

**CHURCH OF IRELAND DIOCESE OF DOWN AND DROMORE**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL (1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023)

#### Bishop

The Right Revd David A McClay

#### Honorary Secretaries

##### Down

The Ven Kenneth Higgins Archdeacon of Down  
(resigned 30/09/2023)

The Revd Adrian TW Dorrian

Dr Elizabeth J Leonard

##### Down Clerical

The Revd James W Cheshire, Archdeacon of Down

The Revd Clive Atkinson (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd Colin Birnie (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd Sabrina Cooke (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd Colin P Darling (resigned 27/03/2023)

The Revd Colin Davis (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd Canon Gareth A Harron (resigned 16/06/2023)

The Very Revd T Henry Hull, Dean of Down (resigned  
29/12/2023)

The Revd Willie Nixon (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd Emma C Rutherford

The Revd Catherine J Simpson

The Revd Canon Dr Helene Steed

##### Down Lay

Dr Marilyn A Armstrong (resigned 16/6/23)

Mr James E Bunting

Mrs E June Butler

Mr William Fyffe (from 16/6/23)

Dr Melanie Houston (from 16/6/23)

Mr Paul Jardine

Mr Michael H Johnston

Mr David Manning

Mrs Glynis Matchett (from 16/6/23)

Mrs Paula McIlwaine (from 16/6/23)

Mr John Menagh (resigned 16/6/23)

Mr Stephen Moore (from 16/6/23)

Mr Tom Mullan (resigned 16/6/23)

Mr Nigel G Quinn

Lady Brenda MH Sheil (resigned 16/6/23)

Professor Brian M Walker (resigned 16/6/23)

Mrs Denise E Wilson

##### Dromore

The Very Revd S Geoffrey Wilson

Mr Basil J O'Malley

##### Dromore Clerical

The Ven T Roderic West, Archdeacon of Dromore  
(resigned 30/09/2023)

The Revd J Mark Harvey, Archdeacon of Dromore

The Revd Canon Terence J Cadden

The Revd Alison N Calvin

The Revd Raymond Kettle (from 16/06/2023)

The Revd B Ian Linton

The Revd Paul McAdam (resigned 16/06/2023)

The Revd Karen E Salmon

##### Dromore Lay

Mrs Alison F Adams

Mr David Armstrong (from 16/6/23)

Mr David Charleton (from 16/6/23)

Mr Simon Henry

Mrs Sally Johnston (from 16/6/23)

Mr C Michael McCarter

Mr Colin W Morris

Mrs Dianne Ruddock

Mr Stephen W Trew (resigned 16/6/23)

**Northern Ireland Charity Number:** NIC107102

**Registered Office**

Diocese of Down and Dromore  
Diocesan Offices,  
Unit 1, 21 Old Channel Road,  
Belfast  
BT3 9DE

**Business Address**

Diocese of Down and Dromore  
Diocesan Offices,  
Unit 1, 21 Old Channel Road,  
Belfast  
BT3 9DE

**Auditors**

Finegan Gibson Ltd  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

**Solicitors**

Edwards & Co Solicitors  
28 Hill Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LA

**Bankers**

AIB (NI)  
University Road  
Belfast  
BT7 1ND

Danske Bank  
PO Box 183  
Donegall Square West  
Belfast  
BT1 6JS

## REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The Diocesan Council presents its annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore is the advancement of the Christian religion.

The principal function of the Diocese of Down and Dromore is to support and develop mission and ministry within the geographical area of the Diocese through the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting, through the work of the Diocese of Down and Dromore and its Parish network 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 the Diocese of Down and Dromore.

As a result of activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, the Diocese of Down and Dromore has responsibility for property and custody of records, materials, and artefacts of significance to the cultural and religious heritage of the Diocese of Down and Dromore. General oversight of this work is undertaken by the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Down and Dromore.

### ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE & PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Diocese has been in the process of rebuilding and re-energising the work of its parishes throughout 2023 following the ongoing impact of covid-19 and the many other challenges in a post Christian culture. This has proved to require hard work and initiative at both the local level in parishes and at the more central level in the diocese. Many parishes are experiencing growth while others have found the way forward more difficult. The Diocese, mostly through the work of the Diocesan Bishop and Diocesan team has sought to provide appropriate support to local parishes and church plants. This has included providing one on one meetings with clergy, coming alongside select vestries, providing much by way of written materials, visitation of the parishes by members of the diocesan team and putting into the hands of clergy and select vestries resources to help them rebuild. It has involved bringing clergy and lay leaders together to explore together resources that enable growth. Full details of the achievements and performance of the Diocesan Council are detailed in the Diocesan Council's report to Synod, however some highlights of how the Diocese gave support in several ways to enhance Mission & Ministry are as follows:

**Clergy Support** – Through the 'Area Deanery' system clergy received mutual support and encouragement throughout the year. Pastoral support is offered to clergy on an on-going basis through the Area Deanery network and when required through paid counselling services. The Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Reverend D A McClay, provided ongoing pastoral support to all serving and retired clergy through regular gatherings for clergy, to provide opportunities for refreshment and renewal, telephone contact and home and hospital visitation.

A residential clergy conference took place in January 2023 for over 140 clergy, spouses and other church leaders and it provided the opportunity for other support gatherings, refreshment and teaching. This was the first residential conference since 2019 and was important in providing encouragement and support that the diocesan clergy and church workers greatly appreciated and found beneficial.

Monthly support gatherings are also provided for those pioneering new initiatives. These have proved very fruitful and have led to new initiatives that are supporting the most vulnerable in our diocese. Monthly gatherings also provide in-service training for clergy, providing the opportunity to equip our clergy and other staff members in parishes for the challenges of mission and ministry in today's world, for example these included providing help to clergy for those suffering from mental health issues and stress. Other events for clergy also took place such as on pioneer ministry, addictions, and disability awareness.

#### **Wider support provided to staff and volunteers involved in ministry**

The Diocesan 'Bible Week' was held in Willowfield Parish Church in September and live streamed to engage with those who for whatever reason were unable to travel to the event each evening. This event is run to give both clergy and those involved in Parish ministry the opportunity to be both challenged and encouraged. In addition, it helps at the start of the academic year in each September, to equip and refresh members of select vestries, youth and children's workers, Sunday school teachers and all those involved in ministry at the commencement of a new season of ministry in 75 parishes and 9 church plants in our diocese. This year the devotions at the Bible Week were delivered by the Reverend

## REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL (CONT'D)

Greg Downes from Kingfisher ministries. Greg stayed on in the diocese for the remainder of the month to lead missions in various places in the diocese involving prayer meetings, outreach services, youth nights, training and choir concerts.

In June the diocese hosted over 60 people from 10 different countries for a 'Sharing of Ministries Abroad' (SOMA) mission over a 2-week period. These people split into different teams to help 28 different parishes run missions and community events.

**Lay Ministry Support** – the Diocese continued to provide support and opportunities to those involved in Lay Ministry. Some of this involved new areas of ministry such as videos to resource the life, work, and ministry of parishes across the diocese. It also included providing ongoing resources for youth ministry, for children's ministry and for the development of leaders for these and other ministries.

Significant numbers attended training events. These events included training on Safeguarding, leadership development, Evangelism, Diocesan and Parish Reader ministry, pastoral care, bible course, first aid, prayer ministry and how to share your faith.

The Exploring Ministry group now has over 30 members (with 11 currently in training) and the Bible course around 40. The Parish reader Course had 22 people complete and the Diocesan Reader Course had 3 get commissioned and another 9 start training, as well as 8 currently on the Evangelist Course. 25 people attended the 5-week small group leadership course and 27 gained first aid qualifications. Around 440 people attended Safeguarding training over 8 different evening events and 50 attended the prayer ministry training. A one-off event on sharing faith attracted 37 people in September.

In May we also ran an encouragement meal for 40 Diocesan readers and Evangelists and at the end of September over 150 women attended the first 'Encounter' event for women in the diocese.

All of the above is part of how local churches, parishes and individuals are resourced by the Diocese for ministry across our Diocese of Down and Dromore.

**Youth & Children's Ministry** – The Diocese has continued to support those involved at diocesan and parish level in various forms of Youth & Children's Ministry. Details include: The Down and Dromore marquee at Summer Madness had over 200 young people attending over 5 days; JAM Summer Children's day camps involving 100 children; Holiday Bible Club resources produced and used by several churches; the summer camps had 130 young people and 40 young leaders attend over three 5-day camps; Youth Night at Bible Week with 80 young people attending; Sunday children's talks and visits to 25 different churches; Youth and Children's leaders' training day with 74 leaders; Kid's Praise Parties in 3 locations involving 90 children; Serve leadership course for youth (11 involved); Fellowship nights for children's and Youth leaders with 130 attending; Kilbroney Youth Weekend for 60 young people and leaders; Confirmation services and Saturday Night Live youth events were held in 4 churches and usually involved around 70 young people from different churches.

## OTHER MINISTRIES

The Diocese provides weekly ministry to prisoners in Maghaberry and Hydebank Prisons and provides support to vacant parishes through its 'cover duty' service. It not only assists existing church structures but seeks to develop new forms of mission and ministry through the Church Plant initiative, which this year has supported seven Church Plants and provided support to two new initiatives.

## SUPPORT MINISTRIES

The Diocesan Office also provides on-going support to parishes in relation to church property and lands, through Quinquennial inspections of rectories and church property, and advice on church graveyards. The support staff also help facilitate the running of the various Diocesan committees, organised the Diocesan Synod, and help with the structures to fill parish vacancies and the placement of curates and deacons. The collection and payment of Clergy Pensions & Stipends and legal and HR assistance to both clergy and parishes is organised at central level.

The Contact Management System continues to prove a very useful resource providing management with better statistical and financial information on parishes across the Diocese.

## REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL (CONT'D)

Church Planting newsletters are distributed three times per year to highlight good practice in pioneering ministry. A range of informative diocesan leaflets are also made available at diocesan events and on the diocesan website for example Bishop David's 10-year vision, Reading the Bible for ourselves, The Generosity Initiative, Sourcing Funding, Reimagining the offering, Invest in God's Kingdom by leaving a legacy to His church, Honouring the Memory, and Making Giving Easier.

### COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Diocese has considered 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 Diocesan objectives and activities, as well as providing benefit to the wider general public.

All the activities as outlined above enables parishes to effectively provide a service to their respective local communities, through the opportunity to provide weekly church services, youth and children's activities and pastoral support to many in local communities. The Diocese also runs an annual St Patrick's Day Celebration in Saul Parish and Down Cathedral, which welcomes the entire community. This is one of a number of cross community events that helps us fulfil our role in bridge building and reconciliation. All the church services and related activities during 2023 have been conducted in ways that comply with health and safety, safeguarding and other guidelines.

### FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Diocesan Council continued to support parishes in facing whatever challenges came their direction, whether these related to finance or personnel, always seeking ways to promote growth and utilise its financial resources with the aim of supporting and developing ministry and promoting the Church of Ireland within the Diocese.

The net revenue account shows a surplus for the year as reported on page 12 amounted to £945,382 (2022: £273,880). The Council had a net gain in total funds for the year of £913,391 (2022: £44,439), including a recognised gain on investments of £82,059 (2022: Loss £229,441). It should be noted that £798,697 of the surplus relates to the sale of COI House.

### RESERVES POLICY

The Diocesan Council operate a reserves policy, which they consider appropriate to ensure the continued ability of the charity to meet its objectives and financial commitments. The policy is reviewed annually by the Diocesan Council, in conjunction with a broader review of the finances of the Diocese.

The reserves policy of the Diocese is set so that the fixed asset investments plus net current assets are sufficient to cover the Council's commitments within its Designated and Restricted Funds, and to provide for at least six months operational costs. These reserves are held to maintain the operation of the Diocese of Down & Dromore and to provide surety against adverse financial events, such as income targets not being achieved or unbudgeted expenditure being required.

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the fixed asset investments plus net current assets totalled £4,621,437 of which £3,950,510 are Restricted Funds and £78,968 are Designated Funds. The funds required to cover the commitments within the Restricted & Designated funds are £4,029,478 with additional funds totalling £604,959 being required to meet six months operational costs and £112,909 to meet employment liabilities in the event of winding up the work of the Council. Free reserves on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 totalled £670,926 and therefore as the free reserves do not exceed the £717,868 required to meet six months operational costs and employment liabilities the reserves policy has not been met; however the Council is working towards meeting the policy.

### GOING CONCERN

The Diocesan Council have reviewed the budget for the year ahead and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the Diocese can continue its activities, and the financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

## REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL (CONT'D)

### PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The Diocesan Council gave approval for the appointment of a Compliance Officer and in 2023 Mrs Jane Beaney was appointed.

In 2023 the Joint Committee sold the Diocesan offices in Donegal Street Belfast, with the Diocesan Offices moving to rented accommodation in Old Channel Road in the Titanic Quarter of Belfast.

### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

#### Governing Document and Constitution of the Organisation

The Diocesan Council of Down and Dromore, in its present form, was established in 1945 by Act of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland and operates under the constitution of the Church of Ireland which claims its authority from the Irish Church Act 1869.

#### Recruitment and Appointment of Diocesan Council (Trustees)

The Diocese is managed by the Diocesan Council, which consists of approximately forty members elected by the clergy and laity of the Diocese meeting in Synod.

#### Organisational Structure

The Diocesan Council is chaired by the Bishop or Archdeacons. Diocesan Council members are responsible for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the Diocese including deciding how Diocesan funds are to be applied. The Diocesan Secretary and other staff handle the day-to-day management of Diocesan affairs.

The Diocesan Council normally meets approximately six times per annum and reports its activities to the Diocesan Synod each year. The Council also operates through meetings of the Honorary Secretaries (Secretariat) who have executive powers and who takes specialist advice from the Diocesan Finance & Governance Committee. Special meetings may be convened at any time by the chairperson and during 2023 the Diocesan Secretariat met 13 times, either by video conferencing facilities or in person.

#### Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

There are several posts within the Diocese that provide an annual allowance. Some of these post holders are also members of Diocesan Council and as such are classed as 'related parties.' During the year ended 31 December 2023, The Diocese of Down and Dromore paid gifts and expenses to Diocesan Council Members amounting to £16,904 (2022: £8,545).

The parishes of St Donard's and Seapatricks each received £2,542, and the parishes of Ballybeen and Shankill each received £847 to reflect the work carried out on Diocesan business by the Archdeacon of Down and the Archdeacon of Dromore.

The Diocese of Down & Dromore is one of eleven Dioceses that make up the Church of Ireland. The Diocese of Down & Dromore interacts and works with several connected organisations within the Church of Ireland, these being the Diocese of Down & Dromore & Connor Joint Committee, the Representative Church Body, the Church of Ireland Trustees, the Church of Ireland Orphans & Children's Society for the Counties of Antrim & Down, and the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund. The Diocese of Down & Dromore is connected with the above bodies by virtue of a number of Diocesan Council members being representatives on the decision-making bodies of these organisations. During the year transactions with these bodies amounted to income of £201,651 (2022: £267,227) and expenditure of £1,339,517 (2022: £1,296,882). During the year, COI House was sold by the Down & Dromore & Connor Joint Committee, the funds of which continue to be held by the Joint Committee.

The Diocese of Down & Dromore has a 50% stake in the Joint Committee.

The Diocese of Down and Dromore also works ecumenically with other Christian denominations and traditions that exist in the Diocese of Down and Dromore and beyond. The Church of Ireland is in a Covenant relationship with the Methodist Church, and this is reflected much in our work and Movilla Abbey and the Church on the Hill in Maghaberry.

**REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL (CONT'D)**

**Pay policy for senior staff**

The Diocesan Council are the Trustees of the organisation with the senior management team comprising of the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running, and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. All Trustees give of their time freely during the year with details of Trustee expenses and related party transactions being disclosed in note 25 to the accounts.

The pay of staff is reviewed annually and is increased in line with the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Representative Church Body Clergy Minimum Approved Stipend rates. The remuneration benchmark for Church Plant leaders is taken from the National Joint Council pay scales and is the mid-point of the range paid for similar roles and responsibilities.

**Risk Management**

The Diocesan Council has a Risk Register which is reviewed as required and usually annually. The last review was in September 2022 with the next review scheduled for March 2024.

**Statement of the Diocesan Councils Responsibilities**

Legislation requires the Diocesan Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Diocese as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the Diocese for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Diocesan Council is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- 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.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Diocese will continue in operation.

The Diocesan Council is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Diocese and enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Diocesan Regulations 2010, applicable law and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective 1 January (2015). It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Diocese and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

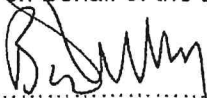
**STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE TO AUDITORS**

So far as the members of the Diocesan Council are aware there is no relevant information of which the Diocese auditors are unaware. Additionally, the Diocesan Council have taken all necessary steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Diocese auditors are aware of that information.

**AUDITORS**

The auditor, Finegan Gibson Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the meeting of the Diocesan Synod in June 2024, in accordance with the Diocesan Regulations 2010.

Signed on Behalf of the Diocesan Council



Approved by the Council

Date: 23/5/2024