

FOUR OAKS BAPTIST CHURCH

**VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**

January 2026

What is a Baptist Church?

For Baptists, the church is a family of believers, committed to Christ, to one another and to the service of God in the world. In this Baptist family everybody is equal, for everybody has a part to play in the service of God. There is no hierarchy of bishops or priests exercising authority over their members. Equality of status, however, does not mean that all have the same role.

Each local Baptist church appoints its own leaders - or ministers - to have particular responsibility for preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Working alongside these ministers are also deacons, who together with the minister(s) form the leadership team of the local Baptist church.

Baptists are grass-roots people, with a particular emphasis on the local church. These local churches are self-governing and self-supporting, ranging in size from twenty or so members to many hundreds. Although each Baptist church is an independent entity, we nonetheless believe in associating with one another and are part of the Heart of England Baptist Association.

The basis of all Baptist belief is:

That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

Our Vision Statement

We are a community of Spirit filled followers of Jesus Christ, rooted in God's word, attempting to do life together in a manner that is fragrant to all, in order to visibly make a difference in the families and communities that God has placed us in.

That our church should be a beacon of hope and a place of welcome to all, providing a space that can be called 'Home'.

We believe that Jesus came to mend the broken hearted, to proclaim God's victory over depression and oppression and to welcome all who would respond into the Royal Family of God himself. He has called us, His Church, to join Him in this adventure through both word and deed until Christ returns.

Volunteering matters!

Volunteering at Four Oaks Baptist Church is more than helping 'make church happen', it's about using your God-given skills, experience and passions to build His Kingdom right here.

Whether that's welcoming and serving people at our Sunday gatherings, drawing alongside others through our prayer and pastoral teams, or cultivating our building and grounds to be warm and welcoming spaces, every person who gives their time to build our church is joining with God in His mission to draw all who would come back to Himself.

This is why volunteering matters – it's only together, as a body of believers, sharing ideas, taking ownership, and carrying responsibility in the teams we serve in, that we can experience and share the Kingdom life that God promises to us right now.

How we communicate with our volunteers

At Four Oaks Baptist Church, we have many ways we communicate with our congregation and wider church community. For our volunteers, the main channels we use to communicate are:

- **Written Role Profiles:** you will receive a role profile when you become a volunteer, this will outline the responsibilities of your role and the part your role plays within our wider mission.
- **WhatsApp:** each ministry team has a dedicated WhatsApp chat within the Four Oaks Baptist Church community. Your Team Leader will add you to the relevant chat once you become an active volunteer. This chat is used to quickly circulate important updates and information regarding your role and the ministry you are part of.
- **ChurchSuite:** our online church-management platform. ChurchSuite is used to securely hold your details, allow you to view your team rota, sign up for shifts or input unavailability. Your Team Leader will add you to the relevant volunteer ministry once you become an active volunteer. Please ask if you would like support using the ChurchSuite programme.

Volunteer Agreement

This section of the Volunteer Handbook sets out what you can reasonably expect from your volunteering role at Four Oaks Baptist Church.

This agreement is binding in honour only, it is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

We expect that agreement is confirmed upon receipt of this document. If you have any queries or concerns, please raise this as soon as possible with your Team Leader.

For you to get the most from serving, and for us to ensure we have sufficient volunteer help, we hope that you will be able to volunteer with us on average once per month for each role you hold. However, volunteering is flexible, so please let us know if you would prefer a different arrangement.

We expect you to serve in your role to the best of your ability and to follow our procedures and standards, including health and safety, safeguarding, and equal opportunities.

Recruitment and Training

We will ensure that, upon commencing your role, you are provided with a copy of this handbook and an up-to-date role profile, describing the activities you will be undertaking in your role. We will also provide you with training (whether in person or via written guidance, depending on your role) to ensure you can get the most from serving in our church.

For those volunteering in our Children, Youth & Families ministry, we ask that you follow the Safer Recruitment process.

Supervision and Support

Upon commencement of your volunteer role you will be informed of who your Team Leader is, they will be your main point of contact.

They can be reached in person or via WhatsApp within working hours if you require any ongoing support or have any questions / queries regarding your role.

We ask that you give as much notice as possible if you are unable to volunteer as expected, or if you would like to stop volunteering, so that we can rearrange rotas.

Confidentiality

Over the course of your volunteering, you may have access to confidential information relating to Four Oaks Baptist Church or members of our church community. We expect you not to use or disclose this information to any person either during your time volunteering with us or at any time afterwards.

Expenses

We will reimburse certain out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with your volunteering with us. Please seek the guidance of your Team Leader or the Treasurer for expenses approval and ways to claim.

Ending your role

Whether you volunteer with us long term, or just for a season, we want the role you serve in to be life-giving and faith-building. Therefore, there is no minimum term to your volunteer role (except in the case of Trustees).

Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that volunteering at FOBC is open, accessible, and welcoming to everyone. We value the unique skills, experiences, and perspectives that each volunteer brings, and we believe diversity strengthens our work and our community.

We will:

- Treat all volunteers with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers and ensure an inclusive environment.
- Promote a culture where differences are celebrated and discrimination, harassment, or victimisation are not tolerated.

We expect all volunteers to uphold these values in their interactions with everyone they encounter within the life of our church. Together, we can create a safe, supportive, and empowering space for everyone to contribute and thrive.

Safeguarding

At Four Oaks Baptist Church, we take safeguarding very seriously – depending upon the volunteer role you hold, volunteers are required to undertake either Level 2 or 3 safeguarding training. We follow a safer recruiting policy and ensure that those required by law hold a DBS check.

We encourage all our Church to read and understand the safeguarding policy, and to report any concerns to the designated safeguarding person or the person on the leadership team responsible for safeguarding.

You can find the full safeguarding policy at the link below:

[Four Oaks Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy](#)

Safeguarding at Four Oaks Baptist Church is everyone's responsibility!

Giving Feedback and Raising Grievances

Living in community isn't always easy! We want to create a culture of honesty and accountability, where disagreement is not at odds with unity and is seen as part of a healthy, growing church. We want all to keep short account, and feel welcome to raise queries, concerns or struggles. As a Leadership Team, we strive to meet you with humility, grace and truth. We hold forgiveness as central to our lives as believers and will always do our best to work towards resolution.

There are several ways you can give your feedback to the Leadership Team.

1. Use our ChurchSuite feedback form. This can be submitted anonymously or, if you supply your name, a member of the Leadership Team will get back to you.
2. Use our paper feedback form and post in our feedback post-box. This is located at the front of the church sanctuary and is checked regularly by our Leadership Team. This can be submitted anonymously or, if you supply your name, a member of the Leadership Team will get back to you.
3. Our Leadership Team have an open-door policy, and are available to listen in person to any feedback you'd like to give at their earliest convenience.

To raise a particular grievance, please raise the matter with Rev Phil Wilks in the first instance, or the Eldership if appropriate. In everything we do, we lead as a team and so all grievances will be brought to the entire Leadership Team and will be prayerfully considered before a reply is given.

In most instances, we believe that talking together is the best way to find resolution. Therefore, any involved parties will be invited to an in-person meeting with two members of the Leadership Team (in most cases, Rev Phil and an Elder) with the aim of each party having space to express themselves and resolutions be worked towards.

Please note – any feedback or concerns that are of a safeguarding nature, please contact Kathy Everett (the designated person for safeguarding) as stated in the safeguarding policy.

Leadership Values

For those who supervise other volunteers as part of our Team Leaders or Leadership Team, please ensure you have read a copy of our Leadership Values Policy, which will be provided by the Minister, who will be happy to discuss this with you. This policy sets out what a leader with our Church means and the expectations of holding this responsibility.