

Parish of Ballyholme, St Columbanus

Trustees' annual report for the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Objectives and Activities

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

The principal function of the Ballyholme Parish Church is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting, through the work of the Ballyholme Parish Church, 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 are fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

As a result of the activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, Ballyholme Parish Church has custody of property and of records, materials and artefacts of significance to the cultural and religious heritage and maintenance of which is undertaken by the select vestry of Ballyholme Parish Church.

Achievements, Performance & Public Benefit

Christians meet, eat, sing and visit one another - it's what we do and who we are. The global pandemic imposed restrictions which disabled us on all those fronts. On reflection, there have only been two real low points during my time in Ballyholme. The first came over Christmas 2015 when it became clear that we had not raised sufficient funds to connect the Church to the Parish Centre in one building project and would have to do it in two phases, taking longer and costing more. The second cast a shadow over this Christmas and, as you all know, I'm talking about our treatment at the hands of Bank of Ireland in December past.

The road back to where we were is proving arduous, and where the first year hit us hard financially, the second year proved doubly painful. Thank you for responding so sympathetically and generously to the "Though he was rich" campaign and please keep those responses coming. Thank you too, to those individuals and families who supported our solar panels project, who paid for the current repairs to Beverley Gardens and who will be sponsoring our new website and rebranding, an upgrade begun but on hold for the last two years. Other surprise and extremely timely gifts have come in and you all have been answers to our prayers.

But what Godly joy there has been in our new reunions. What blessing there has been in finding safe ways around the limitations so that we can renew our fellowship and rekindle our devotion. It's been such a relief to see so many familiar faces back again and there's even the excitement of meeting some new ones! The return of the Choir marked a real turning point. While the seniors have proved indomitable from the start of the Pandemic, the families and children are still finding life uncertain. Yet with creche, mothers and toddlers, Children's Church and Easter Jumpin all cranking back into action, and new contacts being made through our community outreach projects like the Easter Family Funday and Scavenger Hunt, it really does feel that the Lord is drawing us back together.

There's a Getty song I've found gently assuring over the last while and you could do worse than join the 4 million people who have listened to it on YouTube ('The Lord is my salvation'):

"I will not fear when darkness falls
His strength will help me scale these walls
I'll see the dawn of the rising sun
The Lord is my salvation."

Financial Review

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the financial position presented in these statements which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements for charities, *The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015*, relating to charity accounting and reporting which commenced on 1 January 2016.

As our Parish income for the year was more than £250,000 but less than £500,000 we must:

Prepare accounts on the accruals basis;

Have our accounts independently examined in compliance with Section 65(4) of the Charities Act NI;

Complete a trustees' annual report that also reports on how our charity has met the public benefit requirement; and

Complete an annual monitoring return.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds comprise of the Parish General Fund, Property Fund, Investment Property Fund, Equipment Fund, Missions Fund and Youth Fellowship Fund.

Overall unrestricted Parish income was £17,067 more than expenditure this year with a total of £290,039 of income against £272,972 of expenditure.

General Fund Income

General fund income was £290,039, up £77,446 from £212,593 in 2022. This income was from the following sources:

General giving increased from £172,196 last year to £232,685.

Property related income was down from £14,597 last year to £12,279.

General Parish income from sources such as hall rental, magazine donations, catering was up from £8,588 last year to £8,820.

Interest earned was £127 this year compared to £53 last year.

General Fund Expenditure

Overall expenditure increased from £210,027 in 2022 to £247,495 (£37,468). The main areas of expenditure were:

Clergy and staff costs increased from £138,649 in 2022 to £139,788 (£1,139).

Premises costs increased from £37,527 in 2022 to £56,748 (£19,221).

General Parish expenses e.g. consumables, postage and printing increased from £17,857 in 2022 to £33,738 (£15,881).

The Diocesan levy increased from £13,175 in 2022 to £15,550 (£2,375).

Missions

Income into the Missions fund and Earthquake Appeal was £11,330 and £9,073 was given to charitable causes.

Youth Fellowship

Income into the Youth fund was £18,214 and £16,404 was used for activities relating to youth.

Transfers

During the year, Development Fund Giving raised £38,144. The Select Vestry agreed to transfer £27,144 of this to the Designated Building Fund for future building projects and £11,000 to the General Fund to help fund repairs to Beverly Gardens.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six months expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. Based on 2023 expenditure of £272,972 the target level of reserves is £68,243 to £136,486. Free reserves as at 31 December 2023 are £425,542. The Trustees are satisfied that relevant level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Look Ahead

The following are financial priorities for the Select Vestry and Parish in the coming year:

Continue to push the generous giving initiative with the aim of having sufficient funds to enable us to employ a full-time Curate.

Continue to move away from Free Will Offering envelopes to electronic giving.

Continue to plan for the next phase of the development plan to build the link between the Church and Halls.

Update the Parish website and other means of communication.

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 ended 2019 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 Organisations. The Select Vestry members are the Charity Trustees.

Recruitment and Appointment of Select Vestry (Trustees)

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 will 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 Incumbent of the Parish stipend is paid directly by the Parish. The Incumbent receives a stipend of £36,348 and locomotory allowance of £6,590 in accordance with figures approved by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland.

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 (the Incumbent), two church wardens, two glebe wardens, and 12 other members (one of which is the Honorary Secretary and another the Honorary Treasurer) of the General Vestry elected at the General Vestry.

The Select Vestry is chaired by the Incumbent. 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 church wardens. In 2023 the Select Vestry met ten times during the year and the average attendance was 88%.

Compliance with Public Benefit

The Parish has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the actives entered into during the year have helped to achieve the Parish's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Parish and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Parish for that year.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principals in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

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.

The trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 24.10.24.

Rev Canon S Doogan
Trustee

E Grant
Trustee