

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present the annual report and statements of Receipts and Payments and Assets and Liabilities for the Parish of Donaghmore, commonly known as St Michael's, Castlecaulfield 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 Donaghmore Church of Ireland Parish is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting, through the work of the Donaghmore 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 activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, the Donaghmore Church of Ireland Parish 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 the Donaghmore Church of Ireland Parish.

Achievements, Performance & Public Benefit

The Church exists primarily, and above all else, as a place of Christian worship. Services of public worship are held each Sunday morning throughout the year and each Wednesday morning. Evening services are held on Wednesday nights during Lent, each night in Holy Week (both shared with our sister parish), at Harvest Thanksgiving, Boy's Brigade Enrolment, and at Christmas tide (Carol service and Christmas eve service).

The parish is always pleased to host groups from the wider community, and does so annually for the Orange Order and bi-annually for the Apprentice Boys of Derry. The local Primary School hold their annual Carol Service in the Church, and their winter and spring concerts in the parish hall. The local Masonic lodge also hold their annual Carol Service in St Michael's

There are good working relationships with other local churches. The clergy of the local Methodist and Presbyterian Churches join with us regularly and there is a recently established service for Christian Unity Week, alternating with St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Donaghmore.

During the year 2023 there were a total of eleven baptisms, four marriages, and five funeral services in the church.

The Church building is of notable historical importance. Built in the early 1680s and incorporating features from its medieval predecessor and also the local castle, it is one of the oldest buildings of the locality in continuous use. Of particular note is the south nave window, which is the original east window from the medieval church (mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters), the pillars on both south and west doors, and the carvings of angels (west wall, east wall and porch), a dragon (west wall), and the arms of the Caulfield family (west wall). Both the entrance pillars and the Burges Mausoleum are grade 1 listed buildings, as is the Church.

The recently restored historic pipe organ continues to be in regular use both liturgically and for concerts, recitals and broadcasts.

The parish Sunday School (the New Life Group) meets weekly from September through to May, and participates monthly in worship. The Parish supports a large Boys Brigade Company (approximately 70 members and 16 officers), a branch of the Mothers Union, and a weekly patchwork and craft class.

Parish Hall facilities are additionally used by the Horticultural Society, the Open Door Club and the Young Farmers Club.

Parish finances and fabric are cared for by the Select Vestry. Various fund raising and social events are held each year.

The parish supports several missionary groups, particularly CMS and the Church Army. There is also a series of special appeals and collections for various local and international groups and in light of international disasters.

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

Financial Review

- The main income of the charity is derived from parishioner donations supplemented by gift aid claims, fund raising events and church organisations.
- Total receipts have remained in line with the previous year with regular weekly amounts increased, but with no one-off significant additional sources this year. There has been an encouraging increase in freewill offering, our main sources of income. Despite this, results record a deficit of £3,113 (2022: surplus of £11,377) for the year.
- There are no material uncertainties impacting the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.
- The Trustees' policy on holding reserves is to retain sufficient unrestricted funds available to meet on-going running costs for a minimum of one year having consideration for regular sources of parishioner weekly donations based on historical, current and projected congregation levels.
- No funds were materially in deficit at the end of the year.

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 31 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

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

Select Vestry members do not receive remuneration for their appointment as Trustees. Where a member of the Select Vestry has provided services which are distinct from their role as trustee then the Select Vestry may approve such remuneration providing the Select Vestry act in the best interest of the charity.

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Organisational 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 ("the curate"), the churchwardens, the glebe wardens and generally not more than twelve 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 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 3 times during the year (2022: 2 times) and the average attendance was 62% (2022: 63%).

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 statement of receipts and payments and statement of assets and liabilities in accordance with applicable law 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 receipts and payments and 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 and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on Behalf of the Trustees


Jim Kirk


Elizabeth Burrows

6 March 2024