

Christ Church Castledawson

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 Church for the year ended 31 December 2023

Objectives and Activities

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

The principal function of the Parish of Christ Church Castledawson is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting, through their work, the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole and offering support to 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 Parish of Christ Church Castledawson 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 Parish of Christ Church Castledawson.

The activities of the charity

At the heart of Christ Church Parish is a passionate desire to glorify God and demonstrate His love. This was achieved through our varied Sunday services which took place at 10am, 11:30am and occasionally (monthly) at 8:30am and 6pm.

Additional events and special services took place during Christian festival seasons such as Lent; Holy Week; Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Advent and Christmas.

Sunday School is a vital part of what we do as a church. Each Sunday from September- June (except the last Sunday in the month when we have an all-age service) Sunday School classes are held in our parish halls for children from age 4-16 years.

Our Sunday School offers various age groups a chance to explore God's word and enjoy fellowship in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. We also have a crèche facility which caters for under 4 years.

Other church groups including Women's Fellowship, mid-week Prayer Meeting and Bible Study, Bowling Club, Dance Class, Mums and Tots, and Home groups provide opportunities to enjoy fellowship with each other and be built up by one another in a practical Christian focused way.

Our Halls are also normally used to regularly facilitate, Scouts; worship band practice, ladies bible study groups, prayer meetings, and 2 local community based choirs. Occasional hall use would include funeral teas and various fundraising activities.

In addition to Sunday and other Church services such as funerals and weddings our church building is used for church choir practices.

The Rectory is used to facilitate marriage preparation classes, confirmation preparation classes, occasional vestry meetings, occasional strategy group meetings and other private pastoral consultations throughout the year.

We recognise that there are issues in our Parish for individuals that stem from sickness, bereavement, ageing, incapacity, and those receiving medical treatment, care in both hospitals and local nursing homes. We are committed to helping these people in need with empathy, sympathy, love and compassion. This is done through occasional visits, the offer of private Holy Communion and prayer. Helping those in need, in this way, is a demonstration of our faith, 'we try to do as Jesus did!'

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We also actively seek to reach out into our community through a range of caring and educational programmes for young people. These projects include Sunday School, young people's group, Ambassadors Football holiday bible club. Our Church also supports a reading assistance programme (Equipping for Life) in the local school with volunteers from our parish offering 1hr per week each to help children in the school with their literacy. Our 'Christmas Lights Tractor Run' and our King's Coronation Event in May served as a means of engaging with and blessing all age groups in the wider community.

Fund raising

The purpose of our charitable fundraising is not only for our own costs, for example, our General Church Fund or Mustard Seed Fund but also for a variety of charitable needs e.g. our Pentecost barbecue (in support of Christian Aid) along with other social events aimed at supporting other charitable causes, such events served as opportunities to improve social cohesion, reduce social isolation and bring a greater sense of togetherness.

This is a tangible demonstration of our mission and outreach and awareness that, as Christians, we are called to support a range of good causes.

Activities such as concerts, birthday parties and other fund-raising events including: Car Boot Sales; Family Fun Night and Duck Race; Charity Golf Day; Table Quiz; Car Treasure Hunt; Autumn Tractor Run; were open to the whole of the church and also the wider community

At all times we keep in mind our Safeguarding Trust policy, Health and Safety requirements and catering regulations.

We have endeavoured to adhere 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 benefit the whole of the community and achieve the Parish's objectives.

Missions and evangelism

Another part of the vision for Christ Church Castledawson is the outreach to the local community with events such as our recently put together Community Choir which is made up of a cross section of singers from various faith based groups in the local community. This year due to increased running costs and a basically static income our usual annual financial giving in support of missionary societies unfortunately couldn't happen.

However support of overseas missions continued with support of different missionary societies abroad such as: Christian Aid; The Leprosy Mission and The Bishop's Appeal (see financial report).

Achievements, Performance & Public Benefit

Central to the work at all levels in the Parish is teaching God's word, to bring parishioners into a deeper relationship, knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, so that they are thoroughly equipped and empowered to reach out into the community, both within and beyond the Parish boundaries.

Christ Church continues to offer a range of services over the course of the year that we hope our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. We further hope that all who enter our buildings do so feeling welcome, safe, warm and secure.

Our continuing desire is to reach out to all, seeking to transform the local community and build a Christ centred congregation which will be a witness for Jesus Christ and work for the advancement of His Kingdom.

The direct benefit of participation in Church life includes the enjoyment of public worship and giving and receiving of pastoral ministry, improved understanding of Holy Scripture, increased application of Christian biblical morals and ethics and improved values relating to civic engagement.

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The expression of the precepts of the Christian religion through engagement with the general public, both in person and (when practicable) online, and in particular with the disadvantaged, the sick, the elderly and the young is a public benefit. This can normally be measured and evidenced through pastoral visitation, increased social integration and pastoral care delivered at the point of need.

Overall, the beneficiaries of Christ Church Castledawson are the general public and the public valuation of the benefits can be evidenced through attendance at public worship, participation in Church governance and willingness to support the continuing witness of the Church through financial contributions. The wider benefit to the public is the availability of a place for worshipping in the course of Christian outreach and the facilitation of weddings, funerals, baptisms and confirmations.

Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our Christian ministry or to lay staff is essential to the fulfilment for the purpose of religion. No elected Trustee receives remuneration, reward or other private benefit for carrying out their Trustee responsibility.

Also, the direct benefits flowing from the purpose of the Church includes the provision of archive records, public enjoyment of historic buildings and artefacts such as Church plate, furnishings and materials as an overall improved appreciation of a longstanding Christian heritage. This is demonstrated through on-going provision of access to records and the use made of these records in, for example, research and genealogy, through conservation efforts in respect of records, property and artefacts and the subsequent requests for access and use of our materials by the wider society. We sometimes receive requests for family information from individuals from around the world.

To mitigate risk of harm to any persons, the Trustees ensure adequate health and safety measures are in place at Christ Church. Also, child protection (Safeguarding Trust Policy), Access NI checks and training opportunities are in place for those involved in children and youth work or working with Adults at Risk.

No private benefit is received from Trustees fulfilling their responsibilities in respect of buildings, artefacts or records. In the course of conservation and to make records accessible to the public, no professional staff is engaged for the fulfilment of the purpose. The beneficiaries are solely the general public.

Financial Review

- The results for the year are set out on page 8, which the Trustees consider to be satisfactory.
- The reserves of the Parish are held for the advancement of its charitable purpose, other than restricted reserves which are held for a designated purpose – see note 15.

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 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 who are annual subscribers of a sum not less than £50.00 per annum and are either resident within the parish or live elsewhere but have been accustomed members of the congregation 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.

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Organisational Structure

The Select Vestry takes responsibility for the managing of certain activities and decision making within 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 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. During the 2023 year the Select Vestry met 6 times for scheduled meetings, and most members attended on a regular basis (81% average attendance) or sent a verbal apology.

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 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



Reverend Canon Colin Welsh
Trustee



Joyce Campbell
Trustee

16 July 2024