

Countess Free Church, Ely

(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)



REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Address: 10 Chapel Street, Ely CB6 1AD

Charity Number: 1166937

Bankers: Lloyds Bank PLC

Independent Examiner: Matthew Lavis

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statement of the trust for the period
1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023.

Status

The Charity was incorporated on 5 May 2016 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the charity number 1166937. The charity is one of the churches of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

Trustees

The trustees are recognised by the membership, in roles of Minister, Elder or Deacon. The current trustees are:

Karl Relton	Minister	(Paid Position as permitted in the constitution)
Helen Atkinson	Elder	
Paula Gregory	Deacon	
Graham Jarrett	Deacon	(Started April 2023)
Dawn Maclure	Deacon	(Started April 2023)
Philip Murfitt	Deacon	
Emad Youssef	Deacon	

Objectives

The objects of the CIO for the public benefit are to advance the Christian faith in accordance with the Statement of Beliefs appearing in the Schedule hereto in Ely, Cambridgeshire and in such other parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the charity trustees may from time to time think fit.

Activities

During this year the church has continued to build momentum through in-person activities resumed after the pandemic. This has included our Mission Activities of Two by Two, Rich Tea Community, and Dads n Kidz, plus working with young people and ministering to various people through our whole church gatherings. The church has continued to support and host the wider activities of Ely Foodbank, Ely CAP Debt Centre, the Recovery Cafe and Ely College Chaplaincy – all of which have seen extensive activity through the year.

The membership of the church has grown, with ten new people joining through the year. Baptisms have included people journeying forward in their faith, and a young person who came into contact with us through our mission activities.

Grass-roots initiatives have continued to be encouraged, with the coronation celebrations affording another natural opportunity with friends and neighbours. Our collaborative work amongst young people has grown through the 'Revive' and 'Awaken' special youth days. Some of our young people attended a summer festival, with more planning to attend in summer 2023.

This year we continued to encourage individuals pursuing their sense of God-given calling for ministry, supporting an individual working as a chaplain in a prison, and commending another individual as a lay preacher transferring their recognition from another denomination. In addition the church continued to support Cate Allen as a Minister in Training, and after a process of discernment became her 'placement church' for part of her training. From March Cate therefore came on staff with a one day per week fixed term appointment, with an assignment that dovetails with the pioneering work of the Rich Tea Community that Cate and the mission activity team were already leading, providing scope to take our work with those with adult learning disabilities into the community, working constructively with care homes to minister to both individuals and their carers.

In March this year Rev Karl Relton announced that he and his wife are moving to a fresh calling of pioneer work in Leicestershire, finishing in Ely in July. The latter part of this year has therefore included handover and preparations to move into a 'pastoral vacancy'.

Regular free-will giving to our General Fund marginally increased this year, despite the tough economic conditions for individuals. The church General Fund was also blessed with a substantial legacy (around £14,000) from an individual who worshipped with us into the final stages of their life. The individual, having no next of kin, asked the church to make necessary arrangements as they entered palliative care – for which they made an additional gift of £2,000 to cover expenses incurred. The members of the church decided to transfer the legacy to the Pioneer Fund at the close of the financial year.

Lettings income is the highest ever (over £10,600), reflecting a building used near capacity throughout the week by different groups. Again this year operational costs were well controlled, with the church benefiting from pre-existing fixed rate energy contracts for both church and manse buildings. This has again led to a further modest increase in the General Fund balance to a year end amount of over £32,900.

During the year there were no significant building works, only minor repairs and modest improvements. The next year will include a significant amount of exterior painting (expected circa £3,000) and attention to degradation of the flat roof over the vestry room to the rear of the church buildings.

The JM – Pioneer Fund is now in part being used to support training costs for a member in ministerial training, and in part being used to fund the Minister in Training placement / pioneer initiative. The latter part commenced in March and represents a commitment from the Pioneer Fund of just over £6,000 per year for 18 months – which can be met by the regular transfers made from the General Fund.

The Communion Fund continues to support those in difficult times or circumstances, with over £1,700 of 'blessing people' spent through the year. Our support for CAP as a church increased to respect inflationary pressure, and combined with individuals' gifts, forwarded over £3,700 to St Marys for use in the local CAP Debt centre.

Our support of other UK and international charities continued, totalling over £8,900. This represents 11.5% of the regular General Fund giving & lettings fees, and thus above our target of 11%.

This year the church brought its handling of finances to support Ely College Chaplaincy to a close, with the church making its own modest final transfer to zero out this restricted fund.

Serious Incidents

The Trustees confirm that there are no serious incidents to report regarding operations in the period 22-23.

Risk Analysis and Reserves Policy

The Trustees confirm that major risks to which the Charity is exposed are reviewed regularly.

The Charity aims to hold unrestricted reserves sufficient to cover between 4 and 8 months of normal ministry expenditure, which at current estimates equates to between £18,000 (4 months) and £36,000 (8 months). This reserves level also gives sufficient cash to cover monthly giving and expenditure cash flow variations, and sufficient levels to cover unforeseen additional ministry expenditure. The lower amount would also cover obligations in the event of sudden unplanned closure. Currently our General Fund amounts to approximately £32,900, comfortably above the mid-range point.

Rev Karl Relton
(Minister)

Dr Helen Atkinson
(Elder)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE COUNTRESS FREE CHURCH, ELY

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the period ended 30 June, 2023, which are set out on page 5 & 6

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities 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 procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities 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 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 Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.

Matthew Lavis – Independent Examiner

Countess Free Church Ely - 1166937
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	80979	3616	-	84596	69273
Other trading activities	10648	-	-	10648	8197
Investments	543	-	-	543	6
Income from charitable activities	2250	-	-	2250	2258
Other income	-	-	-	-	4078
Total income	94421	3616	-	98038	83814
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditure on charitable activities	68106	11481	-	79588	77011
Other expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditure	68106	11481	-	79588	77011
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	26315	(7,865)	-	18450	6803
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	15762	22380	-	38142	22100
Gross transfers between funds - out	(37,343)	(800)	-	(38,143)	(22,100)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	4735	13715	-	18450	6803
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	38583	21723	-	60307	53503
Total funds carried forward	43319	35438	-	78757	60307

Notes

1. There were no special grants received by the church through this year
2. *Expenditure on charitable activities* includes £28,092 on stipend costs and £1,745 on manse utilities. These costs are for the employment of the Rev. Karl Relton as a paid trustee as per the provisions of charity constitution.
3. A legacy of just over £14,000 was received, together with a gift of £2,000 to cover expenses. The expenses were met from General Funds, and totalled approx £2,000.

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

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Balance sheet (Summary)

As at: 30 June 2023

	As at 30/06/2023	As at 30/06/2022
Fixed assets	-	-
Current assets		
Debtors	745	220
Cash At Bank And In Hand	78012	60087
	78757	60307
Liabilities	-	-
Net current assets less current liabilities	78757	60307
Total assets less current liabilities	78757	60307
Liabilities	-	-
Total net assets less liabilities	78757	60307
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted - General Funds	33057	30980
Designated		
Designated - Children and Young People	(11)	559
Designated - Renovation	10019	7044
Designated - World Vision	252	(1)
Restricted		
Restricted - Christians against poverty	0	158
Restricted - Communion	348	551
Restricted - Ely College Chaplaincy	-	128
Restricted - JM Pioneer	34678	20139
Restricted - Rich Tea Community	411	745
Fund Totals	78757	60307

Notes

1. *Debtors* – represents four lettings invoices not yet paid from financial year (22-23).
2. *Cash at Bank and in hand* – there were no uncleared cheques as of 30th June.

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown