Ministry and Mission Fund contributions, which totalled just over £16.2 million. We are extremely grateful for the faithful and regular giving that this represents, enabling the Church to support ministry and mission across our three nations, and sustain the major way in which all members of the Church fund, in partnership, all our work for the kingdom of God. The pie chart of total unrestricted expenditure on page 16 shows that 80% of our unrestricted expenditure, totalling £16.0 million is used to provide ministry and a further 9% (£1.8 million) is used to provide financial resources to train and equip people for ministry.

Donations, grants and legacies

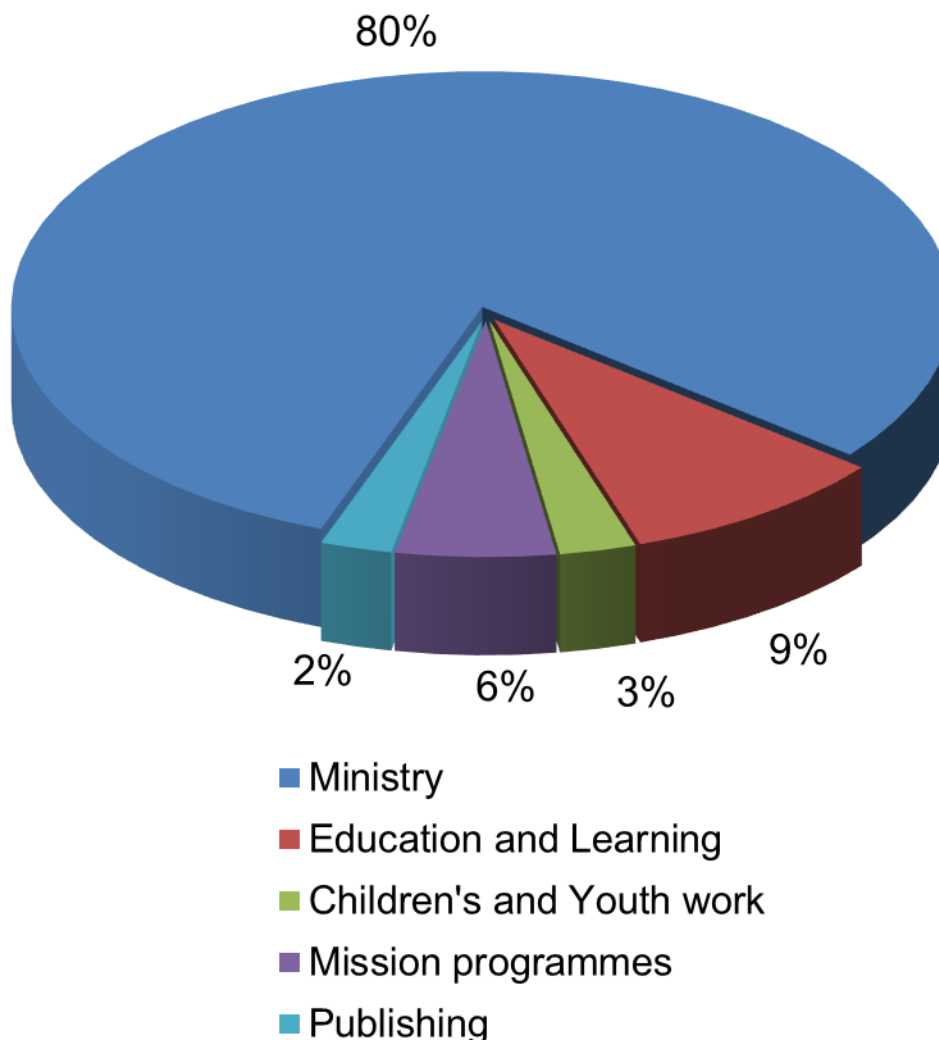
We are very grateful for regular grants from a number of trusts, detailed in note 2 to the financial statements, as well as for many other donations. Apart from general donations the Trust received donations totalling just over £1.4 million from the synods towards helping pay the deficit contribution to the Ministers' Pension Fund. Commitment for Life donations from churches and individuals decreased from £267k to £231k. Legacies bequeathed for general purposes are held in a separate designated Legacy Fund, available for projects not covered by regular budgets. As at 31 December 2024 the balance in this fund stood at £728k (2023: £672K). Grants paid from this fund totalled £82k in 2024 (2023: £101k) with a further £166k included in creditors having been committed for future payment.

**Unrestricted Income - £18.8m
Year ended 31 December 2024**



- Ministry and Mission Fund contributions
- Donations, grants and legacies
- Investment income
- Income from charitable activities
- Other income

Unrestricted Expenditure - £19.9m Year ended 31 December 2024



Investment income

In 2024 investment income showed an increase of 5.5%. The total was £2,332k in 2024 compared to £2,210k in 2023. Total investment income includes rental income on the mixed motive property.

Income from charitable activities

This income includes rental from the retired ministers' housing properties, and from sales of publications and subscriptions to *Reform* magazine.

Other income

Most of this income of £2,261k (2023: £1,759k) represents net gains from sales of housing properties when they fall vacant. £432k (2023: £258k) came from selling properties for ministers in central roles and £1,694k (2023: £1,456k) came from selling homes for retired ministers. The proceeds of the latter are used to acquire properties for retiring ministers or sometimes for rehousing them in later years. In 2024, 6 properties were bought and 19 were sold.

Expenditure on Charitable activities

These costs are analysed in note 5 on page 30 and include a share of support costs.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

Ministry: £19,996k. The maintenance of ministry is the most important charge on the Church's resources. This sum pays for the stipends, social security and pension costs of our stipendiary ministers and CRCWs (who averaged 302 in number over the year) and includes all costs of the Synod Moderators. The total also includes costs relating to safeguarding.

Education and Learning: £2,067k. The considerable commitment of resources to training ministers has continued. This sum includes our support for our RCLs, which reflects their wider role in providing learning opportunities for the whole Church, as well as direct support of those training for ministry. Other costs relate to ongoing lay development, including the Stepwise programme.

Mission Programmes: £1,479k. The Mission Committee and team continue to progress longer-term strategies, including the Commitment for Life programme and have continued to support the Joint Public Issues Team and various interdenominational and interfaith organisations.

Children's and Youth Work: £570k. Children & Youth Work continued to run Youth Assembly and a variety of programmes.

Publishing: £545k. The department continues to publish *Reform*, the denomination's magazine. They also run the on-line bookshop which offers a wide variety of book, merchandise and URC branded items. The denomination continued to help with their websites through iChurch.

Gains on investment assets

The change in investment values from the beginning to end of the year, broken down by fund, is shown in the Summary of Fund Movements in note 19. Most of the funds are invested with CCLA and the investment committee continues to monitor their performance and press on ethical issues where needed. In monetary terms, investments increased by £1.6 million during the year with markets faring relatively well. There was a slight net upward revaluation of £40k on the investment property. Investment gains and losses over time are shown in the five year summary on page 50.

Actuarial gains on pension obligations

The URC has obligations to two defined benefit pension schemes (see notes 22 to 24). Both funds were showing surplus positions for FRS102 purposes as at 31 December 2024. These surpluses have not been recognised in these accounts. Both pension schemes were closed to future accrual at the end of February 2023.

The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF)

The Trust is required to take full account of any actuarial losses of the MPF. An increase in the discount factor resulted in the pension liabilities in 2024 decreasing by £21.5m while the fund's diversified investments decreased in value by just under £10m. The asset portfolio has been largely de-risked, and the fund now shows a surplus of £29.4m using the FRS102 basis of valuation, but because the Trust does not have an unconditional right to the surplus, this has not been recognised. The Church made the required deficit contributions to fund up to November 2024 when the new Schedule of Contributions from the triennial valuation of the fund at 1 January 2024 noted that deficit contributions are no longer needed at this stage.

The United Reformed Church Final Salary Scheme (FSS), which is mainly for lay staff, reported a decrease in the surplus of £1,842k. This was mainly due to a decrease in the scheme assets. The scheme remains in a net asset position in this scheme but because the Trust does not have an unconditional right to the surplus, this has not been recognised.

More details are given in notes 22 to 24 to the financial statements on pages 42 to 45.

TRUSTEES' REPORT CONTINUED

STATEMENT OF THE TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The directors of the charitable company are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements.

Company law requires the charitable company to prepare financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the charitable company is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The charitable company is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company, and the funds it is responsible for 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 charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the charitable company is aware:

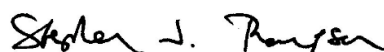
- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the charitable company has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make itself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The charitable company is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

The company by its directors has approved this Report. Those wanting more information or explanations about any aspect of the Church's finances are encouraged to address their enquiries to the Treasurer.

Signed on behalf of the directors of the charitable company



Dr Stephen Thompson

Deputy Chair

22 September 2025

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCH TRUST LIMITED

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of United Reformed Church Trust Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the Group and Parent Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2024 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs(UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained in the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

Andrew Stickland (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor

30 September 2025

9 Appold Street
London
EC2A 2AP

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

					2024	2024	2023
	Note	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Capital Funds	Total	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	funds	Trust
						Only	funds
						£'000	£'000
Donations and legacies							
Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	2(a)	16,216	0	0	0	16,216	16,316
Grants receivable	2(b)	142	0	0	0	142	155
Legacies		0	169	562	0	731	650
Commitment for Life donations		0	0	231	0	231	267
Other donations	2(c)	8	0	1,417	4	1,429	6,521
		150	169	2,210	4	2,533	7,593
Charitable activities							
Ministry	3	0	0	809	0	809	598
Education and Learning		2	0	0	0	2	2
Children's and Youth work		30	0	0	0	30	25
Mission programmes		0	0	0	0	0	1
Publishing		181	0	0	0	181	190
		213	0	809	0	1,022	816
Other trading activities							
		0	0	0	0	0	0
Investment income	4	1,699	34	599	0	2,332	2,210
Other income							
Gains on sale of properties		432	0	1,694	0	2,126	1,714
Other income		134	0	1	0	135	45
		566	0	1,695	0	2,261	1,759
<i>Total income and endowments</i>		18,844	203	5,313	4	24,364	28,694
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds:							
Trading expenditure		0	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable activities							
Ministry	5	15,990	273	3,733	0	19,996	21,675
Education and Learning		1,839	30	198	0	2,067	2,452
Children's and Youth work		523	6	41	0	570	556
Mission programmes		1,094	16	369	0	1,479	1,457
Publishing		491	8	46	0	545	501
Other expenditure		0	0	0	0	0	0
		19,937	333	4,387	0	24,657	26,641
<i>Total expended</i>		19,937	333	4,387	0	24,657	26,641
Surplus from charitable and trading activities		(1,093)	(130)	926	4	(293)	2,053
Net gains/ (Loss)on investment assets		437	36	331	834	1,638	4,910
<i>Net income</i>		(656)	(94)	1,257	838	1,345	6,963
Transfers between funds		1,605	(1,792)	187	0	0	0
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension schemes	22	0	0	833	0	833	4
<i>Net movement in funds</i>		949	(1,886)	2,277	838	2,178	6,967
Reconciliation of Funds							
Total funds brought forward		27,336	4,115	67,139	32,584	131,174	124,207
Total funds carried forward		28,285	2,229	69,416	33,422	133,352	131,174

All amounts relate to continuing operations.

There is no material difference between the net incoming resources stated above and their historical cost equivalents.

All gains and losses recognised in the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

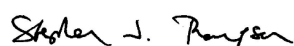
The Companies Act income and expenditure account has been included in note 32.

The notes on pages 24 to 46 form an integral part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND TRUST BALANCE SHEETS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	Consolidated 2024 £'000	Consolidated 2023 £'000	Trust 2024 £'000	Trust 2023 £'000
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	11	252	235	252	235
Tangible assets	11				
Houses for retired ministers		40,879	39,972	446	347
Houses for serving ministers		9,236	8,200	9,236	8,200
Other properties		1,949	2,603	1,949	2,603
Total properties		52,064	50,775	11,631	11,150
Cars and equipment		69	74	69	74
		52,385	51,084	11,952	11,459
Investments and loans					
Mixed motive investment property	12	2,105	2,105	2,105	2,105
Mixed use investment property	12a	800	728	800	728
Investments	13	61,626	59,432	61,626	59,432
Programme-related investments	14	244	244	244	244
Loans, excluding inter-fund loans	15	584	191	3,434	4,042
		65,359	62,700	68,209	66,551
Current assets					
Stock		-	-	-	-
Debtors	16	2,606	5,136	2,633	5,497
Bank balances and money on call		15,811	16,158	11,809	10,944
		18,417	21,294	14,442	16,441
Current liabilities	17	(1,280)	(1,542)	(1,072)	(1,132)
Net current assets		17,137	19,752	13,370	15,309
Total assets less current liabilities		134,881	133,536	93,531	93,319
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	22-24	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)
Other pension obligations	23	(1,525)	(2,358)	(1,525)	(2,358)
Net assets including pension liability		<u>133,352</u>	<u>131,174</u>	<u>92,002</u>	<u>90,957</u>
Unrestricted income funds					
General reserves		20,215	19,703	20,215	19,703
Revaluation reserve - investments		6,380	5,698	6,380	5,698
Revaluation reserve - property		1,694	1,939	1,694	1,939
Designated funds		2,229	4,115	2,229	4,115
Total unrestricted income funds before pension reserve		30,518	31,455	30,518	31,455
Pension reserve		(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)
Restricted income funds		69,416	67,139	28,066	26,922
Capital funds		33,422	32,584	33,422	32,584
TOTAL FUNDS	19-20	<u>133,352</u>	<u>131,174</u>	<u>92,002</u>	<u>90,957</u>

Approved by the Trustees on 22 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Dr Stephen Thompson
Deputy Chair



Alan Yates
Treasurer

United Reformed Church Trust is a company limited by guarantee, number 135934, and Registered Charity number 1133373.

The notes on pages 24 to 46 form an integral part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income/(expenditure) before other recognised gains and losses (see pg 21)	1,345	6,963
Adjustments for:		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	2,530	(2,051)
Decrease/(increase) in creditors	(262)	(27)
Loss/(gain) on investment assets	(1,638)	(4,910)
Profit on sale of tangible fixed assets	(2,125)	(1,714)
Depreciation and impairment	80	88
Other investment income	(2,332)	(2,210)
Cash endowment received	(4)	(4)
Difference between pension contributions and actuarial cost	-	(4)
Cash flows generated from operations	(3,751)	(10,832)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	(5,011)	(3,823)
Payments to acquire intangible fixed assets	(45)	(67)
Receipts from sales of tangible fixed assets	5,172	3,332
Receipts from sales of fixed asset investments	-	60
Loans and advances made to ministers	(20)	(26)
Loan made to Westminster College	(395)	-
Loans repaid by ministers	17	17
Loans repaid by churches	5	11
Investment income	2,332	2,210
	2,055	1,714
Cash flows from financing		
Addition to capital endowment	4	4
Net increase (decrease) in Cash (note 28)	(347)	(2,151)

The notes on pages 26 to 49 form an integral part of these financial statements.

NOTE 1 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Companies Act 2006. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April, 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

United Reformed Church Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

A separate Cash Flow Statement has not been presented for United Reformed Church Trust itself because it has made use of the exemptions afforded by Section 408 of the Companies Act 2006.

The presentation currency is pounds sterling and unless otherwise stated, figures are rounded to the nearest thousand (£000).

Going concern

The directors have considered possible events and conditions that might cast significant doubt on the ability of the Trust to continue as a going concern. The directors have made their assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of approval of these financial statements. In particular they have considered the Trust's forecasts and projections and have considered the longer term impact of the economic challenges and the diminishing giving to M&M on the viability of the Trust. In 2024, a request was made to synods to help top up the Ministry and Mission Fund contributions and maintain this at the 2023 level. The synods responded well to this request and M&M levels were just about maintained. The synods have indicated that they will be able to continue at this level for 2025. The 1 January 2024 valuation of the Ministers' Pension Fund reflected that contributions to the costs of the fund (amounting to £337k in 2024) are no longer required. Furthermore, in early 2025 the General Secretariat embarked on a major staff restructuring exercise which should result in significant savings. The Trust therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

The principal accounting policies, which have been applied consistently throughout the year, are set out below:

(i) Scope

The consolidated financial statements show the combined income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the charitable funds administered by the Trust for the purposes of the United Reformed Church under the overall authority of the General Assembly, and include the total financial operations of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited ("the society"). The society is a separate exempt charity registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. It is accounted for as a separate fund and branch of the Church in accordance with the SORP, and details are also given to reflect its legal status as a subsidiary charity.

(ii) Classification of funds

Unrestricted income funds may be spent generally for furthering the religious and charitable work of the Church.

Restricted income funds are funds whose use is restricted to specific purposes according to the terms on which the funds were received. However, if the purpose is one that forms part of the Church's regular expenditure and the income of the funds are fully spent each year, the restriction has no practical effect and funds with such restrictions are treated as unrestricted.

Capital funds (i.e. endowments) include some permanent endowments that are required to be retained but the income from these funds can be spent for the benefit of the Church subject, in certain cases, to specific restrictions contained in the original endowment. Other capital funds (i.e. expendable endowments) may be converted to income at the discretion of the trustees.

The main funds included in these financial statements, and their classification, are shown in notes 18 to 21.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(iii) Income

All incoming resources including voluntary income, income from activities for raising funds and investment income, is recognised in the SOFA when there is legal entitlement to the income, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

a. Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are accounted for on a receivable basis. In accordance with this policy, legacies are included when advice has been received from the personal representative of an estate that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount can be measured reliably. Gifts in kind are included within income at the value to the charity at the date of the gift. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

b. Grants receivable

Incoming grants are accounted for on a receivable basis. Incoming resources from grants, where there are service or performance deliverables required as conditions of the terms of the grant, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to payment through its performance, when the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and it is not deferred.

c. Ministry and Mission Fund contributions, investment income and other income

Ministry and Mission Fund contributions, investment income, income from charitable activities and other incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis. Contributions to the fund, based on local church pledges, are agreed annually in advance with each synod; amounts received in excess of, or shortfalls from the agreed contributions, are accounted for in the year.

d. Gains and losses on investments

Realised and unrealised gains and losses on investments are included in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they arise.

(iv) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and allocated to the appropriate heading in the financial statements. Any irrecoverable VAT is included with the costs to which it relates. Directly attributable costs are allocated to the main charitable activities; details are shown in notes 5 to 8. The support costs, including governance costs, included in note 7 relate to the whole of the charity's activities and a proportion of these costs is allocated to expenditure headings on a basis that is consistent with the use of the resources. Outgoing grants are accounted for on a payable basis. Grants payable are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when approved and this has been communicated to the applicant. The value of such grants unpaid at the end of the year is accrued.

(v) Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

(vi) Pensions

The Church operated a funded defined benefit pension scheme for ministers and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) receiving a stipend, known as The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund. The assets of the scheme are managed independently of the Church. Pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of an independent qualified actuary. This scheme was closed to future accrual on 28 March 2023.

The Church, together with most synod trusts, also used The United Reformed Church Final Salary Scheme, a multi-employer defined benefit scheme operated by TPT Retirement Solutions Trust, an independent pension provider to the not-for-profit sector. It provides trustee and asset management services, and pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of an independent qualified actuary. This scheme was also closed to future accrual on 28 February 2023.

For both schemes, under FRS102 paragraph 28 – 'Retirement benefits' – the amounts charged to expenditure are the current service costs, interest costs and expenses, which are included within charitable expenditure. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately and disclosed in the Statement of Financial Activities.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The assets of the pension schemes are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the attained age method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained triennially and are updated at each year end. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the Balance Sheet except where the scheme is in surplus and there is no unconditional right to that surplus. In this situation the scheme surplus is recognised at nil value in accordance with FRS102.

(vii) Intangible and tangible fixed assets

Intangible and tangible fixed assets having an initial cost of £1,000 or less are written off on acquisition. Assets having an initial cost greater than £1,000 are stated at cost when purchased and at valuation when received in specie. Property repairs are normally written off when incurred. Many properties used as houses for retired ministers are owned jointly with tenants or synods of the United Reformed Church. The value in the Balance Sheet of such properties is the cost (less any impairment charged) to the charity of the charity's share in the property.

Properties are maintained in a state of sound repair. The Finance Committee considers whether any impairment is necessary considering the lives of the properties and their residual value. Any material deficit between the anticipated recoverable amount of freehold property and its carrying value shown in the financial statements is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities. Depreciation is no longer charged on these properties on grounds of materiality. The value of land is not depreciated.

Depreciation is charged as a percentage of cost as follows:

Improvements to property with limited life	5 % pa
Cars, computers and photocopiers	25 % pa
Intangible assets, other furniture and equipment	10 % pa

Further details are given in note 11.

(viii) Operating leases

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as incurred.

(ix) Mixed motive investment properties

Mixed motive investment property comprises the portion of United Reformed Church House that is let on a commercial basis to other charities. It is recognised at fair value and is not depreciated.

(x) Mixed-use investment properties

Mixed use investment property comprises the portion of United Reformed Church House that is let on a commercial basis for residential purposes. It is recognised at fair value and is not depreciated.

(xi) Investments

Listed securities are included at market value at the Balance Sheet date. Unlisted securities are stated at cost as there is no readily ascertainable market price.

(xii) Programme-related investments

Programme-related investments comprise investments in entities whose aims are aligned to the charitable objectives of the trust and are shown at cost.

(xiii) Concessionary loans

Loans to advance the Church's charitable purposes are held within fixed assets and are stated at original cost and subsequently adjusted for any repayments or impairment.

(xiv) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

(xv) Critical accounting judgements and estimation

Significant areas of judgement in applying accounting policies are as follows:

- Provision is made for retirement obligations where advice is taken from independent actuaries
- Valuation of mixed motive and mixed use investments where use has been made of relevant market indices to update the formal valuations obtained in previous years
- Recoverability of concessionary loans based on management's assessment of recovery
- Impairment of houses held for serving and retired ministers

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTE 2 VOLUNTARY INCOME

(a)

Synods	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Northern	844	906
North Western	1,380	1,430
Mersey	857	855
Yorkshire	669	714
East Midlands	830	906
West Midlands	1,586	1,461
Eastern	1,918	1,819
South Western	998	1,115
Wessex	1,773	1,851
Thames North	1,991	1,929
Southern	2,369	2,339
Wales	466	473
Scotland	535	518
	16,216	16,316

(b) Grants Receivable

The Church receives income from a number of trusts. The significant ones are described below.

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Congregational Memorial Hall Trust ("CMHT")	57	115
Council for World Mission	65	40
Other grants	20	-
	142	155

Congregational Memorial Hall Trust

The United Reformed Church has a 70% interest in distributions from this Trust. In 2010 the trust distributed a share of half of its assets by way of a donation totalling £3,658k of investments. Income from the investments has replaced most of the grant. In 2024, the CMHT embarked on a project to relocate its library, consequently there was less available for distribution by way of grants.

Council for World Mission

The grants noted above were received to cover the costs of 2 South Korean ministers working for the URC.

(c) Donations

	2024	2022
	£'000	£'000
Other donations received	1,429	6,521

Included above are £1,374k (2023: £6,108K) received from synods as a contribution towards the pension fund deficit (see note 21).

NOTE 3 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

These comprise:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Retired Ministers' Housing rents	807	592
Publication and resource sales	120	100
Reform magazine - subscriptions and advertising	53	91
Other programmes - fees, grants and sales	42	33
	1,022	816

NOTE 4 INVESTMENT INCOME

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Unitised funds	1,831	1,793
Interest on short-term investment and bank deposits	342	260
Rental income	159	157
	2,332	2,210

NOTE 5 ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

The amount spent on charitable activities, including support costs, is summarised as follows:

2024	Direct programme expenditure £'000	Grant funding (note 6) £'000	Support costs (note 7) £'000	2024 Total £'000
Ministry	16,793	595	2,608	19,996
Education and Learning	1,309	395	363	2,067
Children's and Youth work	332	22	216	570
Mission programmes	656	512	311	1,479
Publishing	384	-	161	545
	19,474	1,524	3,659	24,657

2023	Direct programme expenditure £'000	Grant funding (note 6) £'000	Support costs (note 7) £'000	2023 Total £'000
Ministry	18,591	894	2,188	21,675
Education and Learning	1,145	452	855	2,452
Children's and Youth work	303	2	252	556
Mission programmes	642	336	479	1,457
Publishing	299	-	203	501
	20,980	1,684	3,977	26,641

NOTE 6 ANALYSIS OF GRANTS

2024	Grants to individuals £'000	Grants to institutions £'000	2024 Total £'000
Pension grants	277	-	277
Welfare and other ministry grants	287	19	306
Student maintenance and training	315	36	351
Local churches - mission and facilities	8	279	287
Chaplaincies	-	9	9
Ecumenical church bodies	-	14	14
Commitment for Life programme	3	233	236
Other programmes	2	42	44
	892	632	1,524

2023	Grants to individuals £'000	Grants to institutions £'000	2023 Total £'000
Pension grants	292	-	292
Welfare and other ministry grants	296	19	315
Student maintenance and training	378	28	406
Local churches - mission and facilities	15	328	343
Chaplaincies	-	9	9
Ecumenical church bodies	2	-	2
Commitment for Life programme	1	215	216

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Other programmes	2	99	101
	986	698	1,684

Major grants to institutions in the year (included above) were:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>£'000</u>
Christian Aid	Commitment for Life	173	213
Global Justice Now	Commitment for Life	12	15

NOTE 7 SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs comprise the premises costs of United Reformed Church House, and the staff and office costs in respect of: Central Secretariat (including Human Resources), Finance, Communications and Information Technology, and governance costs. These costs have been apportioned across the areas of charitable activity on the basis and in the amounts shown below.

	Premises costs £'000	Computer costs £'000	Staff and office costs £'000	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
Basis of apportionment	Area	Staff	Actual costs		
Ministry	80	82	2,446	2,608	2,188
Education and Learning	72	21	270	363	855
Children's and Youth work	88	72	56	216	252
Mission	96	72	143	311	479
Publishing	80	21	60	161	203
	416	268	2,975	3,659	3,977

NOTE 8 GOVERNANCE COSTS

Governance costs are included in support costs and total £633k (2023: £423k). This figure includes the remuneration of the auditors, amounting to £51k (2023: £50k) of which £36k relates to the audit of the Trust which includes an over accrual of £1k and the balance of £15k relates to the audits of its subsidiary charity. Other services provided by the auditors amounts to £19k.

NOTE 9 NOTIFIED LEGACIES

The Trust received notification of 1 (2023: nil) legacy (2023: nil) that has not been included in the financial statements because the conditions for recognition have not yet been met. The amount the notified legacy may be is dependant on the value of the shares in a particular company. The company is in the process of bidding for a government contract which, if successful will mean a legacy of around £500k. If the bid is unsuccessful, then the company will be worth very little and the legacy is likely to be an insignificant amount. It is not certain when the result of the bid will be known.

NOTE 10 STIPEND AND SALARY COSTS

During the year the following stipend and salary costs were incurred:

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

		2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Ministers and CRCWs: 302 (2023: 314)	Gross stipends	9,144	9,159
	Social security costs	934	909
	Other pension costs	3,202	6,518
		<u>13,280</u>	<u>16,586</u>

All stipend costs above are included within the costs of Ministry

Lay staff: 68 (2023: 69)	Gross salaries	2,688	2,540
	Social security costs	256	238
	Other pension costs	399	394
	Redundancy costs	19	-
		<u>3,362</u>	<u>3,172</u>

Salary costs have been apportioned as follows:

Ministry	1,947	1,701
Education and Learning	245	300
Children's and Youth work	263	246
Mission programmes	403	451
Publishing	504	474
	<u>3,362</u>	<u>3,172</u>

The minister and staff numbers shown represent the average for the year. They include staff working at Church House in London.

During 2024, one (2023: two) employee received emoluments, excluding employer pension contributions greater than £60,000 but less than £69,999, two (2023: nil) employees greater than £70,000 but less than £79,999 and one (2023: nil) employee greater than £80,000 but less than £89,999.

Key management personnel are the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary Discipleship, the Deputy General Secretary Mission and the Chief Operating Officer ('COO'). The post of the COO is filled by a lay person while the other 3 posts are filled by ministers. The total of employee benefits paid to key management personnel in 2024 was £303k (2023: £294k).

In addition, a great amount of time, the value of which it is impossible to reflect in these financial statements, is donated by thousands of volunteers throughout the United Kingdom.

Individuals acting as a director for the company received no remuneration in respect of their services as director, other than the reimbursement of travel expenses to 6 individuals during the year ended 31 December 2024 totalling £1,841 (2023: 9 individuals totalling £1,824)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTE 11

TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

(a) Consolidated:

	Houses for retired ministers £'000	Houses for serving ministers £'000	Other properties £'000	Cars and equipment £'000	Total Tangible Fixed assets £'000	Computer Software £'000
Cost						
At 1 January, 2024	40,275	8,240	2,847	269	51,631	289
Additions	2,972	2,017	-	22	5,011	45
Reclassified as Investment Property	-	-	(673)	-	(673)	-
Disposals	(2,093)	(995)	-	(74)	(3,162)	-
At 31 December, 2024	41,154	9,262	2,174	217	52,807	334
Accumulated depreciation and impairment						
At 1 January, 2024	303	40	244	195	782	54
Charge for year	-	-	26	26	52	28
Reclassified as Mixed Motive	-	-	(45)	-	(45)	-
Disposals	(28)	(14)	-	(73)	(115)	-
At 31 December, 2024	275	26	225	148	674	82
Net book value						
At 31 December, 2024	40,879	9,236	1,949	69	52,133	252
At 31 December, 2023	39,972	8,200	2,603	74	50,849	235

Of the land and buildings included above, £4,198k (2023: £4,206k) are leasehold. At 31 December 2024, 250 (2023: 271) houses were owned for housing retired ministers and 16 (2023: 17) houses for serving ministers. Although the total market value of all properties is not practicable to quantify, it is considerably in excess of the carrying value shown above. Other properties include premises improvements at United Reformed Church House and the Yardley Hastings Centre. At the Yardley Hastings property, the local church continues to use part of the premises and the remainder is leased to a local charity under a long-term lease. The URCT's interest in the property, has been transferred to Investment property and revalued to market value.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(b) Trust:

	Houses for retired ministers £'000	Houses for serving ministers £'000	Other properties £'000	Cars and equipment £'000	Total Tangible fixed assets £'000	Computer software £'000
Cost						
At 1 January 2024	369	8,240	2,847	269	11,725	289
Additions	99	2,017	-	22	2,138	45
Reclassified as Mixed Motive	-	-	(673)	-	(673)	-
Disposals	-	(995)	-	(74)	(1,069)	-
At 31 December 2024	468	9,262	2,174	217	12,121	334
Accumulated depreciation and impairment						
At 1 January 2024	22	40	244	195	501	54
Charge for year	-	-	26	26	52	28
Reclassified as Mixed Motive	-	-	(45)	-	(45)	-
Disposals	-	(14)	-	(73)	(87)	-
At 31 December 2024	22	26	225	148	421	82
Net book value						
At 31 December 2024	446	9,236	1,949	69	11,700	252
At 31 December 2023	347	8,200	2,603	74	11,224	235

NOTE 12

MIXED MOTIVE INVESTMENT PROPERTY

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fixed asset investments				
Carrying value at beginning of year	2,105	2,222	2,105	2,222
Net gains/(losses) on revaluation	-	(117)	-	(117)
Carrying value at end of year	2,105	2,105	2,105	2,105

Mixed motive investment property consists of the second floor of URC Church House which is rented out on a commercial let to another charity. The second floor of URC Church House was formally valued by Allsop LLP on 6 November, 2017. The value of the mixed motive investment property at 31 December 2024 was calculated using rental yields.

NOTE 12a MIXED-USE INVESTMENT PROPERTY

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed asset investments				
Carrying value at beginning of year	728	856	728	856
Net gains/(losses) on revaluation	72	(128)	72	(128)
Carrying value at end of year	800	728	800	728

Mixed use investment property consists of the third floor of URC Church House which is rented out on a commercial let for residential purposes. The property was formally valued by Allsop LLP on 6 November, 2017. The value of the mixed use investment property at 31 December, 2024 was calculated using rental yields.

NOTE 13 INVESTMENTS

	Consolidated and Trust			
	Unitised funds	Property	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed asset investments				
Carrying value at beginning of year	59,432	-	59,432	54,336
Additions	220	-	220	-
Reclassified from fixed assets	-	628	628	-
Sales proceeds	(220)	-	(220)	(59)
Net gains/(losses) on revaluation	1,608	(42)	1,566	5,155
Carrying value at end of year	61,040	586	61,626	59,432

	Consolidated and Trust			
	Unitised funds	Property	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Investments comprise units in UK based Common Investment Funds at market value, as follows:				
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund	60,019	-	60,019	58,407
COIF Charities Property Fund	1,021	-	1,021	1,025
Investment Property	-	586	586	-
	61,040	586	61,626	59,432
Investments at book cost	34,016	628	34,644	33,972

The directors believe that the carrying value of the investments is supported by their underlying net assets.

Included within investments held in the COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund is £5,427k held to meet the 'other pension obligation' as set out in note 23.

Investment properties comprises the portion of the buildings at Yardley Hastings URC which are rented out on a commercial let to another charity.

Financial assets measured at fair value are £61,626k.

NOTE 14 PROGRAMME-RELATED INVESTMENTS

Programme-related investments are investments made in pursuit of the Trust's charitable purposes, the primary motivation for which is not financial but to further our objectives and programme. The principal programme-related investment is £200k as a Founder Member of Luther King House Educational Trust, which owns the property that houses our resource centre for learning at Northern College. Smaller investments are held in Oikocredit and the Churches' Mutual Credit Union. These smaller investments held as social investments and are held at cost and not revalued.

NOTE 15 CONCESSIONARY LOANS

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
External loans comprise:				
To ministers	49	46	49	46
To Churches	140	145	140	145
To Westminster College	395	-	395	-
Inter-fund concessionary loans	-	-	2,850	3,851
	584	191	3,434	4,042

Loans to ministers are generally interest free and repayable over 3 to 5 years. Movements on the loan balances were as follows:

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Balance at 1 January	46	37	46	37
Repaid in the year	(17)	(17)	(17)	(17)
Advanced in the year	20	26	20	26
Balance at 31 December	49	46	49	46

Loans to churches comprises a long term loan to the Synod of Wales in respect of the Glamorgan Chaplaincy and loans from the Church Building Fund to local churches. The loan to the Glamorgan Chaplaincy is interest free and is repayable if the chaplaincy is wound up. The loans from the Church Building Fund are repayable over 8 years and interest is charged using the CCLA Charities Deposit Fund deposit rate.

The loan to Westminster College carries interest at the CCLA Charities Deposit Fund deposit rate. Under the terms of the loan, the URCT can waive the interest payable without prejudicing its right to charge interest in the future. The URCT agreed to waive the interest charge for 2024. Westminster College can repay the loan in whole or part at any time. The URCT can call up the loan after giving 1 year's notice.

Inter-fund concessionary loans represent the long-term indebtedness of the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited to the Church. Loans have been made available for the purchase of properties, for as long as they are required, to enable the Society to fulfil its objectives.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTE 16 DEBTORS

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Debtors comprise:				
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	199	-
Other debtors	1,711	4,330	1,688	4,733
Prepayments and accrued income	895	806	746	764
	2,606	5,136	2,633	5,497
Financial assets measured at amortised cost*	2,152	4,312	2,328	4,189

NOTE 17 CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Current liabilities comprise:				
Sums held for synods and congregations	52	50	-	-
Other creditors including taxation and social security	1,117	1,229	971	921
Accruals	111	263	101	211
	1,280	1,542	1,072	1,132
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost*	1,186	1,261	990	903

* Amortised cost is the historical cost of an asset or liability, adjusted for how it's been used or changed over time.

Movements in deferred income

	Consolidated		Trust	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Balance at 1 January	-	33	-	33
Transferred to income	-	(33)	-	(33)
Balance at 31 December	-	-	-	-

NOTE 18 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

The Ministry and Mission Fund is the general fund of the Church through which the bulk of income and expenditure, covered by the annual budget agreed by the Trustee and presented to Assembly Executive, is passed. Associated with it are two capital funds, Maintenance of the Ministry and Ministerial Training, the whole of whose income each year is transferred to the Ministry and Mission Fund, which is responsible for meeting ministry and training costs. These funds include £19m held as capital, most having been gifted by other trusts. These funds are invested and the income is used as intended. The capital is expendable by decision of the Trustee.

NOTE 19 SUMMARY OF FUND MOVEMENTS

2024 Fund Movements

	Funds at 1 Jan 2024 £'000s	Incoming resources £'000s	Resources expended £'000s	Transfers between funds £'000s	Gains/ (Losses) on investment assets £'000s	Actuarial (losses)/ gains £'000s	Funds at 31 Dec 2024 £'000s
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS							
Ministry and Mission Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	27,336	18,316	(19,937)	2,133	437	-	28,285
Ministerial Training Fund	-	37	-	(37)	-	-	-
	-	491	-	(491)	-	-	-
Consolidated & Trust	27,336	18,844	(19,937)	1,605	437	-	28,285
DESIGNATED FUNDS							
Legacy Fund	671	137	(83)	3	-	-	728
Discipleship Development Fund	971	61	(93)	(7)	32	-	964
Church Life Review Fund	683	5	(155)	-	4	-	537
Churches Energy Crisis Fund	1,790	-	(2)	(1,788)	-	-	-
Consolidated & Trust	4,115	203	(333)	(1,792)	36	-	2,229
RESTRICTED FUNDS (note 21)							
Church Buildings Fund	5,335	154	(145)	2	135	-	5,481
Retired Ministers' Housing Fund	5,478	9	(27)	-	-	-	5,460
Welfare Fund	24	8	-	-	-	-	32
Retired Ministers' Funds	2,076	159	(278)	13	124	833	2,927
Legacies of Slavery	-	-	-	250	-	-	250
Commitment For Life Fund	-	230	(184)	(46)	-	-	-
Pension Deficit Fund	8,389	1,374	(1,600)	-	-	-	8,163
Other Funds	5,623	308	(218)	(32)	72	-	5,753
Total Trust Funds	26,925	2,242	(2,452)	187	331	833	28,066
Retired Ministers' Housing Society	40,214	3,071	(1,935)	-	-	-	41,350
Total Consolidated Funds	67,139	5,313	(4,387)	187	331	833	69,416
CAPITAL FUNDS							
Ministry and Mission Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	7,251	-	-	-	188	-	7,439
Ministerial Training Fund	2,010	-	-	-	49	-	2,059
Church Buildings Funds	16,560	-	-	-	437	-	16,997
Retired Ministers' Housing Funds	184	-	-	-	(10)	-	174
Welfare Funds	391	-	-	-	-	-	391
Retired Ministers' Funds	1,058	-	-	-	29	-	1,087
Other Funds	388	-	-	-	11	-	399
	4,742	4	-	-	130	-	4,876
Consolidated & Trust	32,584	4	-	-	834	-	33,422

Transfers between funds generally represents use of restricted funds to cover items of expenditure in the general funds that fall within the objects of the specific restricted fund.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2023 Fund Movements

	Funds at 1 Jan 2023 £'000s	Incoming resources £'000s	Resources expended £'000s	Transfers between funds £'000s	Gains/ (Losses) on investment assets £'000s	Actuarial (losses)/ gains £'000s	Funds at 31 Dec 2023 £'000s
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS							
Ministry and Mission Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	27,839	18,088	(19,535)	(4)	944	4	27,336
Ministerial Training Fund	-	36	-	(36)	-	-	-
	-	478	-	(478)	-	-	-
Consolidated & Trust	27,839	18,602	(19,535)	(518)	944	4	27,336
DESIGNATED FUNDS							
Legacy Fund	1,089	169	(102)	(485)	-	-	671
Discipleship Development Fund	934	30	(81)	(1)	89	-	971
Church Life Review Fund (previously the Annenberg Fund)	180	5	(1)	485	14	-	683
Churches Energy Crisis Fund	2,000	-	(210)	-	-	-	1,790
Consolidated & Trust	4,203	204	(394)	(1)	103	-	4,115
RESTRICTED FUNDS (note 21)							
Church Buildings Fund	4,812	147	(65)	2	439	-	5,335
Retired Ministers' Housing Fund	5,489	9	(20)	-	-	-	5,478
Welfare Fund	16	8	-	-	-	-	24
Retired Ministers' Funds	1,794	157	(292)	12	405	-	2,076
Commitment For Life Fund	-	269	(215)	(54)	-	-	-
Pension Deficit Fund	6,481	6,108	(4,700)	500	-	-	8,389
Other Funds	5,103	261	(153)	59	353	-	5,623
Total Trust Funds	23,695	6,959	(5,445)	519	1,197	-	26,925
Retired Ministers' Housing Society	38,556	2,925	(1,267)	-	-	-	40,214
Total Consolidated Funds	62,251	9,884	(6,712)	519	1,197	-	67,139
CAPITAL FUNDS							
Ministry and Mission Maintenance of the Ministry Fund	6,639	-	-	-	612	-	7,251
Ministerial Training Fund	1,870	-	-	-	140	-	2,010
Church Buildings Funds	15,199	-	-	-	1,361	-	16,560
Retired Ministers' Housing Funds	184	-	-	-	-	-	184
Welfare Funds	391	-	-	-	-	-	391
Retired Ministers' Funds	963	-	-	-	95	-	1,058
Other Funds	353	-	-	-	35	-	388
	4,315	4	-	-	423	-	4,742
Consolidated & Trust	29,914	4	-	-	2,666	-	32,584

Designated funds: Income from unrestricted legacies is put into the Legacy Fund. Grants are made from the fund to churches and synods for mission focussed projects. The Discipleship Development Fund resulted from the sale of the Windermere Centre in 2017. It is used to give grants to help develop lay people for work in the church. The Churches Energy Crisis fund was set up late in 2022 in response to rising energy prices. The aim of the fund is to give financial support to churches struggling with these increases. In 2024 it was agreed at General Assembly to return these funds to general funds as the expected need did not arise.

NOTE 20 ANALYSIS OF CONSOLIDATED NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

2024 Analysis

ANALYSIS OF ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS – CONSOLIDATED

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Capital Funds	Total 2024
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Intangible assets	252	-	-	-	252
Property	10,747	-	40,434	884	52,065
Cars and equipment	69	-	-	-	69
Investments	13,905	983	14,547	32,435	61,870
Mixed motive/use properties	2,905	-	-	-	2,905
External loans	443	-	141	-	584
Inter fund loans	199	-	(199)	-	-
Net current assets	13,346	(116)	3,906	-	17,136
Pension reserve	(4)	-	(1,525)	-	(1,529)
Inter fund balances	(13,577)	1,362	12,112	103	-
Net assets	28,285	2,229	69,416	33,422	133,352

ANALYSIS OF ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS – TRUST

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Capital Funds	Total 2024
	£'000	£'000s	£'000	£'000	£'000
Intangible assets	252	-	-	-	252
Property	10,748	-	-	884	11,632
Cars and equipment	69	-	-	-	69
Investments	13,905	983	14,547	32,435	61,870
Mixed motive/use properties	2,905	-	-	-	2,905
External loans	443	-	2,991	-	3,434
Net current assets	13,544	(116)	(59)	-	13,369
Pension reserve	(4)	-	(1,525)	-	(1,529)
Inter fund balances	(13,577)	1,362	12,112	103	-
Net assets	28,285	2,229	28,066	33,422	92,002

2023 ANALYSIS OF ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS – CONSOLIDATED

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Capital Funds	Total 2023
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Intangible assets	235	-	-	-	235
Property	9,737	-	40,107	931	50,775
Cars and equipment	74	-	-	-	74
Investments	13,540	1,147	13,388	31,601	59,676
Mixed motive/use properties	2,833	-	-	-	2,833
External loans	47	-	144	-	191
Inter fund loans	944	-	(944)	-	-
Net current assets	14,536	(163)	5,378	-	19,751
Pension reserve	(4)	-	(2,358)	-	(2,362)
Inter fund balances	(14,606)	3,131	11,424	52	1
Net assets	27,336	4,115	67,139	32,584	131,174

2023 ANALYSIS OF ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS – TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Capital Funds	Total 2023
	£'000	£'000s	£'000	£'000	£'000
Intangible assets	235	-	-	-	235
Property	9,737	-	483	931	11,151
Cars and equipment	74	-	-	-	74
Investments	13,540	1,147	13,388	31,601	59,676
Investment properties	2,833	-	-	-	2,833
External loans	47	-	3,994	-	4,041
Net current assets	15,480	(163)	(9)	-	15,308
Pension reserve	(4)	-	(2,358)	-	(2,362)
Inter fund balances	(14,606)	3,131	11,424	52	1
Net assets	27,336	4,115	26,922	32,584	90,957

NOTE 21 RESTRICTED FUNDS

(a) Church Buildings Fund

This fund may be used in the upkeep and repair of the buildings of the local churches of the United Reformed Church and the maintenance of the services therein; in the improvement and extension of the buildings of such churches; and in the provision and erection of buildings for use for the purposes of such churches or as residences for ministers of the United Reformed Church. Both grants and loans are available for these purposes; notes 6 and 15 give some details.

(b) Retired Ministers' Housing Funds and Retired Ministers' Housing Society

The whole of these funds is utilised by the RMHS Board in providing accommodation for ministers and ministers' widow/ers or civil partners in their retirement. Income in 2024 included £5k from donations and £457k from legacies. Most of the remaining income arises from the profit on the sale of houses, the proceeds of which were largely re-invested in further house purchases. The indebtedness of the Society to the other funds of the Church is included in the Trust Balance Sheet and notes 15 to 17 as inter-fund loans and balances; note 26 gives information on its future commitments.

(c) Welfare Fund

This fund can be used to relieve cases of need among ministers of the United Reformed Church, their spouses and other dependants. Regular uses have been to provide a grant on the death of a minister to the surviving spouse, to provide a grant at Christmas to widow/ers of United Reformed Church ministers, counselling costs and assistance with medical costs. Surplus income of certain other funds is transferred to this fund.

(d) Retired Ministers' Fund and Retired Ministers' Aid Fund

These funds are used to supplement the pensions paid to ministers and ministers' widow/ers, principally by upgrading the pensions of former ministers of the Congregational Church and the Churches of Christ and the widow/ers of such ministers to a level of the pension that would have been paid if the minister's service had been to the former Presbyterian Church, and also to pay certain ill-health early retirement pensions. The balances shown for these funds are after deducting the actuarially assessed cost of the Church's constructive obligation to continue making these payments, totalling £1,525k (note 23).

(e) Commitment for Life Fund

This programme involves substantial sums of money being collected through the Church and Society office and disbursed for Christian Aid programmes and other purposes. The balance held at the year end represents sums received, which had not yet been allocated.

(f) Pension Deficit Fund

During 2021 the synods pledged various amounts to help with the payment of deficit contributions to the Ministers' Pension Fund. A restricted fund was set up to collect these contributions and to pay them over to the Pension Fund when required by the agreed schedule of contributions. Any excess monies in the fund once the deficit has been paid off will be returned to the synods in the proportion in which they contributed.

(g) Other funds

There are some fifty other funds in the care of United Reformed Church Trust, covering many different activities relating to the Church centrally, and some to the wider parts of the United Reformed Church.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Most of their income is earned from investments, and expenditure is in accordance with their various specific purposes.

NOTE 22 PENSION OBLIGATIONS

The United Reformed Church has obligations for two pension funds: United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF), and the United Reformed Church Final Salary Scheme (FSS). Both schemes were closed to future accrual on 28 February 2023. The net assets are not recognised in the balance sheet. Details of each scheme are set out in notes 23 and 24 below.

NOTE 23 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

Up until 28 February 2023, pensions for most ministers were provided by The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund. The Fund is a defined benefit pension scheme and the assets are invested and managed by an independent trustee. The scheme was closed to future accrual at the end of February 2023 and a new Defined Contribution Scheme (note 25) has been set up for ministers. The new pension fund is administered by Aon MasterTrust.

Triennial actuarial valuations of the pension scheme are performed by a qualified actuary. The actuarial valuation at 1 January, 2024 was formally agreed on 12 November, 2024. The fund's assets are now in surplus on a technical provision basis by £2,042k.

a) Contributions:

No contributions in relation to pensionable pay were made in 2024. Deficit funding contributions of £1.6m were made up to the date that the new Schedule of Contributions was signed.

The major assumptions used by the actuary in assessing scheme liabilities on a FRS102 basis were:

	2024	2023
Discount rate at year end	5.50%	4.55%
Future stipend increases	2.90%	2.80%
Future pension increases (RPI up to 5%)	3.20%	3.15%
Future deferred pension revaluation (CPI)	3.00%	2.95%
Life expectancy of male pensioners (age 65)	22.1	23.7
Life expectancy at female pensioners (age 65)	23.2	25.3

b) The amounts recognised in the Balance Sheet are as follows:

	2024 Value at 31 Dec £'000	2023 Value at 31 Dec £'000
Present value of obligations	(110,238)	(134,060)
Fair value of plan assets	139,625	149,596
Adjustment to reflect asset limit	(29,387)	(15,536)
Pension asset/(liability)	-	-

c) The charge to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year comprised:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Charitable activities		
Current service cost	-	381

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Administrative expenses	828	427
Total operating charge	828	808

Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension schemes)

Asset losses/(gains) arising during the year	9,253	(1,081)
Liability losses/(gains) arising during the year	(21,577)	4,277
	(12,324)	3,196
Change in effect of the asset ceiling	13,096	1,329
Other comprehensive loss	(772)	(4,525)
Total loss/(gain) recognised in the Statements of Financial Activities	-	-

d) Change in defined benefit obligation:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Opening defined benefit obligation	134,060	131,614
Service cost (incl. employee contributions)	-	537
Interest expense on DBO	5,916	6,127
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities	(21,577)	4,277
Benefits paid	(8,161)	(8,495)
Closing defined benefit obligation	110,238	134,060

e) Change in fair value of plan assets:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	149,596	145,108
Interest income on assets	6,671	6,840
Actuarial gains (losses)	(9,253)	1,081
Contributions by employer	1,600	5,333
Contributions by employees	-	156
Administrative expenses	(828)	(427)
Benefits paid	(8,161)	(8,495)
Closing fair value of plan assets	139,625	149,596

f) Future employer contributions:

Based on the results of the triennial valuation of the fund as at 1 January 2024, no further contributions to the fund are required at this stage.

g) Breakdown of plan assets:

The major categories of plan assets as a percentage of total plan assets are as follows:

	2024	2023
	Asset allocation	Asset allocation
	%	%
Equities	-	29
Property	13	12
Bonds	87	59

h) Five year comparison

The amounts for the current and previous four years are as follows:

2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Defined benefit obligation	(110,238)	(134,060)	(131,614)	(194,278)	(194,227)
Plan assets	139,625	149,596	145,108	189,675	173,426
Unrecognised surplus/(Recognised deficit)	29,387	15,536	13,494	(4,603)	(20,801)

Other pension obligations

SORP 2015 requires that constructive obligations, although not legally binding, be recognised on a charity's balance sheet. United Reformed Church Trust considers that it has a long-term constructive obligation in respect of:

a) the pension supplements it pays to former ministers of the Congregational Church and the Churches of Christ and the widow/ers of those ministers, in order to bring their pension to the level of the pension that would have been paid if the minister's service had been to the former Presbyterian Church. An independent actuarial assessment of the net present value of these future payments was obtained at as at 31 December 2024, using comparable assumptions as for FRS102 section 28 calculations; this reflected a decrease of £833k in the value of the obligation which has been reflected in the Statement of Financial Activities. The total obligation value (£1,525k) has been deducted from the total of restricted Fund included in the Balance Sheet. Included within restricted fund investments is £5,427k held to meet this obligation, and;

b) other pension grants, principally for ill-health early retirement until 2004.

NOTE 24 THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH FINAL SALARY SCHEME

Up until 28 February 2023, the United Reformed Church contributed to a staff pension scheme known as the "Final Salary" scheme; this too is a defined benefit scheme, which is administered by TPT Retirement Solutions. The United Reformed Church is the principal employer in the scheme, and eleven synods and Northern College are participating employers. There is no agreement to charge the net defined benefit cost to participating employers, who are therefore unable to identify their share of the underlying assets and liabilities – each employer paid a common contribution rate. The information below is provided by the principal employer in respect of the whole scheme as required by FRS102.

Triennial actuarial valuations of the whole Final Salary scheme are performed by a qualified independent actuary. The most recent formal actuarial review of the scheme was at 30 September, 2022, when the scheme had a surplus of £1,446k. For the purpose of these financial statements, the actuary has updated that valuation at 31 December, 2024 using assumptions that are consistent with the requirements of FRS102.

The scheme was closed to future accrual at the end of February 2023 and a new Defined Contribution Scheme has been set up for lay staff. The pension fund is administered by Aon MasterTrust.

a) Contributions:

No contributions in relation to pensionable pay were made in 2024.

The major assumptions used by the actuary in assessing scheme liabilities on a FRS102 basis were:

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2024	2023	2022
Discount rate at year end	5.54%	4.77%	4.98%
Inflation (RPI)	3.14%	3.04%	3.12%
Inflation (CPI)	2.79%	2.62%	2.81%
Earnings growth	3.00%	2.62%	2.62%
Future deferred pension revaluation (CPI)	2.5%	2.5%	2.50%
Life expectancy in years of males retiring in 2020 (age 65)	21.0	21.0	21.3
Life expectancy in years of females retiring in 2020 (age 65)	23.4	23.3	23.4
Life expectancy in years of males retiring in 2040 (age 65)	22.6	22.6	22.6
Life expectancy in years of females retiring in 2040 (age 65)	24.8	24.8	24.6

b) The amounts recognised at 31 December in the Balance Sheet are as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Present value of obligations	(23,509)	(24,588)	(23,300)
Fair value of plan assets	25,197	28,118	27,792
Adjustment to reflect asset limit	(1,688)	(3,530)	(4,492)
Pension asset/(liability)	-	-	-

c) The charge to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year comprised:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Charitable activities		
Current service cost	-	88
Administrative expenses	151	150
Net interest (credit)/cost:	-	-
Total operating charge	151	238

Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension schemes

Asset gains/(losses) arising during the year	(3,082)	(56)
Liability gains/(losses) arising during the year	3,123	(1,124)
Effect of asset limit	(41)	1,180
	-	-

d) Change in defined benefit obligation:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Opening defined benefit obligation	24,588	23,300
Current service cost (inc. contributions by plan participants)	-	94
Interest expense on DBO	1,147	1,134
Actuarial losses/(gains) on liabilities	(1,114)	1,226
Benefits paid and death in service premiums	(1,112)	(1,166)
Closing defined benefit obligation	23,509	24,588

e) Change in fair value of plan assets:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	28,118	27,792
Interest income on assets	1,314	1,360
Expenses	(151)	(150)
Actuarial gains (losses)	(3,082)	(56)
Contributions by employers	110	332
Contributions by plan participants	-	6

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Benefits paid	(1,112)	(1,166)
Closing fair value of plan assets	<u>25,197</u>	<u>28,118</u>

f) Future employer contributions:

As the scheme has closed to future accrual, there are no further contributions expected to be made by the employer.

g) Breakdown of plan assets:

The major categories of plan assets are as follows:

	2023	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Equity-Type assets	11,359	12,422	10,723
Fixed Interest Bonds	3,350	292	2,536
LDI	7,876	12,181	11,833
Property	-	1,910	2,162
Cash and Liquid Alternatives	2,612	1,313	538
Total assets	<u>25,197</u>	<u>28,118</u>	<u>27,792</u>

Certain members of the Final Salary scheme have also made additional voluntary contributions to the 'Growth Plan', a multi-employer funded pension plan operated by TPT Retirement Solutions. Certain past contributions to this plan entitle the members to either a defined pension or a guaranteed capital sum to be converted into an annuity at retirement. During the year, the Church triggered the Growth Plan debt. As a result a payment of £49k was made to the scheme. This covered approximately 90% of the debt. A liability of £4k is still held on the balance sheet in respect of the balance due once the final sums have been calculated. Once the final balance has been paid, there will be no further debt to this scheme.

NOTE 25 DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION SCHEME

During the year ended 31 December 2024, the Church contributed £2,003k (2023: £1,836k) to a defined contribution pension scheme for ministers and lay staff. Of this £1,604k (2023: £1,336k) related to ministers and £399k (2023: £500k) related to lay staff.

NOTE 26 COMMITMENTS

At 31 December, 2024 the Retired Ministers' Housing Society had entered into 0 uncompleted contracts to purchase properties (2023: 1 for £410k). There were no properties for which approval for purchase had been given (2023: 2), but for which no contract had been signed by 31 December 2024. The Society was aware of 2 ministers who were looking for properties at the year end.

The Church is committed, through the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited and other earmarked funds, to providing housing for retired ministers. Owing to the many unknown variables which would be involved in calculating the value of this long-term liability, no provision is included in the Balance Sheet.

These variables include the number of ministers requiring assistance from the Society and the level of contributions able to be made by individual ministers towards the cost of their homes. During 2024 £2,873k was spent on acquiring housing for retired ministers, £1,042k on repairing and maintaining existing properties and profits of £1,694k were earned from the sale of homes no longer required. Exercises have been undertaken periodically by the Society's management committee to collect information to assist more accurate long-term planning; these have confirmed a continuing need for assistance in the short to medium term. Future cash flow is kept under continuous review, and recent years have seen the Society become cash flow positive. This trend is expected to continue for the medium to long term.

The Trust entered into a legal Guarantee on 21 July, 2010, under which it guarantees future contributions by the Church to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund, as set out in the Schedule of Contributions in force from time to time up to an aggregate maximum amount of £24 million, using assets available for this purpose.

NOTE 27 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

We have been notified by the trustee of the United Reformed Church Final Salary Pension Scheme that they performed a review of the changes made to the Scheme's benefits over the years and the result is that there is uncertainty surrounding some of these changes. The trustee has determined that it is prudent to follow best practice and seek clarification from the Court on these items. This process is ongoing and the matter is unlikely to be resolved until 2026 at the earliest. It is recognised that this could potentially impact the value of Scheme liabilities, but as the Court direction is pending, it is not possible to calculate the impact of this issue with any accuracy at this time. Therefore, no adjustment has been made in these financial statements in respect of this issue.

NOTE 28 CASH FLOW INFORMATION

Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash funds

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
(Decrease)/Increase in cash in the period	(347)	(2,151)
Net cash funds at 1 January	16,158	18,309
Net cash funds at 31 December	15,811	16,158

Net cash funds are represented by bank balances and money on call, as shown on the Consolidated Balance Sheet. Of the total, £11,809k is shown on the Trust Balance Sheet.

NOTE 29 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the United Reformed Church Trust recharged salary and staff costs amounting to £547k (2023: £305k) to the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited.

NOTE 30 LEASE COMMITMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

At 31 December, 2024 the trust had future minimum Lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Due within 1 year	12	12
Due in more than 1 year but less than 5 years	29	30
Due in more than 5 years	-	6
Total	41	48

NOTE 31 LEASES RECEIVABLE

At 31 December, 2024 the principal future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases are as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Due within 1 year	95	95
Due in more than 1 year but less than 5 years	166	261
Total	261	356

NOTE 32 SUBSIDIARY UNDERTAKINGS

The United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited ('RMHS') is an exempt charity registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, number 15986R. Under the rules of the Society, which were revised by agreement of the RMHS Board in 2019, the United Reformed Church Trust has the power to appoint a majority of the directors. Accordingly, it is considered that the United Reformed Church Trust has control of the entity and its results are consolidated in full.

Their financial results were as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Income	3,070	2,925
Expenditure	(1,937)	(1,267)
Net income	1,133	1,658
 Total net assets	 41,350	 40,217

NOTE 33 CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Gross income from continuing operations	22,238	26,980
Net gains on disposal of fixed assets	2,126	1,714
Total income	24,364	28,694
Total expenditure	(24,657)	(26,641)
Net (expenditure)/income for year	(293)	2,053

NOTE 34 CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2023

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

					2023	2023	2022
	Note	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Capital Funds	Total	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	funds	Trust
						Only	Total
						£'000	funds
						£'000	£'000
Donations and legacies							
Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	2(a)	16,316	0	0	0	16,316	16,685
Grants receivable	2(b)	155	0	0	0	155	175
Legacies		0	170	480	0	650	568
Commitment for Life donations		0	0	267	0	267	259
Other donations	2(c)	10	0	6,507	4	6,521	4,493
		165	170	7,254	4	7,593	5,495
Charitable activities							
Ministry	3	6	0	592	0	598	483
Education and Learning		2	0	0	0	2	2
Children's and Youth work		25	0	0	0	25	15
Mission programmes		1	0	0	0	1	8
Publishing		190	0	0	0	190	197
		224	0	592	0	816	705
Investment income	4	1,594	34	582	0	2,210	2,006
Other income							
Gains on sale of properties		258	0	1,456	0	1,714	4,384
Other income		45	0	0	0	45	77
		303	0	1,456	0	1,759	4,461
<i>Total income and endowments</i>		18,602	204	9,884	4	28,694	29,352
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities							
Ministry	5	15,816	323	5,536	0	21,675	23,595
Education and Learning		1,906	40	506	0	2,452	2,879
Children's and Youth work		453	7	96	0	556	534
Mission programmes		960	17	480	0	1,457	1,717
Publishing		400	7	94	0	501	565
Other expenditure		0	0	0	0	0	0
		19,535	394	6,712	0	26,641	29,290
<i>Total expended</i>		19,535	394	6,712	0	26,641	29,290
Surplus from charitable and trading activities		(933)	(190)	3,172	4	2,053	62
Net gains/ (Loss) on investment assets		944	103	1,197	2,666	4,910	(8,041)
<i>Net income</i>		11	(87)	4,369	2,670	6,963	(7,979)
Transfers between funds		(518)	(1)	519	0	0	0
Actuarial gains/(losses) on pension schemes	22	4	0	0	0	4	3,368
<i>Net movement in funds</i>		(503)	(88)	4,888	2,670	6,967	(4,611)
Reconciliation of Funds							
Total funds brought forward		27,839	4,203	62,251	29,914	124,207	128,818
Total funds carried forward		27,336	4,115	67,139	32,584	131,174	124,207

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FIVE YEAR SUMMARY (unaudited)

	2020 (Restated) £'000	2021 (Restated) £'000	2022 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS					
Income					
Ministry and Mission Fund contributions	17,908	17,204	16,685	16,316	16,216
Investment income	1,899	1,896	2,006	2,194	2,332
Income from charitable activities	610	744	705	816	1,022
Grants receivable	279	162	175	155	142
Legacies	339	80	568	650	731
Donations	345	9,509	4,752	6,788	1,660
Other income	397	3,105	4,461	1,759	2,261
	21,777	32,700	29,352	28,678	24,364
Expenditure					
Ministry	17,220	18,665	23,595	21,668	19,996
Education & Learning	1,840	1,890	2,879	2,451	2,067
Children's and Youth work	353	337	534	556	570
Mission programmes	1,282	1,353	1,717	1,456	1,479
Support activities (incl. publishing)	411	426	565	501	545
Trading activities	20	13	-	-	-
	21,126	22,684	29,290	26,632	24,657
Net income	651	10,016	62	2,046	(293)
Investment gains	3,490	7,683	(8,041)	4,910	1,638
Actuarial gains/(losses)	(10,174)	17,669	3,368	-	833
Net increase/(decrease) in funds	(6,033)	35,368	(4,611)	6,956	2,178
CASH FLOW STATEMENTS					
Cash required for investment in					
Houses for retired ministers	948	(3,151)	(4,055)	(31)	(805)
Other properties	499	2,339	(2,196)	473	611
Cars and equipment	91	90	116	116	78
Loans to churches and ministers	13	47	(10)	(2)	393
	1,551	(675)	(6,145)	556	277
Source of cash					
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year (see above)	331	10,009	3,438	2,053	(308)
Adjustment for items not resulting in a cash movement, for returns on investments, and for capital receipts	(21)	(2,578)	(6,730)	(3,712)	234
	310	7,431	(3,292)	(1,659)	(74)
Net increase in capital	4	5	4	4	4
Net decrease/(increase) in investments	0	(93)	0	60	0
Decrease/(increase) in bank balances	1,237	(8,018)	(2,857)	2,151	347
	1,551	(675)	(6,145)	556	277

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FIVE YEAR SUMMARY continued

	2020 (Restated) £'000	2021 (Restated) £'000	2022 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000
BALANCE SHEETS (Consolidated)					
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets					
Houses for retired ministers	39,979	39,334	38,278	39,972	40,879
Houses for serving ministers	5,517	8,622	7,736	8,200	9,236
Other properties	8,297	8,193	2,620	2,603	1,949
Cars, equipment and intangibles	434	393	265	317	321
	54,227	56,542	48,899	51,092	52,385
Investment Properties	3,078	3,427	3,078	2,833	2,905
Long term investments (incl.programme-related)	56,525	64,196	54,578	59,676	61,870
Loans to churches and ministers	155	202	192	191	584
	113,985	124,367	106,747	113,792	117,744
Net current assets/(liabilities)					
Current assets					
Debtors	3,338	4,819	3,085	5,120	2,606
Bank balances and money on call	8,245	16,263	18,309	16,158	15,810
	11,583	21,082	21,394	21,278	18,416
less : current liabilities	1,298	1,844	1,569	1,540	1,280
	10,285	19,238	19,825	19,738	17,136
Net assets excluding pension liability	124,270	143,605	126,572	133,530	134,880
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	(20,872)	(4,618)	(8)	(8)	(4)
Other pension obligations	(2,358)	(2,358)	(2,358)	(2,358)	(1,525)
Net assets including pension liability	101,040	136,629	124,206	131,164	133,351
Unrestricted income funds	9,824	28,776	27,838	27,326	28,285
Designated funds	1,664	1,722	4,203	4,115	2,229
Restricted income funds	58,312	70,840	62,251	67,139	69,416
Capital funds	31,240	35,291	29,914	32,584	33,422
Total funds	101,040	136,629	124,206	131,164	133,352

NON-FINANCIAL STATISTICS

(from URC Year Book)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Members	43,208	40,024	36,986	41,786	40,938
Stipendiary ministers	364	334	316	301	280
Non-stipendiary ministers	62	56	60	60	57
Church Related Community Workers	15	14	16	15	14
Churches	1,331	1,284	1,242	1,198	1,172
Retired ministers	857	844	843	835	824
Ministry and Mission contribution per member	£414	£430	£451	£390	£396