

St. Finnian's Parish Church

Cregagh

Belfast

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2023



Northern Ireland Charities Number:101977

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023

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St Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh

References and administrative details

Charity Name: St Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh

Charity Registration Number: 101977

Contact Address: The Rectory
3 Upper Knockbreda Road
Belfast
BT6 9QH

Trustees

Rev Canon J PIERCE (Rector)
Rev A HAY (Curate)
Michael ALLEN
Peter ARMSTRONG
David CAIRNS to March 2023
Robert CRAWFORD
Neil DONALDSON
Mrs Karen GATELY
Miss Catherine HAMILTON
Geoff HARMAN
Jim HAUGHEY
Angela HARVEY to March 2023
Jonathan JOHNSTON
Greg KIDD to March 2023
Brian LAVERY
Timothy LECKEY
Mrs Linda LEONARD
Mrs Claire MONAGHAN from April 2023
Mrs Gillian Mc INTYRE from April 2023
Norman SLEATOR from April 2023
Trevor SMYTH

Principal Office-Bearers

Clergy: Canon Jonathan DM Pierce (Rector)
Rev Andrew Hay (Curate)
Secretary Linda Leonard
Treasurer: Robert Crawford to April 2023
Brian Lavery from April 2023
Churchwarden- Rector's: Angela Harvey to March 2023
Claire Monaghan from April 2023
Churchwarden – People's: David Cairns to March 2023
Gillian McIntyre from April 2023

Independent Examiner

GMcG Chartered Accountants
17 Mandeville Street
Portadown
BT62 3PB

Bankers

Danske Bank
P.O. Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

The Trustees present the annual report and accounts for St. Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh for the year ended 31st December 2023

Objectives and Activities

The charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland is the advancement of religion.

The principal function of St. Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh is the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting through the work of St. Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh the whole mission of the church – Pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole and offering support for those needing help is fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

As a result of activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, St. Finnian's Parish Church, Cregagh has custody of property and of records, materials, and artefacts of significance to cultural and religious heritage, the maintenance of which is undertaken by the Select Vestry of St. Finnian's, Cregagh.

Achievements, performance and public Benefit

2023 was a busy year in the Parish not only due to the many activities which had resumed after the Covid closure, but which also finally saw the Accessibility project come to fruition after a long delay. Work on both internal and external work began in August and was mainly completed by November allowing the congregation to return to the Church building for worship. The project including the building of a ramp to the front entrance, providing wheelchair accessible seating spaces in the Church and a wheelchair accessible toilet, the refurbishment of the other Church toilets, a new accessible path to the Lower Hall and 3 designated disabled parking spaces. These improvements have made access to all parts of the Parish property much easier for those with impaired mobility.

To facilitate Worship during the construction period an audio-visual system was installed in the Lower Hall which enabled live streaming to home bound parishioners or those further afield.

During the year the Parish updated its Health and Safety and Data Protection policies; provided Safeguarding training; and 5 members trained in the Safe Church programme which has been introduced to provide information and support for those experiencing Domestic Abuse.

The Parish allocated 10% of its income to a wide range of projects including Church planting, overseas aid and Christians against Poverty. Funds were also donated to the Bishops' Appeal to provide emergency support following international earthquakes and floods. A special lunch was arranged to raise funds for Syria in addition to individual donations. Foodstuffs were donated to The Larder foodbank following the Annual Harvest Service.

Several courses were held during the year including a Sanctuary course, which considers mental health issues and an Immerse Messiah Bible study course. The weekly Zoom online prayer service continued and the parish house groups resumed. The Parish also part funded a parishioner who is undertaking a Theology course and gave funds to young people taking part in the Ulster Project.

The Church and halls were used by a number of external groups to host meetings and activities, and this is seen as an important part of the Parish's outreach into the local community. The Parish also continued to support a Ukrainian family throughout the year and to facilitate the school transfer of the older child.

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023 (continued)

In the community the Parish Literacy and Numeracy support programme has continued in Lisnasharragh primary school. The Mothers' Union provided toiletry bags for mothers and babies in the Ulster Hospital Maternity Unit and resumed their craft classes at Hydebank. The Parish hosted the East Belfast Women's World Day of Prayer in March with a large group attending.

The volunteer telephone service which started during the Covid epidemic when face to face contacts could not take place has continued to be a welcome support to more vulnerable parishioners and those who are housebound. Throughout the year the Rector delivered his "Church without Walls" messages on the website and his popular podcast "Bitesize Chunks of Faith".

The Parish magazine and Facebook page have kept people informed of changes and new activities throughout the year and help to encourage people to become involved in both group and online activities. The website includes details of worship events in the community and faith based articles which provide people with information for personal study.

The Cregagh Crafters group which began as a new initiative in 2022 has grown considerably and has had a very busy year providing a wonderful display of poppies for Remembrance Sunday and ending the year with a Craft Fair and Coffee Morning in aid of Church Funds. The group has attracted many people from the local community and some have become members of the Parish.

The Boys' Brigade Company continued post-COVID activities with a varied programme for boys aged between 5 and 18 and once again had senior boys achieving the President's Badge and Duke of Edinburgh Award. As with the Cregagh Crafters, the BB Company is proving to be a vehicle for outreach with more than 50% of our members not being members of our church.

The Pilates group has also continued to expand and is now at capacity on Wednesday evening. Messy Church takes place quarterly and is a popular event for primary age children in the area.

The popular HEDGE project which encourages young, home-schooled people to learn gardening skills and provides an opportunity for socialisation expanded its activities with the addition of a greenhouse. This has allowed participants to grow new produce inside as well as in their raised beds in the Church grounds.

During 2023 the provision of teas for funerals resumed and this helps provide funds to support the work of Fields of Life in Africa. The organisation provides education and medical support in the community and in hospitals. This work is also supported by donations.

The Volunteer Work team continued to meet throughout the year maintaining the grounds and carrying out small repairs. Stores were cleared and cleaned and the team was particularly busy when preparation for the building work had to be done and then all furnishings restored in time for the reopening of the Church building for services. The Parish is indebted to its many volunteers who support its work across a wide range of tasks and services.

The Parish has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year and those planned for the future have and will continue to help to achieve the Parish's objectives as well as providing public benefit.

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023 (continued)

Financial Review

- The overall unrestricted funds of the Parish decreased in 2023 by £28,889, which was slightly offset by a £2,835 gain in investment value. The total income of the Parish was £261,108 as opposed to £308,422 in the previous year, however a large legacy of approximately £80k was received in the previous year.
- The major expenditure within the year related to the completion of the Accessibility Building project. This project costs approximately £215k with the funds coming from the Building & Contingency Fund. The costs were offset by two grants from the Garfield Weston Trust and the Benefact Trust, totalling £24,800.
- During the year It was agreed by the St Finnian's Uganda committee and endorsed by the Select Vestry to close the St Finnian's Uganda Fund and transfer the funds into the newly created Fields of Life Fund, as the geographical area and type of work supported were the same.
- The valuation of the Rectory and Curatage in 2016 for the first time led to a large increase in Unrestricted Reserves. In reviewing this valuation and taking into account that the Property is
 - owned by the Parish
 - vested in the Representative Church Body (RCB)
 - is restricted in actions that can be taken as permission must be sought from both the RCB and the Diocese of Down and Dromore prior to disposal of and use of the resources for other purposes

It has been agreed that these assets must be classified as restricted and they are declared as such.

- Reserve Policy. The Parish does not use any formulaic calculation of necessary reserves. The Parish has available Investments with a value of £64,035 in addition to some cash funds, and upon reviewing the budget for 2024 believes that sufficient funds are available to meet its need for 2024.

Going Concern

The Trustees have reviewed the budgets for the year ahead and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the Parish can continue its activities and the financial statements for the year end 31st December 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity

Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland governs Parishes and Parochial Organisation. The Select Vestry members are the Charity Trustees

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023 (continued)

Recruitment and Appointment of Select Vestry

All members of the Church of Ireland who are over the age of 18 and are either resident within the parish or live elsewhere but have been accustomed members of the congregation for at least three months, may register as members of the General Vestry of the parish, allowing them to attend and vote at meetings of the General Vestry and to stand for election to the Select Vestry. Meetings of the General Vestry are held at least once a year. The Select Vestry is elected as part of this General Vestry Meeting. The Select Vestry hold their positions for a period of one year. Select Vestry members may be re-elected annually and there is no limit on the number of terms which may be served.

Pay and remuneration

The Rector receives a stipend and office and locomotory allowances in accordance with figures approved by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland.

The Organist and Rector's Secretary receive salaries commensurate with role and experience.

Organisational Structure

The Select Vestry is responsible for the day-to-day management of the parish. The Select Vestry consists of the members of the clergy serving in the parish, any curate assistant ("the curate"), the Churchwardens, the Glebe wardens and generally not more than twelve other members of the General Vestry elected at the Easter General Vestry Meeting.

The Select Vestry is chaired by the incumbent or other member of the clergy officiating in the parish. Select Vestry members are responsible for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how parish funds are to be applied.

The Select Vestry meets at times fixed by the members or by the Diocesan Synod. Special meetings may be convened at any time by the chairperson or the Churchwardens. In 2023 the Select Vestry met 10 times during the year and the average attendance was 72%.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in the Northern Ireland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in the United Kingdom (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council in the UK, including Charities SORP (FRS 102) "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)" and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the United Kingdom and United Kingdom Law) Under that law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charity and of the statement of financial activities of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023 (continued)

- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and identify the standards in question, subject to any material departures being 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 Parish will continue as a going concern.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Parish's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Parish and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the provision of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement as to disclosure to our examiners

In so far as the Trustees are aware at the timing of approving our Trustees' Annual Report:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's independent examiner is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.

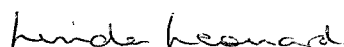
Independent Examiner

The examiner, GMcG Chartered Accountants, have indicated their willingness to continue in office, and a resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual Easter General Vestry Meeting.

On behalf of the Trustees



Canon J Pierce - Rector



L Leonard – Secretary

Date 16/4/2024