



Charity Number 1091290

Step Annual Report 2025

Step's vision is for a lively, relevant and consistent witness to Christian truth and standards to be established and maintained in all the secondary schools in St Albans and Harpenden.



A Question Becoming a Direction

At our End of Year Celebration in July 2024, we asked a simple but significant question: “What next?” What happens after a student hears the gospel in a Step Day, engages deeply in a lesson, joins a club, or completes a course? We wanted to make the next steps short and easy to take!

Over the past year, that question has quietly but meaningfully shaped our work. We’ve been developing clear and accessible ways for young people to explore faith further - especially those beginning to follow Jesus.

We introduced the Explore the Bible booklet, giving students a helpful companion for reading Scripture. We distributed them alongside over 1,000 New Testaments through our partnership with Good News for Everyone (GNFE, formerly Gideons). We created the ‘Next Steps’ discipleship resource, a simple guide designed to help young people grasp the basics of following Jesus, which has been used as a mentoring aid, or independently.

As part of this journey, we developed the five new Step Zones—Christian Connection, Spiritual Awareness, God is Good, The Gospel is Good News, and Following Jesus - providing a framework for volunteers and staff to understand what ‘success’ means, by creating a clear way forward for students seeking to explore faith.

What began as a question has become a direction. And we’re excited to keep walking that path with students in the year ahead.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)



Step's Year in Numbers



1,156
Lessons and Workshops



51
Whole Day Activities



73
Staff or Volunteers went into a school



51,644
Student Hours



1,141
GNFE Youth Testaments given out



29
Schools Served (15 secondary & 14 primary)



512
Lunchtime or Afterschool Groups



1,073
iMatter Journals given out



In total, we delivered 2,382 activities in schools during 2024/25. That's an average of 61 activities and 1,220 students seen every single week during term time

Primary Schools - Step Up Day Changes

This year, Amy, one of our Schools Coordinators, was tasked with developing our Step Up Days with Year 6 children in primary schools. Our three aims are: First, to prepare children for their move to secondary school. Second, for the children to meet the Step team who they will soon be encountering! Third, to develop their links with local churches. Amy has led us superbly and worked with Mary to create a new booklet, enhanced presentations and a brand-new session called Strength and Stretch. This new session emphasises the need for resilience, uses Dynamite (from Gladiators) as a relevant example of someone getting stronger by taking herself out of her comfort zone, and explores how prayer can play a crucial part in our growth.

The sessions on Friendship and Journeys have also been refreshed and the feedback from the schools has been very positive. The children continue to hear about Moses, Joshua and the Parable of the Good Samaritan while preparing themselves practically for their, sometimes daunting, move to a new school. This year we delivered 13 Step Up Days across St Albans and Harpenden (the latter in partnership with Jump!) and we were also involved in a 14th primary school when we joined Phase who delivered some mental wellbeing workshops with Year 5 & 6 at Bernard's Heath.

This year we were particularly pleased to work with the High Street Methodist Church's LX Drop-In, which Step is helping to organise. For the first year, they provided 'early access' to Year 6s after the Step Up Day and 9 new members from a couple of schools joined the group. Many of our Step Up Days have local ministers in attendance and are therefore a great way of developing connections with churches; for example, our long-standing association with the Year 7 Doughnut Club at St Helen's in Wheathampstead, or the direct link between Colney Heath's Step Up Day and St Mark's Church youth group.



Growing Leaders in Sixth Form

Our work with sixth formers (16-18 year olds) has grown significantly over the last few years. Our Leadership Foundations course is impacting many older students, with 9 schools implementing the course this coming year and others in the 'pipeline'. We are also helping others to run it elsewhere in the UK. With our Leadership Conference, which for the first time gave the young people the option to choose from a range of seminars, and organising a student-led conference with the Alban Learning Partnership (a sixth form consortium), Step is becoming a significant influence in the development of young leaders. Our hope is this will feed our Gap Year Program in future years. One of the young people to benefit from this work has joined the leadership team of an Alpha Youth course at her school. She shares about her experience below:

“I’ve been aware of Step’s presence in my school since Year 7, however it’s only been in my time at Sixth Form (after discovering faith for myself in Year 10/11!) that I’ve become so excited by their work. I received a taste of leadership at the ALPS conference at the start of the year - I was instantly hooked by Step’s encouragement of young people as leaders and was promptly led to sign up for the Leadership Foundation course. Here, I discovered so much about myself! I received both uplifting and challenging feedback from peers and mentors throughout, and have left feeling bolder in my leadership skills and in voicing my opinions as a Christian.

I therefore decided to take my Year 12 Work Experience week with the Step team. It was such a beautiful opportunity for me to continue to fall in love with the work and mission of Step. I really appreciated the way the team trusted me to create and present resources, and I found that I was able to use all that I had learnt through the Leadership Foundations course in school settings.”



Prioritising Mental Wellbeing

One of Step's aims is to change young lives for the better and this includes playing a small but valuable role in tackling the mental health crisis among young people. We continue to offer Haven Hope - a 6-week course for students with problematic anxiety - in conjunction with our mentoring program which provides crucial one-to-one support.

One of the other initiatives related to mental wellbeing that we are particularly excited about is Keep Calm and Cook. It is a course we delivered in October, at Loreto, aimed at Year 7 students who are struggling to settle into secondary school and have anxiety issues.

Focused around cooking and simple tools to reduce anxiety, it has been a big hit. In February, our 'next steps' were to invite the students to be part of the hospitality team for our Leadership Conference for sixth formers. The Year 7 students were unrecognisable from the quiet, reserved students we had met back in October.

They rose to every challenge we set them with confidence. They talked to the sixth formers (such as those in the photo), they helped to set up, clear away and serve refreshments. One of them said: "I remember when they first came down the stairs and I was nervous and took a deep breath and said Ok. But they really liked the biscuits." And another reported that "I could go out there again and I could just speak with them without feeling overwhelmed." It was wonderful to see these young people flourishing and enjoying school and new challenges.

Although Step has distinct activities that directly respond to the national mental health crisis, we recognise that this crucial issue is intrinsic to, and inseparable from every aspect of our work with young people.

The background of the page features a photograph of a table covered with a blue cloth. On the table, there are several clear plastic water bottles, some of which are partially filled. A person's head, seen from the back, is positioned in the upper center of the frame. The person has light brown hair and is wearing a dark-colored garment. The table also has some papers and other small items scattered on it. The overall lighting is soft, and the colors are somewhat muted.

Discipleship Through Step

We often say “we give enough information and experiences about Jesus for young people to make their own decision about Him”. There are many young people we meet who, after receiving this input via Step activities or other sources, would like to connect with us to grow in their newfound Christian faith and learn what following Jesus means.

One way we do this is through our Explore Groups (sometimes called Christianity Unpacked). This year, across numerous schools, we have delivered series on parables, the Armour of God, and key concepts around creation, the fall, redemption and glorification. We’ve used an excellent new resource created by Jubilee+ to discover God’s heart for the vulnerable called ‘Look Again’. These groups have been most successful when delivered alongside a church youth leader, who can then share invitations to their church activities. This year we’re looking at an overview of the Bible, which was prompted by one of our work experience students who began researching ideas for it.

Mary, one of our Schools Coordinators, has produced a new Explore the Bible resource to accompany the GNFE Youth Testaments and a mentoring series for new Christians called ‘Next Steps’, both of which have been shared with local churches. These have been a valuable addition to our offering, as we’ve worked one-to-one with a number of individuals new to faith.

We were encouraged last year by testimony from students attending our Alpha Youth courses, either in school or in partnership with a church, who have made the decision to be baptised. Our team have been privileged to share those special moments with them.

Snapshots From Step



Charlotte Carthy (pictured) sadly left her role as a Schools Coordinator at Easter 2025. We are incredibly grateful for all she invested in Step, especially developing our mentoring program. If you'd like to see our current staff team, please scan the QR Code.

We delivered our first ever lessons in St Albans School (Who is Jesus with Year 7 and Grace with Year 9) and are continuing to develop new links in the school.

We have worked closely with Young Life over the past 18 months to help them create connections with local schools and churches as they sought to establish a presence in St Albans. We are excited that as of September 2025, they have a paid St Albans worker, who now also volunteers with us, and will lead the Young Life club that was launched at Marshalswick Baptist Church in April. With 267 also involved, and all three charities naturally complimenting one another, this is great news for the city.

We had the privilege of inviting the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics (OCCA) to Townsend School to host an informative Q & A session with sixth formers from seven different schools. This is now established as an annual event in the Step diary.

We hosted a vibrant Culture Day for Year 7 students at Sir John Lawes School, celebrating diversity and inclusion. Pupils rotated through activities exploring seven countries, discovering food, clothing, traditions, stories and games that brought each culture to life. A highlight was the Refugee Experience, offering a powerful opportunity to step into the shoes of displaced people, building empathy and understanding. The day was enriched by the involvement of volunteers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including a refugee who shared personal insights and experiences.

Introducing the Five Step Zones

You may be familiar with the Engel Scale as a way to describe a person's spiritual journey from being completely unaware of God to becoming a committed follower of Christ. After attending an inspiring seminar at the National Youth Ministry Weekend, we spent time as a team reflecting on our work and the outcome was the birth of Step's 'Five Zones' outlined below. We look forward to embedding these zones into Step this year by categorising each activity we offer, ensuring we deliver a breadth of spiritual experience in each school.

Zone A is Christian Connection- young people meet Christians who are kind, thoughtful, and fun to be with. These encounters gently challenge negative assumptions and demonstrate that faith is alive.

Zone B is Spiritual Awareness- we encourage young people to consider deeper questions of life including what it means to be human. Questions about purpose and worth broaden their perspective, support their mental health, and raise the possibility of the existence of God.

Zone C is God is Good- we communicate the Christian view that God is personal, compassionate and caring, which helps young people navigate personal challenges and counter any negative portrayals of God.

Zone D is The Gospel is Good News- through stories, testimonies, and creative content, young people encounter the relevance and power of Jesus' message.

Zone E is Following Jesus- through small groups, one-to-one support and connections with local churches, we help nurture a young person's relationship with Jesus - one that shapes daily decisions and grows into lifelong discipleship.



Love Your Enemy For Step

In the past, we have sometimes had a theme for the year that forms a backdrop for our work. Our iMatter material, for example, stemmed from such a theme and is now fully integrated into Step's identity.

This year, we have another theme- love your enemy - which you may have read about in our Faith Focus article in the Herts Ad at the start of September. In schools we shall seek opportunities for these famous words of Jesus to infiltrate our existing projects, such as Explore Groups, Step Days and Abbey Services. In a world that often polarises people into 'us' and 'them' and where cancel culture is rife, these incredibly challenging words of Jesus, if put into practice, could transform our communities.

The theme has come about because of a fundraiser our Spurs-supporting Associate Director Geoff has initiated, called 'Love Your Enemy For Step'. Geoff and others will wear their rival's kit for a day to raise money for Step.

There are two ways you could respond. Firstly, could you sponsor Geoff or another team member? Maybe look out for one of your rival's supporters who will wear your team's kit and sponsor them. Secondly, would you consider joining the team and 'Love Your Enemy For Step'? The more we have joining us, the wider our reach will be. More details can be found at www.stepschoolswork.org.uk/love-your-enemy-for-step or scan the two QR codes below.



SCAN HERE TO
SPONSOR GEOFF OR
ANOTHER TEAM
MEMBER

SCAN HERE TO JOIN
THE TEAM AND BE
SPONSORED TO WEAR
YOUR RIVAL'S KIT



Finances

2024/25 Income: £226.2k (Increase of £40.9k)

Income Stream	Total Income in 2024/25	% Increase From 2023/24
Individuals & Gift Aid	£107.5k	17%
Churches	£42.8k	11%
Grants	£54k	80%
Other (e.g. bank interest, ticket income, school contributions)	£21.9k	-12%
TOTAL	£226.2k	22%

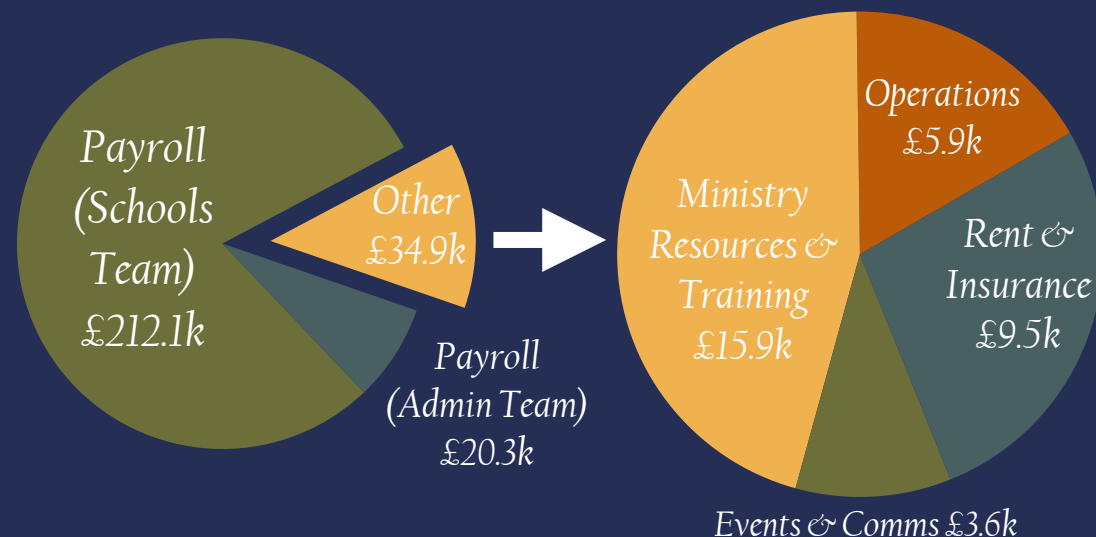
Deficit for 2024/25: £41.1k

As anticipated, we experienced a loss for the year due to planned expenditure of money already received from a grant in the 2022/23 academic year.

Budget for 2025/26: £265.3k

Our budget for 2025/26 is around £265k, just shy of our expenditure this year. This is mainly because of our decision not to immediately employ a replacement for Charlotte. If income continues on its current upward trajectory, we hope to appoint a new worker in September 2026.

2024/25 Expenditure: £267.3k



We have worked hard to grow our 3 main sources of income - individuals, churches and grants - with significant success in the latter as we have developed a robust system in this area.

This year, we aim to increase individual giving through our Love Your Enemy For Step fundraising initiative (see page 10), an increased target from our Christmas Big Give campaign and a push for more regular givers through our Spring Appeal.

If you can help by becoming a Step supporter or increasing any existing giving, this will make a huge difference to the lives of young people across St Albans and Harpenden.



There are many ways to support Step so if you'd like to volunteer, sign up to updates or financially support us, please get in touch or visit our website for more information.



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