YARNTON GOSPEL
WORKERS TRUST

Operations Director

Role Description

Introduction and context

A consultation of conservative evangelical training stakeholders at Yarnton Manor in May 2024, convened by 9:38, marked a turning point. Facing up to the urgent need for gospel workers, the group left convinced that ministry is a noble task, convicted to pray to the Lord for workers, and committed to work together as training stakeholders, believing much more can be achieved together than apart.

In autumn 2024 a working group of training stakeholders was formed. The group was tasked with understanding the current landscape across England and Wales and building collaboration and consensus among training stakeholders.

In April 2024 the Yarnton Gospel Workers Trust (Yarnton) was established.

People

In October 2026 John Funnell was appointed as the National Director, following a national recruitment process supported by Carnelian Search Consultancy. In 2014 John was appointed as Pastor of Noddfa Church in Abersychan, in the South Wales valleys. John took on the pastorate when the church numbered just a handful of elderly members. Since then, Noddfa Church has grown exponentially and serves hundreds of people each week though a variety of ministries that have drawn, in particular, young men with no church background. A key focus of John's ministry in Noddfa was building a healthy training culture. This led to John establishing the Valleys School of Theology in 2023, offering foundation training as a first step for people considering pastoral ministry. John is the author of *What God Can Do With a Little Oil*.

Under the oversight and direction of the trustees, the National Director leads the work of the Trust in pursuing its aim to multiply gospel workers in the UK. Key lines of strategy include:

- Engaging and energising a wide range of stakeholders in the work of the Trust: most significantly church leaders, network leaders, training providers and potential funders.
- Through the identification of enablers of cultural change, working towards a genuine and lasting increase in the priority with which training and sending gospel workers is understood across the church.
- Encouraging trust and collaboration between churches, training providers and networks, often across denominational boundaries.
- In partnership with Trustees, raising the profile of the Trust amongst potential donors and generating further funds to support its work.
- Ensuring that funds are wisely and effectively deployed through its grant-based model.

A number of the trustees – Simon Pilcher, Brian O'Donoghue, Ben Stone and Robin Sydserff – were closely involved in the development of Yarnton.

Yarnton has a number of 'partners' spread across the stakeholder group. This includes informal partnerships created in the development phase of Yarnton, as well as recipients of Yarnton Enabling grants. Enabling grants are for individuals making a positive impact in developing and multiplying healthy ministry training culture in local churches or networks of churches.

Yarnton is looking to appoint a full-time Operations Director to work with the National Director, trustees and partners to deliver the vision.

Current landscape

Across the whole of the UK, there are approximately 150,000 people in conservative or complementarian evangelical churches, 0.2% of the population. The figure for all evangelicals is around 3%. That means 97% of the population are not hearing the gospel proclaimed, with a massive number facing eternal judgement. The gospel need is therefore huge.

Challenges

There are many factors contributing to the challenge of recruiting gospel workers:

- Uncertain future for evangelicals in the Church of England.
- Gospel partnership and collaboration among evangelicals.
- Understanding that a movement, for example to multiply gospel workers, will be an ecosystem of many movements of different sizes, built on strong relationships, connections and shared ministry convictions, often centred on a geographical area.
- Fear of leadership – scandal, failure, pressure, criticism.
- Fear of intentional mentoring or encouragement into set apart ministry being perceived as exerting undue pressure.
- Lack of understanding of the importance of gospel work and appreciation of its worth.
- Lack of consensus among training stakeholders on vision and strategy for training.
- Lack of training culture.
- Relatively few local churches are training and sending out gospel workers.
- Lack of funding for training

Opportunity

This is a defining moment in history. Across the UK there is increasing evidence of people turning back to God, or turning to God for the first time. We pray for revival. Gospel workers will be a pressing need. Moreover, the crisis in the Church of England and a strong FIEC create the potential to bring Anglicans, Independents and Others together, behind a centrist movement that galvanizes the training and sending of gospel workers. The Lord Jesus promises to build His Church. And in this light, the Lord Jesus urges us to pray for workers because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Vision

The vision of Yarnton is to:

- Multiply gospel workers across England and Wales, to serve in local churches, reaching the lost.

- Aim to double within 5 years, and triple within 10, the number of people trained and sent out as gospel workers
- Change the culture around training through enabling and funding.
- In focusing on enabling and funding, Yarnton's conviction is not to centralize or control, but to serve the ecosystem of many movements to multiply gospel workers.

Convictions

The core convictions that underpin this vision are:

- Multiplying gospel workers is a key and urgent priority in God's plan to reach the lost.
- The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, and so we must pray to the Lord to send out workers.
- At the heart of gospel work is the faithful ministry of the word.
- Gospel workers are people set-apart to serve in local churches exercising a significant word ministry.
- Training and sending out gospel workers is an essential and normal part of the missional strategy of every local church, in partnership with external training providers.
- If we are to reach the whole nation for Jesus, the training of gospel workers will look different, depending on the context.
- Importance of gospel partnership, with Anglicans, Independents and others working together.
- Positively complementarian – God's pattern for the good of His Church.

What Yarnton is seeking to do in more detail

In the current landscape – gospel need, challenges and opportunity – Yarnton is seeking to change the culture around training through enabling and funding. In focusing on enabling and funding, Yarnton's conviction is not to centralize or control, but to serve the ecosystem of many movements to multiply gospel workers.

Enable training to change the culture

- Enable gospel partnership among evangelical Anglicans, Independents and others around a uniting focus on multiplying gospel workers.
- Align with groups like ReNew, CEEC and the Alliance, to work for a future for evangelical Anglicans in and outside the Church of England.
- Promote the importance of gospel work and appreciation of its worth.
- Build consensus and collaboration among training stakeholders around training vision, culture and strategy.
- Work with church leaders and future leaders to change the culture, so that training and sending gospel workers is an essential and normal part of the missional strategy of every local church, in partnership with external training providers.
- Train the trainers.
- Engage in research to describe healthy training culture in local churches.

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Fund training to change the culture

- Yarnton will award material grants to individuals through their training.
- Grants will be awarded on a matched funding basis.
- As a minimum, the grant will need to be matched by the training or sending church. Yarnton will also look for evidence of a third source of funding – personal support, gospel patronage, other trusts – ideally at the same level.
- The principle of matched funding maximizes the overall investment in training.
- For local churches, unable because of their demographic, to match fund, Yarnton will consider giving an enhanced grant.
- Grants will be awarded to individuals training on the recommendation of the training or sending church and rigour of the training.
- Yarnton will also award enabling grants. These grants are for individuals who can make a positive impact on training culture in their network or geographical area.

Critical factor is local churches training

- Local churches and networks of churches embracing their responsibility for training and sending out gospel workers, in partnership with external training providers.
- Local churches developing a healthy training and sending culture.
- A local church with a healthy training and sending culture is where everyone is equipped to be a disciple-making-disciple with the word.
- Some will be identified as suitable for leadership roles exercising a significant word ministry.
- Some of them will be identified to be trained and deployed as full-time gospel workers to serve in local churches, exercising a significant word ministry.

Foundation training for full-time gospel workers

- Full-time in a local church for 2 years, in partnership with an external training provider.
- In exceptional circumstances, part-time in a local church for 2 years or full-time for 1 year, in partnership with an external training provider.
- In many churches, foundation training will be Apprenticeship or Associate programmes.
- The external training provider could be a Gospel Partnership training course or a portfolio of distance-learning courses like Union's Grow programme.
- Foundation training is with the expectation that the significant majority will go on to become full-time workers in local churches. Currently, some Apprenticeship or Associate programmes in churches have that expectation, but many don't. Research on training culture in local churches has found that these two types of programme are very different, in terms of who is recruited, the expectations of trainers and those being trained, the content of the programme, and the church's level of investment in the programme. While both types of programme are valuable, Yarnton will partner with churches whose foundation training programmes are focused on preparing people for full-time gospel work.

Advanced training for full-time gospel workers

- Advanced training is either (a) full-time in one or more local churches for 3 or 4 years in a Leader in Training role in partnership with an external training provider; or (b) full-time residential theological study for 3 or 4 years with placements in local churches.
- The terminology Leader in Training embraces men and women, reflecting complementarian principles.

Raising support

- Yarnton has prepared detailed financial modelling over a 15 year time frame. The Trust launched with committed multi-year funding in place of £2million per year.
- The Trust has established a number of principles for awarding grants to ensure that support raised is properly stewarded. The principles are to ensure that grants are given to godly and gifted people receiving rigorous training.
- It is not the objective of the Trust to make grants to the full capacity of funds available unless there are high quality candidates to support. Whilst a primary goal of the Trust is to grow the numbers training for gospel ministry, an equally important commitment is to ensure the quality of those being trained.

Purpose of the Operations Director role

Working with the Director and trustees, the purpose of the role is to manage, develop and deliver the vision and operations of the Trust across key areas for optimal impact and performance. These include but are not limited to those set out below:

A. Executive PA to National Director

To support the National Director in their work organisationally and strategically.

B. Data gathering and analysis

To develop and implement strategy for data gathering and analysis as a key way to measure and mobilize the impact of Yarnton.

C. Mapping the training ecosystem

To map the training ecosystem in order to maximize the impact of Yarnton.

D. Donor management and support raising

To include timely correspondence with donors, production of support-raising literature and progressing applications to grant-making trusts.

E. Event organisation and network facilitation

To include organization and hosting of promotional, stakeholder and grantee events.

F. Online workspace and other infrastructure

To include Google Workspace and our email systems and online storage and filing, and to ensure that trustees and colleagues have appropriate access for decision-making purposes.

G. Grant-making including applications, assessment and payment

To include the inception, development, accessibility, assessment and communication of all grant-making applications and decisions, and timely payment of grant awards to beneficiaries. Also includes maintenance of Principles of Grant-making and associated documents.

H. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

To include all aspects of Beacon CRM, including associated processes, procedures, forms and Mailchimp integration (see I below).

I. Communications and mailings

To include timely and impactful communication to all stakeholders, primarily via the Beacon CRM interface with Mailchimp.

J. Website and Publicity

To include timely and impactful maintenance of the yarntontust.org website, and all publicity including flyers and events.

K. Other forms and applications

To include non-Beacon forms currently used for Enabling grant applications, church programme questionnaires and 'keep in touch' forms. This may be catered for by other means in future.

L. Finances including income and expenses, CAF Bank, Stewardship, Gift Aid, and other donor transactions

To include periodic recording and reporting of all banking and other financial transactions (e.g., Stewardship), production of management accounts, managing our relationship with CAF Bank and Stewardship, and all gift aid administration

M. Trustee functions including meetings, agendas, minutes and actions

To include production of agenda with the Chair and issuing at least ten days prior to meetings with supporting papers, taking and disseminating minutes, and maintaining an Action Log. Also includes onboarding of new trustees.

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N. Charity Commission and other governance matters

To include all aspects of our relationship with and responsibilities to the Charity Commission and timely maintenance of governance responsibilities with other bodies e.g., the ICO, The Pensions Regulator. Also includes review and necessary amendments to policies and registers.

O. HMRC and PAYE matters

To include our relationship with and responsibilities to the HMRC, for example gift aid (see above) and payroll PAYE. Also includes the relationship with our payroll provider, and ensuring prompt payment of salaries, and required remittances to the HMRC.

P. Other operational, administrative and staffing functions

To include:

- Dealing with all incoming queries in a timely and accurate manner, and obtaining National Director and trustees input as necessary.
- Onboarding of new staff, and supervising where required.
- Fulfilling all other reasonable requests and directions of the National Director and trustee body in a timely fashion.

Person specification

We envisage this as a full-time role, though there may be some flexibility for the right candidate.

The appointed candidate will be fully aligned with the vision and convictions of Yarnton, and bring the following gifts, skills and experience:

- Excellent organizational and administrative skills.
- Ability to develop organizational and operational structure.
- Strong relational and interpersonal skills.
- High levels of personal initiative.

It is just as essential that the Operations Director has a deep and mature evangelical Christian faith.

Other Details

The place of work is Proclamation House in central London. We are open to a flexible working pattern.

The salary will be in the range £55,000 - £65,000 depending on experience.

The closing date for applications is 30 November 2026.

Interviews will take place in early December 2026.

If interested, please send an up to date CV and covering letter describing your suitability for the role to the National Director at john@yarntontrust.org.