

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Achievements, Performance and Public Benefit

Our mission statement outlines our aims and objectives: "Worshipping God, making disciples, transforming community" and we seek to be "A place where everyone is welcome"

During the year our numbers attending Church Services have been increasing gradually towards a level which we enjoyed before the outbreak of Covid.

Sunday services were held twice on a Sunday at 8.30 am and 11.00 am, and evening services had been suspended this year due to the small level of attendance and the high costs of heating and lighting the Church building especially during the winter months.

Children's organisations

Organisations for young people such as **Penguins** and **GFS** continue to follow their normal pattern of attendance, and this has held up very well with children enjoying the support of parents and the wider Church. **5th Portadown** Scouting organisations also meet in our Halls on a Thursday evening and are enjoying much success.

"WOW" is the name for our Sunday School (WOW stands for Worship our way). WOW has been meeting as normal each Sunday in the Church Hall and members attend special seasonal services such as Advent and Palm Sunday along with prizegiving in the Church Building.

Although we are very thankful for the numbers which we have attending WOW, the numbers are not what they could be for the size of our parish. Part of this is due to competing activities for children held outside of Church, and the increasing secularism which has infiltrated many Church families, and "Church" is not the priority it once was.

"Messy Church" is part of our outreach. Messy Church happens on the first Thursday of each month and our activities resumed for the normal times which are now 4.15 pm to 6.15 pm. This is for all children in the parish but each child or group from a family must be accompanied by an adult. The activities includes crafts, storytelling worship and a shared meal prepared on the premises by our catering team. There is no monetary charge for this service; it is supported by voluntary contributions and from Church funds. The group is open to ALL in the community whether they are regular Church attenders or not.

Adult Organisations

Bowling club, Craft Group, and Mothers' Union meet in our halls from time to time, and a Parish Bible Study group meets via Zoom.

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

Child Protection Policy

St Columba's Parish Church, Portadown subscribes to the Church of Ireland child protection policy statement: "It is the policy of the Church of Ireland to set standards for the welfare of all children sharing in its ministry with a view to protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm".

The same policy also applies to those who would be termed vulnerable adults. St Columba's Parish Church, Portadown does this by adopting the Code of Good Practice "Safeguarding Trust" as issued by the Church of Ireland.

Charities Commissioner for Northern Ireland (Statement of Compliance)

St Columba's Parish Church, Portadown 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 have helped to achieve the parish's objectives and activities as well as providing public benefit.

The Benefit is defined thus:

"The expression of the precepts of the Christian religion through engagement with the general public, and in particular with the disadvantaged, the sick, the elderly and the young, is a public benefit. This can be measured and evidenced through increased social integration and pastoral care delivered at the point of need. The direct benefit of participation in Church life includes the enjoyment of public worship and the giving and receiving of pastoral ministry, improved understanding of the values relating to civic engagement, community cohesion and providing a bridge between diverse groups as well as improved educational outcomes through the Church's ministry of teaching. The beneficiaries are the general public, participation in Church governance and willingness to support through contributions the continuing witness of the Church. The wider benefit to the public will outweigh any detriment arising in the course of Christian outreach. Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our Christian ministry or to lay staff is essential to the fulfilment of the purpose of the advancement of religion."

Financial Review

The principal sources of income are freewill offering donations from our parishioners.

St Columba's Parish Church had a deficit of receipts over payments before other gains of £23,928.53, for the year ended 31st December 2023.

St Columba's Parish Church continues to be in a healthy financial state as at 31st December 2023 with a total cash funds of £194,232.58.

The trustees' policy on holding reserves is to retain sufficient unrestricted funds to meet on-going running costs for a minimum period of one year, having regard to increasing costs and declining income. No funds were materially in deficit at the year end.

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

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 St Columba's Parish Church, Portadown can continue its activities and the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

Structure, Governance and Management **Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity**

Chapter 111 of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland governs Parishes and Parochial Organisation. 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. **Select Vestry members 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 clergy are paid directly by the Diocese

Organisation Structure

The Select Vestry is responsible for the day to day management of the parish. The Select Vestry consists of the member of the clergy serving in the parish, any curate assistant ("curate"), the churchwardens, the glebewardens and generally not more than fourteen other members of the General Vestry elected at the General Vestry. The Select Vestry is chaired by the Incumbent or other member of the clergy officiating in the parish. Select Vestry members are responsible for 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 Diocesan Synod. Special meetings may be convened at anytime by the chairperson or the churchwardens. In 2023 the Select Vestry met ten times during the year and the average attendance was 90%.

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

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 activities entered into during the year and have helped to achieve the parish's objectives and activities as well as providing benefit.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report, the Statement of Receipts and Payments and Statement of Assets and Liabilities in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland with income of less than £250,000 requires the trustees to prepare a statement of Assets and Liabilities for each financial year.

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 assets and liabilities of the parish. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on Behalf of the Trustees



Canon W Adair, Clergy



Date



Mrs S Rutherford, Treasurer



Date