

St Mark's Church, Dundela, Belfast

Charity Trustees' Annual Report

for the Year ended 31st December 2023

Charity Registration Number NIC102090



St Mark's
Parish of Dundela

Charity Registration Number: NIC102090

St Mark's Parish Church, Dundela

References and administration details

Charity Registration Number NIC102090

Contact Address St Mark's Parish Office
Heyn Hall
2 Sydenham Avenue
Belfast
BT4 2DR

Charity Trustees

Mrs Yvonne Davidson
Dr Ann Clark
Ms Laura Hillis: Glebe Warden People
Mr Michael Newman
Mrs Lynn Wilson: Glebe Warden Clergy
Mrs Lesley Donaldson
Mr Robert McBride
Mrs Joan Atkinson
Mr Don McClean
Mr John Campbell
Mrs Heather Ellison
Miss Heather McKaig

Principal Office-bearers

Clergy (Rector)	Revd Canon Helene T. Steed
Church Hon Secretary	Mrs Hannah Nelson
Church Hon Treasurer	Mrs Lucy McIlwaine
Church Warden Clergy	Mrs Karen Doyle
Church Warden People	Mrs Yvonne McMaster

Independent Examiner

Mr Mark Eakin

Bankers

Danske Bank
520 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast. BT4 3HD

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Charity Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 31st of December 2023.

The Charity Trustees present the annual report and statements of Receipts and Payments and Liabilities for St Mark's Parish Church, Dundela for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Objectives and Activities

The charitable purpose for the Church of Ireland is the advancement of religion – faith in Christ.

As a Church of Ireland parish, the principal function for St Mark's Parish Church, Dundela is to adhere to and promote the charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland. The mission of our parish is to provide divine worship; pastoral care; nurturing of faith; charitable (outreach) and social activities; and ecumenical involvement in East Belfast. St Mark's Parish engages with the local community through activities and events.

As part of our objective in pursuit of the advancement of religion, St Mark's Parish has custody of property, records, and artefacts of significant importance to the cultural and religious heritage. This is maintained by the Select Vestry.

Achievements, Performance and Public Benefit

As a Parish church, with a clear Anglican identity, St Mark's Parish aims to be the spiritual home for all our parishioners regardless of age. To achieve this, we try to offer a wide variety of services and activities.

During 2023, St Mark's Parish divine worship was at the core of our parish activities, we held 177 services. Our services ranged from the traditional to the contemporary, from the choral to the meditative and hence offers a wide variety of devotional options. As part of our core activities, we offer opportunities for all ages to grow in faith through bible studies, discussion groups, Sunday School and Youth Fellowship.

The public benefit associated with St Mark's Parish, in addition to divine worship, is through the many weekly group activities that takes place throughout the year. These groups cater for all ages and many different interests. Singing, our Open Choir is growing in numbers; studying (faith formation); and social events take place on a regular basis. In addition, we have specific outreach ministries: *Mums and Chums*: ministry to pre-school children and their parents (or carers). The group meets weekly during term time in the Heyn Hall for a morning of play, fun and singing. Other activities during 2023 included Lego Club, Book Group, Walking Group, Handbell ensemble and Tower Bell ringing, Art and Chat, Creative Stitching, Cooking classes for adults and children, Children's Easter and Summer Camp and a Youth Fellowship programme. The family focused Messy Church also continued and in 2023 saw growth in numbers of people attending the Warm Hub this enables people of all ages to meet for social interaction and fellowship in a heated environment with Coffee and Soup provided at no charge. During 2023 we also hosted 9 concerts which provides cultural experiences in this part of Belfast and beyond.

St Mark's Parish is strongly committed to an open ethos. We do all we can to make sure that our premises are accessible. Both the Church and the Heyn Hall are disability friendly. We have a very effective district wide communication policy which informs and encourages every home within our parish boundary, approx. 5,000 homes, to participate in the wide range of religious and social activities held on our premises. We also host local housing and charitable groups for meetings and activities. We have also increased our social media by increasing Facebook updates and updating the Website, emailing weekly church newsletter to parishioners.

St Mark's Parish is involved in various fundraising activities which are for the benefit of our own charitable ministry, as well as supporting other charities in the local community, and also at national, and international level. Supporting humanitarian initiatives is a long-standing tradition in the parish. As part of this ministry every year we send Christmas presents ('shoe-boxes') to children in need. In 2023 funds were raised for the local foodbank *The Larder*, CSMI and the Poppy Appeal.

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As part of the parish New Spring initiative, we improved the interior of the church building to facilitate increased fellowship and friendship before and after services. This included installing a servery where light refreshments can be prepared. We also upgraded the side chapel to be used for educational purposes and smaller, intimate worship. As part of this scheme, we have provided great accessibility for people of differing abilities, including special designated seating areas for wheelchair users and prams.

St Mark's Church was designed by the renowned Victorian architect William Butterfield, his only parish church on the island of Ireland. This makes our Church unique and as custodians of this gem, the Select Vestry is particularly focussed that it is cared for according to the highest possible heritage praxis. In addition, the Church and Parish have a strong historical link with the life of the theologian, poet and novelist C. S. Lewis, whose maternal grandfather; Revd Thomas Hamilton was the first rector of the Parish. To make this cultural and architectural heritage accessible to the public, the Select Vestry offers open days, guided tours and participates annually in the C. S. Lewis Festival and Heritage Open Days.

The Parish is affiliated with and have a very longstanding cooperation with the Girl Guiding movement. Rainbows, Brownies and Guides meet weekly in the Heyn Hall and draw members from all denominations and none.

The Heyn Hall is also regularly used by community organisations, including Scottish Dancing classes, Resident AGM Meetings, flexibility exercise classes and birthday parties. There was an increased use of the Hall and Church premises with new exercise classes offered, BBC radio performances and using the grounds as filming locations.

Finance

The Charity Trustees consider the financial results for the year ending 31st December 2023 and the financial situation at that date to be good, this has been helped due to targeted fundraising events such as the tile appeal for the refurbishment work in the Church, concerts and successful grant applications.

Management

St Mark's Parish, as a Parish in the Church of Ireland is governed by Chapter three of the Constitution for the Church of Ireland. Members of the Select Vestry are elected as stated herein. The Select Vestry is responsible for the day-to-day management of St Mark's Parish in terms of finance, fabrics and furnishing. The finances are managed by the Hon. Treasurer in conjunction with the Select Vestry.

Acting in her role as Incumbent and Rector of St Mark's Parish, the Revd Canon H. T. Steed receives a stipend, locomotory and office allowances in accordance with the figures approved of the General Synod for the Church of Ireland. No other Trustees receive any remuneration from St Mark's Parish.

St Mark's Parish adhere to the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Trust policy.

Compliance with Public Benefit

The Charity Trustees have 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 have helped St Mark's Parish objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees,

Revd Canon H. T. Steed
Rector

Mrs Lucy McIlwaine
Hon. Treasurer

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Commented [ML1]: Does this read ok??