

*Orthodox Church of The
Nativity of the Mother of God*

*Archdiocese of Thyateira in the
Ecumenical Patriarchate*

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1082272

Black Country Orthodox Trust, in pursuit of its aim to advance the Orthodox Christian faith, operates the Orthodox parish at Palfrey in Walsall in the West Midlands, under the jurisdiction of the Greek Archdiocese of Thyateira Great Britain and Ireland, to serve the Orthodox faithful of whatever nationality who live in the Black Country and local areas, and to be an Orthodox presence in the whole community.

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Report of the Trustees	1-5
Acknowledgements	6
Legal and Administrative Information	7
Report of the Independent Examiner	8
Receipts and Payment Account	9
Statement of Assets and Liabilities	10
Notes to the Accounts	11-12

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

The Charity Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2021. The financial statements comply with both the Charity's Constitution and the Charities Act 2011.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Charity are the advancement of the Orthodox Christian faith as contained in Holy Scripture, as practised in the life of the Church, as confirmed by the ecumenical and local councils and as interpreted, preserved and taught by the Great Church of Christ, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

To carry out these objects, the Charity runs the Orthodox parish of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Palfrey, Walsall, and works for the Orthodox Church in the wider community and for an active part in the whole local community. Within the structures of the Orthodox Church, the parish is in the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Thyateira, Great Britain and Ireland, by whom it is currently charged to conduct the services and other matters primarily in English, so as to be accessible to Orthodox of all backgrounds and to enquirers.

Public Benefit

The trustees continue to give regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit (Charities and Public Benefit) in relation to the charitable purpose of the charity. In the opinion of the trustees, the objectives of the charity as detailed above fall within the remit of 'for public benefit'.

The purpose of BCOT is to run the affairs of the Orthodox parish of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Walsall, in the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It owns the church building and the former church house next door in Dale Street, and under the Archdiocese supports the clergy and the pastoral and liturgical life of the parish. The Trustees have the first responsibility for these matters. Day-to-day practical affairs are dealt with by the Parish Committee which reports to the Trustees. The clergy take care of the pastoral and liturgical needs of the parish.

The Trustees held twelve meetings in this period, all but two of them virtually. The Parish Committee is managed by Steve and Irina Rollins and Nicoleta Muntean. Their activities are detailed below, but with monitoring and providing for the constantly changing situation, it was the Covid crisis which dominated the work of the Trustees and the Parish Committee, as it did in 2020.

Clergy The priest in charge is Father John Nankivell, who has served the parish since it was founded in 2000. Father Emilian Bratu, the assistant priest, joined the parish in January 2020. He lives with his family in Yorkshire and comes to the parish on Saturdays and Sundays and at other significant times.

Church life. In principle (as directed by the late Archbishop Gregorios when the parish was founded in 2000) the main services are in English. The community comprises many ethnicities. The parish kept contact both informally and (outside the lockdowns) liturgically with the local Orthodox communities of all jurisdictions.

The Pandemic In January 2021 England entered Lockdown 3 and general services in church were not permitted. As a substitute, online Sunday meetings attended by both priests took place until July. An official break was permitted at Easter, when the church was opened but with no night-time services, so as to remove all responsibility from BCOT for possible crowds. Several services were held with a booking scheme and stewarding and in addition some were “streamed”; there was satisfactory attendance.

In July the church was opened, with some restrictions; “streaming” became regular. The Parish Committee continued to organise a rota of stewards to monitor the premises during the Sunday services. Father Emilian continued to come from Sheffield to Walsall for Saturdays and Sundays, and during the week he began routinely to take telephone calls to the office, which were diverted to him. Sunday attendance in this period gradually reached between 80 and 100. Baptisms were permitted throughout the year, albeit with restrictions, as they were private celebrations, and they numbered 248, a big increase on all preceding years. In September we celebrated the patronal feast with visitors from the local Orthodox parishes and from the archdiocese represented by Bishop Athanasios.

The Parish Committee organised hospitality for visitors, and at St Nicholas’ day gifts for the children instead of the usual party. It supported the Sunday school when it could function. It organised housekeeping and stewardship, notably for the pandemic. It established a regular stall offering books, icons and other church items for sale in aid of its charities.

Community life The church hall was re-opened for lettings to the local people from July. There were lettings for private parties, and in July and in the October half-term holiday it was a venue for community activities run by the government-sponsored Palfrey Big Local scheme. We are grateful to PBL for a donation of tables and chairs.

Charity Property The Charity owns the church building in Sun Street Walsall and the church house (the former vicarage) at 63 Dale Street Walsall. It acquired the freeholds of both church and church house and their grounds from the Church of England in 2005.

Under the freehold purchase of the Church House, when development takes place, the Trust is required to pay the Diocese of Lichfield a set proportion of the agreed increase in value conferred by the development. Negotiations on this process was under way with the Diocese during the year and continues to date.

The church was valued for insurance at £3,420,651 from December 2020 to December 2021 and at £3,583,314 from December 2021 to December 2022; its contents were valued at £34,000 approximately and £35,466 for those dates. The church house was valued for insurance at £495,242 and £520,761 respectively for those dates. Loss of rent from the Church House was valued for insurance from December 2021 at £58,044.

Work on the property

Church The work on the new apse was completed and the mosaic was installed. As the Covid restrictions finally eased the church hall was brought back into use and the services were concentrated exclusively back in the church.

Church House Following the conversion into flats during 2019 and 2020, the grounds had to be reinstated. A tarmac car park and driveway were installed in March 2021. A contractor cut the lawns and the landscaping plan was gradually developed. During 2021 and to date, the six flats have been continuously occupied by tenants.

Finance

During this period income received was £123,261 (£150,209 in 2020), payments were £95,489 (£172,840 in 2020). The closing balance at the end of this financial period was £40,153 compared to £12,381 at the end of the previous period. The year-end accounts show an outstanding liability of £65,000; the charity have agreed terms regarding how this will be repaid with payments starting in 2022.

Reserves Policy

The trustees continue to review the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risk to the organisation, a reduction of income. At the end of December 2021, the total reserves were £40,153, all of which was unrestricted.

The long-term financial strategy of the trustees remains their intention to increase the level of the reserves by continually reviewing overheads and increasing income not only through rent from the property but by securing charitable donations and increasing fundraising activities.

Update January to October 2022

In the early part of the year The Trustees and the Parish Committee gave much consideration to the lifting in a measured way of the restrictions of the pandemic. This was achieved by Easter, by which time the Parish Committee had created a new group of volunteers for a rota serving drinks after the Sunday Liturgy.

Easter was held in the normal way, at midnight, for the first time since 2019, with a good attendance, but apparently lesser crowds in the surrounding streets than in earlier times.

At the crisis in Ukraine in February 2022, a collection was organised for a charity in Romania which has existed since 2016 to support Ukrainian refugee orphans.

The Parish Committee has reinstated refreshments after the Sunday services.

The Trustees after careful consideration decided that the refurbishment of Flat 7 in the church house, which was suspended during the main operation, should continue, and work commenced in May 2022.

Bishop Maximos, newly appointed to serve in the Midlands, visited the parish at the beginning of Lent and has since been in regular contact. Father Emilian since June has not attended Sunday services in Walsall as the Archdiocese needs him elsewhere. The Trustees continue to press the Archdiocese to propose a successor to Father John, a project which is increasingly urgent.

Conclusion

Covid and the release from Covid dominated the year 2021. Normal church life is under way but with the building projects largely completed and the lack of clarity about future clergy the parish is in transition. The remaining building work in the church house should secure more income when complete. There is no doubt about the need among the faithful for the parish, and the plan for the future needs to be worked out by the trustees together with them.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Black Country Orthodox Trust is an unincorporated registered charity based in the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall in the West Midlands. It is governed by a Constitution approved on 7th May 2000 and was entered on the Register of Charities by the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 4th September 2000.

Organisational Structure

The charity has a committee consisting of at least three but no more than thirteen individuals. The committee may consist of a chair, up to nine elected committee members and three members co-opted by the committee members to hold office until the next AGM. The charity trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity.

Recruitment and Appointment of Committee Members

All committee members are required to be members of the Church prior to being recruited as a charity trustee. One third (or a number nearest one third) of the elected committee members must retire at each Annual General Meeting (AGM) and new committee members are elected to replace those retiring from office. Every committee member must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before they are eligible to vote at any meeting of the committee. The board of committee members is well represented by a wide range of individuals from various aspects of the church community.

Trustee Induction and Training

Whilst there is no formal induction process in place, all new committee members are invited and encouraged to visit the offices of Black Country Orthodox Trust in order to familiarise themselves with the organisation and the context within which it operates. The trustee will discuss the following aspects of the organisation with the new committee member and answer any questions arising.

- The role, responsibility and obligations of the charity trustees
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts
- Future plans and objectives of the charity

In addition to the above, a copy of the latest Annual Report is given to all new committee members along with a charity trustee role description, a copy of the constitution, the Charity Commission's Trustee Handbook, the organisation's main policy documents and the latest financial statement

Risk Management

The trustees continue to monitor any potential financial and/or governance challenges that they may face. Whilst the trustee body has not formally conducted its own review of other major risks to which the charity may be exposed to, systems have been established to mitigate any identified risks.

The risk of not being able to adequately fund the charity is the biggest risk which is why the trustees are keen to increase their unrestricted reserves money as a contingency for any emergencies. As and when required, trustees review, amend and update working procedures to help eliminate risks.

Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with Health and Safety for all visitors whilst on charity property. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. Disclosure and Barring checks are made on all members of staff and potential new volunteers where appropriate. General Data Protection Regulations are adhered to as well as Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection policies regarding all work with children and families.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The trustees must hold a minimum of six meeting a year, there must be a quorum of four trustees present at each. Twelve meetings have been held during 2021;all but two of these were virtual. The Annual General meeting was held on 8th December 2021, this was also held virtually.

At each meeting trustees receive regular reports from the clergy and other groups. In 2019 a subcommittee the ‘Parish Committee’was established to manage the day to day “housekeeping” of the church. The trustees reviewed and updated procedures and attended as necessary to regulatory matters and oversaw the management of the activities of the Charity as described above.

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its financial position at the end of that year.

In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that the charity will not continue in existence.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity (Accounts Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on the 20th October 2022 and was signed on their behalf by

.....

Anne Perks, Chair

.....

Georgina Nankivell, Secretary

Acknowledgements

Black Country Orthodox Trust would like to thank all of the faithful who support the parish with their donations, both great and small: and also to thank our Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain (together with his staff) for his pastoral care and oversight of our parish and to ask for his continued prayers.

Those directly involved in parish and community work were:

Father John Nankivell, priest in charge

Father Emilian Bratu, assistant priest

Marina Carrier, lay worker and parish iconographer

Tatiana Vasiliou, Sunday school teacher

Oxana Costin, contracted to clean the church

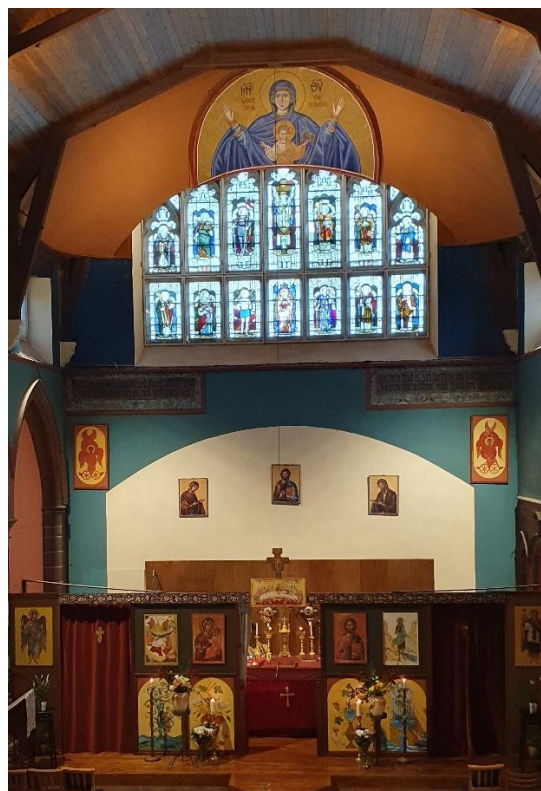
Farook and Rukayya Albertus, contracted to manage the church hall bookings in the community

Boria Malazona and his team, who completed the building work on the church house

Thanks are due to all of these. Thanks also go to servers, singers, doorkeepers, workers in the office and the premises and many other volunteers and supporters for the skills, commitment, time and prayers that they have contributed throughout the year, and to those who give financial support.

Special thanks go to the Parish Committee and their team for the work they have done, particularly on keeping the parish Covid-safe.

Our new Apse and Mosaic



Legal and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	Black Country Orthodox Trust
Charity Status:	Unincorporated
Registered Charity Number:	1082272
Registered Office and Operational Address:	1a Sun Street Walsall West Midlands WS1 4AL
Telephone Number:	01922 633451
Email Address:	blackcountryorthodoxtrust@gmail.com
Website:	www.orthodoxwalsall.org.uk

Charity Trustees:

Chair	Anne Perks
Treasurer	Mihaela Ispas
Secretary	Georgina Nankivell
Trustees	Florina Clewer Brandon Scott-Omenka Maria Tsilika Gregory Wittwer

Independent Examiner:

Bev Richardson M.A.A.T.
Charity AID Accountancy Services
Woodland Lodge
Dunston Business Village
Stafford Road
Dunston
Staffordshire
ST18 9AB

Banks:

HSBC Bank
The Bridge
Walsall
West Midlands
WS1 1LN

Co-operative Bank
P.O. Box 250
Southway
Skelmersdale
Yorkshire
WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

I report on the financial statements of Black Country Orthodox Trust for the year ended 31st December 2021 which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act')) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Bev Richardson M.A.A.T.

Date: 20th October 2022

On Behalf of
Charity AID Accountancy Services
Woodland Lodge, Dunston Business Village
Stafford Road, Dunston, Staffordshire, ST18 9AB

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

Receipts and Payments Account for the period 1st January 2021 – 31st December 2021

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
<u>RECEIPTS</u>					
Donations	1	97,883	0	97,883	77,630
Charitable Activities	2	23,584	0	23,584	27,133
Fundraising	3	1,794	0	1,794	442
Investments	4	0	0	0	4
Other Income	5	0	0	0	45,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS		123,261	0	123,261	150,209
<u>PAYMENTS</u>					
Raising Funds	6	820	0	820	0
Charity Running Costs	7	25,173	0	25,173	20,034
Church & Hall Costs	8	13,929	3,960	17,889	10,949
Church House Costs	9	27,778	0	27,778	133,857
Activities & Events	10	11,322	426	11,748	7,485
Governance	11	12,081	0	12,081	515
		91,103	4,386	95,489	172,840
<u>ASSETS & INVESTMENTS</u>					
Fixed Assets		0	0	0	0
Investment		0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0
TOTAL PAYMENTS		91,103	4,386	95,489	172,840
Net incoming resources		32,158	(4,386)	27,772	(22,631)
Transfer between funds		0	0	0	0
Cash funds from last year		7,995	4,386	12,381	35,012
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		40,153	0	40,153	12,381

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2021

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
CASH FUNDS			
HSBC Business Account	28,009	0	28,009
HSBC Saver Account	1,234	0	1,234
Co-op Community Account	10,886	0	10,886
Petty Cash	24	0	24
OTHER MONETARY ASSETS	0	0	0
INVESTMENT ASSETS	0	0	0
ASSETS RETAINED FOR THE CHARITY'S OWN USE			
Church			3,420,651
Church Contents			34,000
Church House			495,242
LIABILITIES			
Independent Examination			480
Loan			65,000

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 20th October 2022 and were signed on their behalf by

.....

Anne Perks, Chair

.....

Mihaela Ispas, Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
1 Donations				
Grants & Donations	0	0	0	10,632
Gift Aid Offerings	58,622	0	58,622	35,391
General Offerings	15,691	0	15,691	10,474
Gift Aid Inland Revenue	17,528	0	17,528	12,050
Eon Feed in Tariff	4,892	0	4,892	6,079
Charitable Donations	1,150	0	1,150	0
Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	3,004
	97,883	0	97,883	77,630
2 Charitable Activities				
Contracts	0	0	0	0
Membership	0	0	0	0
Church House Rent	21,849	0	21,849	3,698
Hall Lettings	1,735	0	1,735	870
Church Worship Goods	0	0	0	0
Baptism / Marriages	0	0	0	22,565
Bank Loan	0	0	0	0
	23,584	0	23,584	27,133
3 Fundraising				
Sale of Purchased Goods	1,612	0	1,612	0
Special Events	0	0	0	0
Community Food	0	0	0	442
Community Giving	183	0	183	0
Family Giving	0	0	0	0
General Fundraising	0	0	0	0
	1,794	0	1,794	442
4 Investments				
Bank Interest	0	0	0	4
	0	0	0	4
5 Other Income				
Loan	0	0	0	45,000
	0	0	0	45,000

Notes to the Accounts continued

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
6 Raising Funds				
Purchase of Goods for resale	820	0	820	0
Community Food & Events	0	0	0	0
General Fundraising	0	0	0	0
	820	0	820	0
7 Charity Running Costs				
Priest Salary, NI, Pension	17,995	0	17,995	7,415
Priest Expenses	0	0	0	6,370
Insurance	6,443	0	6,443	4,477
Health & Safety	0	0	0	352
IT & Telephone	364	0	364	346
Stationery, Printing, Postage	371	0	371	251
Travel	0	0	0	55
Miscellaneous Costs	0	0	0	768
	25,173	0	25,173	20,034
8 Church & Hall Costs				
Utility Costs	5,828	0	5,828	3,720
Church Maintenance	173	0	173	118
Hall Maintenance	246	0	246	0
Capital Works	2,499	3,960	6,459	6,060
Apse, Icons & Nartex	0	0	0	246
Church Worship Goods	1,498	0	1,498	6
Cleaning Costs	1,316	0	1,316	799
Grounds Maintenance	2,369	0	2,369	0
	13,929	3,960	17,889	10,949
9 Church House Costs				
Utility Costs	4,235	0	4,235	4,705
Maintenance	719	0	719	0
Capital Works	21,960	0	21,960	129,151
Cleaning Costs	865	0	865	0
	27,778	0	27,778	133,857
10 Activities & Events				
Worship Requisites	9,695	0	9,695	7,470
Community Food	127	426	553	15
Community Giving	600	0	600	0
Family Giving	900	0	900	0
Hospitality	0	0	0	0
	11,322	426	11,748	7,485
11 Governance				
Governance Costs	35	0	35	35
Independent Examination	480	0	480	480
Professional Fees	11,566	0	11,566	0
	12,081	0	12,081	515