

Churches Together in Lancashire

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31st December 2023

Towers + Gornall
Chartered Certified Accountants
Garstang, Preston

Independent examiner's report on the accounts of Churches Together in Lancashire

Report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner:

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement


My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 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 material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- The accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed.......... Date.....04/09/2024.....

Mick Gornall
Towers & Gornall
Abacus House
The Ropewalk
Garstang
PR3 1NS

Ecumenical Officer's Report 2023-24

I have now been working full time in the role of County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Lancashire for over a year.

The year has been busy arranging the meetings of the Denominational Ecumenical Officers which as you have heard has now been joined by Pastor Stephen Norcross for the Independent Free Churches and Fr Paul Cannon for the Catholic Diocese of Salford.

Alongside my regional and national roles, I have also engaged in some inter-county work with Cumbria, bringing together the DEOs for Lancashire and Cumbria at Rydal Hall to explore the opportunities and challenges of the Ecumenical County of Cumbria which finds expression in the God for All initiative. The Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District gave an overview of the progress which is variable from considerable engagement to none. It is clear that those churches which come together are better placed to enable the continuation of Christian witness, mission and ministry whilst retaining the best of their traditions.

Over the year we have connecting with Housing Justice, Citizens UK, the VCFSE, PLASP, Springnorth, health and wellbeing agencies, the Diocesan Rural Focus group and Lancashire MIND.

Last year I set out a number of priorities for working this year:

1 To reach out and re-vitalise all of our seventy plus local groups.

There has been considerable reaching out and some groups have become more responsive and communicative. It has been good to support groups wanting to refresh their work together. Notably St Anne's Lytham, and Ashton on Ribble. Some groups which have been dormant have become active again. There remains a large proportion that do not respond so the work continues.

2 To visit local groups and LEP meetings

It has been good to connect with the Darwen Group, North Blackburn, Fylde Coast group, Bacup Fellowship of Churches, Haslingden, Fleetwood, Leyland, Fulwood and Broughton. Most recently I have initiated a review of the Lighthouse Community Church in Knott End LEP, a URC/Methodist partnership. Methodist Synod 22nd April

3 To visit local churches and ecumenical partnerships for Sunday worship.

It has been good to join with St Annes Lytham for WPCU, various services at Penwortham URC. The DEOs and some of the Church Leaders attended a service at the Romanian Orthodox Church on Romania Day. It was very moving and we were very warmly welcomed. Capt Tracy Collis wrote a reflection on this which was printed in the national Salvation Army news.

4 To develop the website and media platforms

Not much progress to date.

- 5 *Develop the directory of Independent Free Churches and especially develop contacts with Black and Asian led churches in Lancashire.*

We have IFC representatives on both the Church Leaders and DEO meetings. There is still a lot of work to do engage with the Black and Asian led churches. More help is needed here.

- 6 Denominational Area Contacts: We are planning to create a point of ecumenical contact in each Anglican & Catholic Deanery, Methodist Circuit, URC Mission Partnership which in turn will create a support communications pathway for each of the Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs)

There is still a lot to do here. It will aid the work of the DEOs immensely once established.

Ecumenical Working Parties

Two significant events in 2023 were the meetings at St Catherine's Hospice to explore the role of churches in End of Life matters. We would like to really engage this year in Dying Matters week. 6-12th May

The Royal Lancashire Show represents both the mission element and social responsibility. 2024 has been referenced already. I would like to emphasise that we are in need of funding to help with the £3K cost of running the event.

The enabling group for environmental matters is now led by Stephen Garsed who engages in this work for the Diocese of Salford.

Ecumenical Resources

The development of the Module "Ecumenism in Theory & Practice" has the support of Churches Together in England and the Society for Ecumenical Studies. Queen's Foundation and Ripon College Cuddesdon have expressed an interest as has the UK rep on the WCC commission for Education and Ecumenical Formation on behalf of the Ecumenical Bossey Foundation, Geneva.

Youth and Young Adults

Churches Together in England has launched the Bill Snelson Fund for young ecumenists which provides grants up to £5k to enable young adults to engage in ecumenical projects overseas.

CTL is supporting "Surfstage", a family Christian Arts Festival in Parbold. This is managed by two young mums who finance the Festival themselves. It currently attracts over 3,000 people. It has huge potential to become NW Christian Festival and is worth our support.

Thank you.

Finally – I would like to thank your dedicated team of Denominational Ecumenical Officers. None of the above could happen without them and our denominations would be ecumenically poorer without the gentle and constant nudging that they represent. There is still a long way to go and with them I look forward to a time when we can truly talk about the whole Church in Lancashire walking and working, praying and worshipping together as the One Body that we are called to be in Christ.

The Revd Anton Müller, 7th March 2024

Chairman's Report 2023 (On behalf of the Trustees)

Annual General Meeting 7th March 2024 for 2023/34

My first year in office concluded as it began with Lancashire Sings Christmas, now re-branded as "Carers Sing Christmas". We were not sure whether Lancashire Sings Christmas would continue as the BBC the was re-organising its local provisions. We prayed that it would, and it has! The programme took place at midday and opened opportunities to engage with various care agencies who work tirelessly throughout the Christmas period in health and social care programmes, including the Police.

In July Churches Together in Lancashire returned to the Royal Lancashire Show. The numbers attending overall were much lower due to the exceptionally poor weather but there was a steady throughput of visitors to the Church Tent. The main focus was Farming and Modern-Day Slavery supported by Caroline Virgo, the Director of the Church of England's Clewer Initiative. Presentations were given by Caroline and also Douglas Martin with Maxine Rawlings.

The Church Tent was populated with church-based resources for supporting farming and rural communities which this year included PLASP, the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership. We were joined for the first time by the Christian Police Association.

The Diocese of Blackburn Children's Department provided brilliant activities to help children think about issues of slavery whilst the Methodist District Godly Play Bus provided a warm cosy place for all age story-telling. This year, the Church Tent will focus on Farming and Mental Health in partnership with Lancashire Mind and will take place 19th-21st July. We are looking for grant funding to help with the costs of running this venue.

The Church Tent service welcomed the Revd Claire Downing, the newly appointed Moderator of NW Synod of the URC. CTL was represented at Claire's Induction on June 10th. Also new to the meeting of the Church Leaders is Pastor Pete Baker of Life Church Burnley who represents the Independent Free Churches in Lancashire. + Tom Neylon has also joined the Church Leaders for the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Pastor Stephen Norcross of the Blackburn Community Church has joined the team of Ecumenical Officers. Fr Paul Cannon, the Episcopal Vicar for Dialogue in the Diocese of Salford replaces Fr Peter Hopkinson as the DEO for Lancashire. Fr Peter will continue to be part of the Church Leaders meeting.

Since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the cost-of-living crisis following on as we emerged from the crisis of the COVID 19 Pandemic we have also witnessed the tragic events unfolding in Gaza and the ensuing humanitarian crisis. Churches Together in Lancashire has joined with other regions to call for a cessation of the war and the pursuit of peace and reconciliation for all.

Churches Together in Lancashire has also supported opposition to the Rwanda Bill and the withdrawal of Government Funding for the Inter Faith Network.

We continue to pray together across these areas which has seen many churches working in unity to support their local communities.

Churches Together in Lancashire continues to be active in the VCFSE, Volunteer, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise raising profile of Faith alongside other faith groups in Lancashire.

The focus on health and wellbeing turned to the role of church and faith groups in End of Life Care with an event held for health, civic and faith leads at St Catherine's Hospice earlier this year. CTL has been invited to assist with the implementation of Integrated Care Board for Lancashire and South Cumbria's End of Life Strategy.

Building on the relationship with the Lancashire Constabulary and the Christian Police Association, Bishop Philip North will be addressing the National Conference of the CPA which takes places in June this year at Salmesbury Hall.

In specifically Methodist news, the Methodist Church is working towards the establishment of the NW England District by September 1st, 2024. The Chair of the new District is the Revd Dr James Tebbutt (currently Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District). The NWE District will comprise four Mission Areas with a Deputy Chair and Assistant Deputy Chair.

It has been a busy year and I am grateful to our County Ecumenical Officer, the Revd Anton Müller, and our brilliant team of Denominational Ecumenical Officers.

They have all worked hard to enable Churches Together in Lancashire to be visible and actively involved across so many areas of life and worship amongst the people we are called to serve across our beautiful County of Lancashire.

The Revd Phil Gough
Chair of the Lancashire Methodist District
Chair of Churches Together in Lancashire.
7th March 2023

Statement of Accounts for the period ended 31st December 2023			
Churches Together in Lancashire	2023		2022
Income			
General Denominational Contributions	13,969		31,783
Other Income			
St. Peter's - Anita			
CTL expenses			
ACOS			
Bank Interest	-		-
Total Income	13,969		20,249
Expenditure			
Ecumenical Development Officer:			
Salary and Pension	27,688		17,246
Travel and home telephone	5,952		422
Consultations, courses and resources	-	33,639	-
			16,793
HMRC Payments - PAYE, Tax,& NICs	4,317		2,471
Forums, conferences & local review expenses	8,560		5,991
Office Costs:			
Equipment	394		257
Insurance	292		292
		687	550
Affiliations	1,198		16
Grants	300		1,000
Other Expenses	1,392		4,370
Total Expenses	50,093		22,151
Income Less Expenditure	-	36,124	-
Cleared Liabilities from previous year		-	-
Profit for the year	-	36,124	-
Assets			
HSBC Current Account	35,568		71,692
HSBC Deposit Account	-	35,568	-
			71,692
CAF Cash Account	1		1
CAF Gold Account	-	1	-
			1
Churches Together In Scorton			
		35,569	71,693
Liabilities			
General contributions received in advance		-	-
Net Assets		35,569	71,693
Represented by:			
Last years general funds	71,693		71,981
Balance of Income and Expenditure for the year	-	36,124	-
Current Liabilities		-	-
		35,569	71,693