

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Frederick Street Preparative Meeting

Annual Report & Accounts for year ended 31st December 2023

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Frederick Street
Preparative Meeting Annual Report & Accounts for year ended 31st December 2023

Frederick Street Preparative Meeting

Trustees (at 31st December
2023)

Edmund Livingston

Elizabeth Dickson

Mark White

Registered Address

Frederick Street.
Belfast. BT1 2WL

Charity number

NIC 107081

Bankers

Danske Bank

Facebook page

Belfast Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Frederick Street

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Trustees' Report for year ended 31st December 2023

Introduction This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and in line with the guidance produced by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Constitution and governance The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Frederick Street Preparative Meeting is governed by its governing document which was agreed by the Preparative Meeting on 18th March 2018. The Meeting was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 18th May 2018.

The Trustees, of whom there should be not less than two, are appointed at the Annual General Meeting. They are appointed for a period of up to three years and are eligible for re-appointment for a further two terms. Trustees who served during the year ending 31st December 2023 were as follows:

Edmund Livingston
(Clerk of Trustees)

Elizabeth Dickson

Mark White

The Trustees are responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. No Trustee received any remuneration for services as a member of the Board of Trustees and the charity has no employees.

The Trustees have put in place a data protection policy and a child protection policy, both of which are reviewed annually.

The Purpose of the charity Frederick Street Preparative Meeting is established by Lisburn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland. It is primarily a Meeting for Worship that practices in accordance with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers.

We are based in a Meeting House at Frederick Street in Belfast. As well as the main meeting room where we meet for worship on a Sunday, we also have a kitchen, committee room and two smaller rooms. We have a small caretaker's apartment attached to the building. We also own an older property on the site which is leased at a peppercorn rent to the charity Concern.

The purpose of our charity, as set out in our governing document, is the advancement of the general religious purposes of the Religious Society of Friends by the following means, in so far as they are exclusively charitable:

- i. Strengthening the Christian understanding and religious development of the Quaker meeting both in the geographical area of the Preparative Meeting and beyond;
- ii. Contributing financially and practically to the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iii. Providing for the pastoral care of individual Members and Attenders including assistance to those in need

Our activities during 2023

Frederick Street has continued to hold Meetings For Worship throughout the year with an average attendance on a Sunday morning of 20. We decided to resume our Midweek Meetings which is held on the 1st Wednesday of each month. This Meeting lasting 30 mins, followed by refreshments, has proved popular with visitors. We have continued our series of short talks led by different Members of the Meeting on spiritual topics and this has stimulated a healthy discussion afterwards. We as a Preparative Meeting have given attention to the duties referred to in the book of Organisation and Christian Discipline chapter 5, Paragraph 4. General Christian

Council and Queries for Serious Consideration have been read. We have fulfilled the requirements of the Child Safeguarding Policy. Our AGM took place on Sunday 20th August and the annual return to the Charity Commission was completed. The development working group has met regularly throughout the year making plans for the refurbishment of our premises. As talks with Quaker Service continued, this group was urged by the Preparative Meeting to make a start. The following action plan was agreed. Phase 1. Upgrade the Meeting Room and the toilets. Phase 2. Upgrade the foyer, kitchen and dining room. Phase 3. Upgrade the upstairs rooms and the caretakers flat in conjunction with Quaker Service. An interior designer, (Catherine McMillan) had come highly recommended and she proved to have great vision advising us on the project. The work started in September and was completed by mid November. We were very grateful to our neighbours at the Belfast Jesuit Centre who welcomed us to their prayer room where we held Meeting for Worship while Frederick Street was out of action. The funding for this 1st phase has come from, several generous anonymous donations from our own Members, grants from, Bangor Meeting fund, Ulster Quarterly Meeting property fund, Jessie Cairns Bequest, JEMY, The Chapman Trust, and the Southall Trust. The balance came from the Meeting reserves. We have had several meetings with the Art department of our neighbours at the Ulster University about a student competition to redesign our entrance gates. The energy and enthusiasm shown by these students is very encouraging and we look forward to seeing the final designs.

The Christmas craft fair, organised with South Belfast was again a very successful morning. The sale of baked goods and crafts produced by local Friends raised over £2800 to be shared between Quaker Service and the refurbishment fund. We celebrated the reopening of our Meeting House with an open coffee morning in December followed by a larger than normal attendance at the Midweek Meeting. Invitations were sent to other Meetings and to representatives from the many neighbours and organisations who helped us with the project so far. We were delighted with the response and very positive feedback from our guests. The event strengthened relationships while encouraging outreach and should perhaps be repeated in the future. The conclusion of the many discussions with Quaker Service is that they are fully committed to a move to join us at Frederick Street as stated in their new strategic plan. This joint venture creating a "Frederick Street Quaker Hub" is an exciting prospect and we ask for God's blessing and guidance to secure a healthy future for both parties working together.

Public Benefit

The trustees of Frederick Street Preparative Meeting are pleased to confirm that they have complied with their duty to have regard to the public benefit requirement statutory guidance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Our public benefit has been demonstrated in a number of ways over the past year:

- We hold regular Meeting for Worship every Sunday morning and these Meetings are open to members of the public as well as our own members and regular attenders – these Meetings provide spiritual nourishment and deepen the Christian experience and understanding of those who attend;
- Using legacy funds that have been left to the Meeting in the past, we provide some financial support to those in need within our Meeting;
- We provide financial support to Quaker Service and a range of other charities from regular collections at our Meetings. We also support the charity Concern by making our premises available to them for a small rent.
- We have engaged with the local community through membership of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster which we hope will make the Meeting House more visible and allow us to make a contribution to the regeneration of the area;

Financial Review

Our financial statement for the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023 is attached to this report.

Subscriptions and collections for Meeting House funds totalled £8455 which was £775 more than 2022. Charity collections continue to provide much appreciated support to our chosen charities. Income from our investments in M&G Charifund and Central Investment Fund totalled £7,197. The Christmas Craft Fair raised £2840 which was split equally between Quaker Service and our refurbishment fund. Our development was funded by three main sources.

1. Donations from members and former members of FS which came to £24,710
2. Grants received from Ulster QM Property, JEMY, Jessie Cairns Bequest, The Chapman Trust and Southall Trust which came to £38,500.
3. Cashing in the anonymous donation of £58,035 half of which was used in phase 1 of the development.

On the expenditure side we were overcharged for electricity in 2022 so our account was in credit for 2023. Gas usage and costs increased during this year. Our National Charge discount has stopped so the full cost was £4,013.80.

The major item was the cost of the first phase of our redevelopment which came to £121,146.

The closing balance in our main current account at 31-12-2023 was £37,175.85.

Declaration

This report was approved at the Annual General Meeting on 20th August 2023 and is signed on behalf of trustees.

Edmund Livingston

Clerk of Trustees
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