

Heswall United Reformed Church

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2024

Administrative Information

Heswall United Reformed Church (Registered Charity No. 1129285) is a Church on the Wirral Peninsula within Mersey Region Synod of the URC. It is centred on the village of Heswall. The Church Office is at the church at 199 Telegraph Road, Heswall, Wirral CH60 7SE (tel; 0151 342 8522).

The Elders who were serving on 31st December 2024 until the date this report was approved are as follows:

Stephen Chantler (Secretary) Ray Craig (Treasurer)

Dave Lock, Dave Dixon, Jonathan Gregson, Faith Hardie, Jenny Smith, Avril Lock, Ian Murphy, Sheila Wadhams.

Minister: Revd. Dr. Nick Jones

The church buildings are vested in the name of URC (Mersey Province) Trust Ltd from 1st January 2024 to the date this report was approved.

Structure, Governance and Management

The United Reformed Church is governed by the Scheme of Union of the URC its Constitution, set up under Section D: The United Reformed Church Acts 1972, 1981 and 2000 as amended from time to time by its Governing Body.

The Eldership is not a body corporate. Its composition, procedures and powers are regulated by The United Reformed Church Manual... Section B: The Structure of the United Reformed Church Clause 2.(2). Elders are elected at the AGM of the Church Meeting by the Members of Heswall United Reformed Church. The Eldership met 11 times during 2024 (70% average attendance). It dealt with all the affairs of the Church and received and considered reports by the Worship Group, Fabric and Finance Committee, Pastoral Team and Junior Church.

Objectives and Activities

Heswall United Reformed Church is a Church within the United Reformed Church and seeks: (i) to further the Church's mission in the locality; (ii) to develop local ecumenical relationships; (iii) to further the Church's compassionate ministry in the locality and throughout the world; (iv) to consider and support the wider work of the Church at home and abroad; (v) to consider public questions in relation to the Christian faith; (vi) to bring concerns for consideration by the Elders' Meeting and wider councils of the church.

The Eldership's objectives are: (i) to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church; (ii) to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered, and generally to promote the welfare of the congregation; (iii) to ensure pastoral care of the congregation, in which the minister is joined by elders having particular responsibility for groups of members; (iv) to nominate from among its members a Church secretary (or secretaries), to be elected by the Church Meeting, to serve both the Church Meeting and the Elders' meeting; (v) to arrange for pulpit supply in a vacancy; (vi) to keep the roll of members and (as an aid to the discharge of the congregation's pastoral and evangelistic responsibility) lists of names of adherents and children attached to the congregation, and in consultation with the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership and to advise on the admission of members on profession of faith and by transfer, on the suspension of members, and on the removal of names from the roll; (vii) to be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and of all organisations within the congregation; (viii) to call for the election of elders and advise on the number required; (ix) to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to advise the Church Meeting about its recommendation to the synod; (x) to recommend to the Church Meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the Local Church; (xi) to act on behalf of the Church Meeting and bring concerns to the wider councils of the United Reformed Church; (xii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

The Eldership is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "*The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit*" and have regard to it in their administration of Heswall United Reformed Church. The Eldership believes that, by fulfilling its responsibility to work together with the Minister and cooperate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, it provides a benefit to the public by:

- providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the church offers;
- promoting Christian values, and service by members of the church to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

The Eldership is responsible, *inter alia*, for the Church budget and all expenditure thereunder, the care and maintenance of church fabric and its buildings, and for any action or other matter referred to it in accordance with the Constitution, and is the normal channel of communication between members and the Mersey Synod.

REVIEW OF HURC ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Minister

The Revd Dr Nick Jones provides a Joint Pastorate ministry to Heswall United Reformed Church [HURC] based on a 75% scoping and with Chester Road, Ellesmere Port URC on a 25% scoping. The minister provides both spiritual and pastoral leadership to the members and adherents of HURC.

Church Roll

The membership was 84 members compared to 86 in January 2024.

Elders' Elections

The Church Members voted on the re-election for Jonathan Gregson and Dave Lock. Both candidates were duly re-elected. Marion Boden chose not to stand for re-election. Ian Murphy stood for election and was duly elected.

Employed Staff

The church employed one part-time staff as an Administrator.

Churches Together

HURC gave its ecumenical support for the activities of Churches Together in Heswall. The annual all denominational walk of witness through Heswall on Good Friday took place, followed by a joint service at HURC. A Christmas Coffee Morning was hosted at HURC to raise funds for Christian Aid. During Advent ecumenical Carol Singing took place in Heswall high street.

Web Content

The content of the Church Website is continuously reviewed to reflect policy and information is regularly updated.

Hiring Agreements for Church Premises: The documentation for those hiring the premises was reviewed and updated. Public Liability insurance extends to Church events only, it does not cover outside hirers and this was clarified in the documentation. In 2024 room hiring charges and on-site parking charges have remained unchanged.

Scales of Fees

The transparent fee scale agreed for weddings and funerals held at HURC remained unchanged.

Security of Confidential Information

The security of confidential information is continually reviewed. Old Church Directories are now brought to the office for shredding. HURC continues to review the currency of its compliance with the Data Protection Act and, from May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The New Church Directories contain only such information as permitted by the individual, for which a signed GDPR Consent Form has been received and securely filed. The New Church Directories are issued to individuals in a controlled manner, rather than being displayed for collection. The office computer has an updated PIN number to restrict access to sensitive information. All the filing cabinets have been checked to ensure any confidential information is segregated and contained within a locked cabinet.

Church Fabric

Progress has been made towards improving the environmental footprint of the church. Following a routine review of the lightning protection, for insurance purposes, further additional works on the earthing arrangements were undertaken to improve the earth resistance.

Charity Commission Trustees.

Five Elders nominated by the Church are the designated trustees. The trustees were appointed at the AGM 2019.

Social & Spiritual Achievements

Live and online services continued throughout the year.

Contact with the congregation is also regularly maintained through either email or by post. The Pastoral group, regularly visit or telephone the members and friends of the church and where appropriate provide in person support.

The Second Sunday Lunches and the Monthly Midweek Communion with a Souper Lunches, and Healing Services continued throughout the year. The church organised regular Bible Study classes continued either in person or using online conference facilities. Prayer Days continued during the year. In addition, there is an established Prayer Group and support is provided for prayer time on an ad hoc basis to anyone who might wish to make use of the Quiet Room.

Open Table service, which commenced in 2023, continued through 2024 on a once per month basis. The Open Table Network is an ecumenical grouping, and registered charity, which began in Liverpool and aims to create communities where LGBTQIA+ people are made welcome. More than 40 churches now host Open Table Communities, and this has brought a number of people into the life of the church through a different style of worship. This is one of the ways we are seeking to live out our mission statement and ensuring that everyone is welcome in church, and has led us to engaging with a group who have historically often felt marginalised from church life. The congregation has grown over the months and the services have attracted strong support from within the existing church congregation.

Outreach

Weekly Keep Fit for the over 60s and Badminton together with regular Afternoon Guild meetings took place throughout the year. Regrettably there has been little scope for Youth activities due to the lack of youth presence at the church. Support is given by members of the church to a local Foodbank.

The Greet, Eat and Meet (GEM) initiative took place once per week throughout 2024 for individuals from the community to meet and socialise.

The church gave to charities and individuals were encouraged to donate to various local charities and to Christian Aid or alternatively contact charities directly.

HURC has continued with its policy to offer to provide ceremonies for same sex marriage. During the year one same sex marriage was performed.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Heswall United Reformed Church.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 2024, set out on the next pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church'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 needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- state whether 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 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 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 comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met;

In order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached, attention is drawn to the additional expenditure of £19,394 in Church running costs over the 2023 level. This increase mainly arose from a fault in the gas boiler which has since been rectified.



Malcolm Cranfield F.C.A.

24 March 2025

8 Foxcover Road, Heswall, Wirral, CH60 1YB

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

The notes on pages 2 and 3 form part of this financial statement

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

NOTES

1	ACCOUNTING POLICIES					
	The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 1993 Section 42(3), using the Receipts and Payments basis available to small charities, and the United Reformed Church guidance.					
2	FUND ACCOUNTING					
	Unrestricted Funds may be used by the church for any of its ordinary purposes.					
	Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds set aside by the church for specific designated purposes; they can be transferred back into general funds at the church's decision.					
	Fund name & purpose:	Balance b/fwd £	Receipts in year £	Payments in year £	Transfers for year £	Balance c/fwd £
	Afternoon Guild	904	150	44	0	1,010
	Flower Fund	921	100	23	0	998
	Donation for Premises / Repair	0	0	0	0	0
	FURY FUND	456	0	0	0	456
	Totals for designated funds	2,281	250	67	0	2,464

	Restricted Funds represent income which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of a trust or bequest, or donations or grants received or invited for a specific purpose. These funds can only be spent on the specific purpose for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent must be carried forward as a balance on that fund for future expenditure on that specific purpose, or returned; it cannot be absorbed into general funds.				
	Fund name & purpose:	Balance b/fwd £	Receipts in year £	Payments in year £	Balance c/fwd £
	Kalifi Fund	0	0	0	0
	Youth Fund	1,034	0	0	1,034
	Benevolent Fund	316	0	0	316
	Totals for restricted funds	1,350	0	0	1,350

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	This Year 2024 Total £	Last Year 2023 Total £
3	MONIES RAISED FOR OUTSIDE CAUSES				
Christian Aid	0	503	0	503	349
Jamie's Fund	0	0	0	0	0
McMillan Cancer Support	0	0	0	0	0
Charles Thompson Mission (Birkenhead)	0	181	0	181	0
Ukraine DEC	0	50	0	50	154
Charity Coffee Morning	0	20	0	20	0
Iona Abbey Appeal	0	0	0	0	0
Kalifi Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Totals raised for outside causes	0	754	0	754	503
4	PROPERTY INCOME				
Lettings income	23,232	0	0	23,232	24,110
Weddings and funerals	725	0	0	725	0
Total property income	23,957	0	0	23,957	24,110
5	CHURCH RUNNING COSTS				
Gas, Electric and Water	25,215	0	0	25,215	8,359
Insurance	2,956	0	0	2,956	2,795
Cleaning	4,090	0	0	4,090	3,003
Telephone & Internet	2,073	0	0	2,073	2,080
Administration	958	0	0	958	720
Photocopying	2,668	0	0	2,668	1,669
Staffing	12,588	0	0	12,588	10,328
Bank Charges	104	0	0	104	111
Licences, music & conduct of praise	0	0	0	0	2,192
Items moved from 2023 report into Programme activity costs					
Total church running costs	50,650	0	0	50,650	31,257

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023						
NOTES – continued						
		Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	This Year 2024 Total £	Last Year 2023 Total £
6	PROGRAMME ACTIVITY COSTS					
	Heswall Churches Together	75	0	0	75	0
	Missionary & Outreach	212	0	0	212	0
	Licenses & Refreshments	2,684			2,684	
	Total programme activity costs	2,971	0	0	2,971	0
7	SUPPORT OF OUTSIDE CAUSES					
		0				
	Dispersal of money raised for outside causes	0	0	0	0	0
	Christian Aid		0		0	349
	DEC - Ukraine		0		0	154
	Total support of outside causes	0	0	0	0	503
8	MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH BUILDINGS					
	Repairs & Renewals	11,589	0	0	11,589	25,263
	Maintenance Costs	2,788	0	0	2,788	2,619
	Gardens	4,698	0	0	4,698	1,819
	Total maintenance of church buildings	19,075	0	0	19,075	29,701
9	MANSE MAINTENANCE /RUNNING COSTS					
	Manse Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0
	Council Charge	2,425	0	0	2,425	2,209
	Water Rates	246	0	0	246	181
	Total maintenance of manse	2,671	0	0	2,671	2,390
10	MONETARY ASSETS					
	The church monies are not held in segregated accounts, but for the sake of this financial statement the total of each account is allocated appropriately over the various funds.					
11	ASSETS USED FOR CHURCH PURPOSES					
	The church building and the manse are vested in URC Mersey Synod Trust as trustees and are not church assets. They are held for the benefit of Heswall URC in accordance with the statutory trusts applicable to URC properties under the URC Acts. For insurance purposes the church buildings are insured by the church for £2,816,439 The church contents are insured by the church for £285,558					
12	CCLA – INVESTMENT FUND					
	At 31/12/2023 Number of unit held was 33,128.45 valued at a mid-market value of £168,156.70, this increased in Value to £175,358.82 by 30/06/2024. On 28/08/2024 4,312.11 units were sold at a value of £10,000 as per church meeting for decoration to the building. On 27/12/2024 units were sold at a value of £20,000 to cover Utility bills. At 31/12/2024 Number of unit held was 27,543.2742 valued at a mid-market value of £147,761.40 A yearly decrease in the value of our investment of £20,395.30					