



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 30 August 2023 to 5 April 2024

Charity name: The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

Charity registration number: 1204527

Introduction

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution is a Christian research organisation which exists to help the general public, churches, media, governments and international bodies understand both the nature and causes of persecution of Christians with a particular focus on Christian minorities in Islamic contexts.

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which has a Christian ethos set out in its basis of faith which forms part of its constitution. This states that *"the organisation will be evangelical in its own ethos and membership but will seek to research and report on the persecution of Christians of all denominations. For the avoidance of doubt, this refers to those who hold to Christ's divinity and are persecuted for the name of Christ."*

This report is the charity's first annual report to the Charity Commission. As required by the Charity Commission it covers the period from initial registration on 30 August 2024 to the end of the financial year on 5 April 2024.

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document

The objects of the CIO are:

4.1 To promote fundamental human rights (in particular, those relating to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of speech exemplified in: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; The UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance or Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, 1981), of the Christian community.

4.2 The advancement of the Christian faith by supporting Christians in the practice of their faith by undertaking research and educating the general public in relation to the persecution of Christians throughout the world

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts

Research on global persecution of Christians.

Publication of research on global persecution of Christians.

Both for the benefit of the public in general and the Christian community in particular. This includes both

a) the general public and Christians in western countries, by enhancing their understanding of persecuted Christians and the causes of that persecution

b) Christians in countries where they face persecution, by drawing the attention of churches, media and governments in the west to their suffering and to possible actions which could help alleviate that suffering.

Guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Additional information

Policy on grant making

The charity does not make grants to individuals or organisations.

Contribution made by volunteers

All work is currently undertaken by volunteers. However, the charity's business plan sets out an aim to achieve grant funding to move to a position of initially two part time posts.

The charity's CEO currently works part time unsalaried. During the reporting period this is estimated at approximately 350 hours professional work, which is notionally assessed as being the equivalent of £10,000.

Achievements and Performance

Establishment of the charity

Financial administration

Banking arrangements were established shortly after charity registration.

Change of name

On 16 November 2023 the Charity Commission approved the modification of the name of the charity from the Lindisfarne Research Centre to the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

Policies

At the first trustees meeting following charity registration the following previously adopted policies were reviewed and approved:

- Conflicts of interest policy
- Council of Reference policy
- Donor policy
- Media and publications policy
- Research Ethics policy
- Risk register
- Safeguarding policy
- Statement of values.

The charity also has a basis of faith which is set out in its constitution.

In addition, at the trustees meeting held in January 2024 an advocacy policy was also adopted.

Business plan

The business plan was also updated and approved by trustees at their January 2024 meeting.

Trustees

During this period the trustees have continued to hold quarterly meetings.

Research undertaken and published

During this first reporting year the charity has sought to

- undertake research into human rights issues
- educate the public about human rights
- raise awareness of human rights issues

through two principal means:

1. Country profiles

The publication of detailed country profiles of the situation in a number of countries where Christians face persecution. These country profiles include a summary of current issues faced by Christians in that country, analyses of the legal situation and of ideologies linked to persecution, an assessment of future risk i.e. how persecution is likely to increase either geographically or in severity in the future; as well as short summary of the history of the church in that country. Country profiles published include:

- Afghanistan
- Egypt
- Iran
- Iraq
- Maldives
- Nigeria
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Syria

Each country is also assessed according to 10 aspects of freedom of religion, which historically developed in the UK and other countries of the English speaking world.

1. Freedom of the church from state interference, including freedom to interpret scripture without government interference.
2. Freedom to translate and own scripture in the vernacular and read it publicly.
3. Freedom of worship.
4. Freedom from being required to act against one's beliefs.
5. Freedom to establish places of worship.
6. Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of one's beliefs.
7. Freedom to choose or change one's faith.
8. Freedom from being required to affirm a particular worldview i.e. religious or philosophical beliefs, in order to hold public office, enter various professions or study at university (repeal of Test Acts).
9. Freedom of parents to educate children according to their own beliefs.
10. Freedom to criticise the religious or philosophical beliefs of others (absence of blasphemy law).

The trustees believe this is an innovative approach which complements existing human rights declarations on FoRB, such as article 18 of the UDHR and ICCPR, by providing a much more specific analyses of FoRB in each country.

As such, as well educating and informing the general public, churches, media and governments in western countries about persecution of Christians in these countries, it also helps educate the governments of the country profiled as to the nature of freedom of religion and the specific aspects they need to improve.

2. Lindisfarne Analysis

Through undertaking and publishing detailed research analyses on issues related to the persecution of Christians as soon as they occurred. These research analyses have covered the following persecution situations

- Pakistan: anti-Christian riots in the city of Jarwanwala (September 2023).
- Morocco: how Christians were affected by the Morocco earthquake in the light of FoRB conditions there (October 2023).
- The Palestinian Territories: life for Christian living in Hamas controlled Gaza (November 2023).
- Analysis of how previous western brokered peace deals have affected the Palestinian Christian minority (December 2023)
- Nigeria: media reporting of terror attacks on Christians in the middle belt (January 2024).
- Afghanistan: Risk to Afghan Christian refugees from Pakistan's deportation order (February 2024).
- Mozambique: Islamic state's expansion in Africa – calls for Christians in Mozambique to pay jizya (March 2024)
- Analysis of how countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan use vaguely worded extremism laws to arrest and imprison Christians (April 2024).

Research Ethics

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution believes that a properly thought-out Research Ethics policy is essential for any form of academic related research and publication.

1. The trustees have adopted a Research Ethics Policy which is similar to those used by many western universities, but which additionally addresses a number of specific issues which could potentially arise in relation to research on persecution of Christians.
2. The policy specifically commits the charity to following both the core principles of the 2012 *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and the specific responsibilities set out in the 2009 *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity*.
3. Our Research Ethics policy is also an expression of the Lindisfarne Centre's wider values (belief, character, courage, compassion, honesty, integrity, justice, patient endurance, research integrity, respecting people, selflessness, trustworthiness, wisdom). These values reflect both our Christian ethos and more widely accepted standards of public life. These values are intended to shape daily culture and establish standards of conduct against which actions and decisions can be assessed.

Research impact

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution seeks to assess research impact in a similar manner to universities i.e. with research not merely contributing to knowledge and understanding, but also in terms of public engagement and social, economic or political impact which is in line with the charitable objectives. The following two examples of research impact illustrate this:

1. During the reporting period a number of MPs and peers subscribed to our regular Lindisfarne Analysis communications providing detailed analysis of a current persecution situation faced by Christians.
2. The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution also took part in a live panel discussion lasting approximately half an hour on Premier Christian Radio relating to current trends in the persecution of Christians. A survey by ComRes found that 1.2 million adults listened to this radio station.¹

Financial review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period

This report covers the first six months following charity registration. During this period the charity has raised funds both by donations from individuals and through the covering of some of its initial costs by the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC which has similar objectives to the charity. The total income during this period was £494.

During the reporting period the charity was planning to launch its first major appeal – although the appeal itself took place shortly after the reporting period and will therefore be reflected in the next annual return.

The current trajectory of income leads the trustees to anticipate that income for the next annual return, which will cover a full 12 month period will be a minimum of £3-4,000.

Reserves policy

At the first trustees' meeting following charity registration it was agreed to adopt a policy of keeping 3 months' operating costs in reserves.

Amount of reserves held at the end of the reporting period

£250

Principal risks

The charity has a risk register which assesses risk in six general categories

Risk is assessed in 5 general areas

1. Governance risk
2. Operational risks
3. Financial risks
4. External risks
5. Compliance and regulatory risks

Risks for each category are identified then categorised a) according to potential impact from 1 (insignificant) to 5 (extreme/catastrophic); b) according to likelihood from 1 (remote) to 5 (highly probable) with mitigation actions taken to reduce any combined risk.

There is no retained net which falls into the RED category (11-25) risk of more categorised as more than RED (11-25).

¹ 'Record figures show more people listening to Premier than at any time before *Premier Christian News* 23 March 2018 <<https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/record-figures-show-more-people-listening-to-premier-than-at-any-time-before#:~:text=A%20new%20survey%20by%20ComRes%20found%20over%201.2,and%20765%2C000%20listening%20to%20Premier%20Gospel%20every%20week.>> [accessed 6 September 2024].

Structure, Governance and Management

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution gained charity registration as a CIO on 30 August 2023

Governing document

The Charity's governing document is its constitution.

How trustees are selected – including details of constitutional provisions

The charity's constitution states

10.2.1. Every Charity Trustee must be a natural person who has confirmed agreement with the Basis of Faith.

11.1.1 Apart from the first Charity Trustees, every Charity Trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Charity Trustees.

11.1.2. In selecting individuals for appointment as a Charity Trustee, the Charity Trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Relationship with any related parties

The charity works closely with the Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christianity CIC and during the initial reporting period had agreed in principle to a memorandum of understanding setting out the areas and purposes for which they would work together.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

Registered charity number

1204527

Charity's principal address

49 Station Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6EA

Names of charity trustees who manage the charity

Mr David Charlwood – chair of trustees

Dr Martin Parsons – CEO

Mr Christopher Martin.

At the October 2023 trustees meeting Jeremy Craxford stepped having served as since July 2021 during the two years in which the charity was seeking to obtain charity registration.

Other trustees declarations

There are no corporate trustees.

No trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

The charity does not hold any funds as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

Council of Reference

The Council of Reference is a non-executive body whose role is

- i) to provide some broad big picture advice both practical and spiritual to the management and trustees at an annual online meeting.
- ii) to provide occasional specific advice if asked to in an area where they have particular expertise, such as reviewing something before it is published.
- iii) informally helping promote the organisation in the wider world.

The members of the Council of Reference are:

Mrs Andrea Minichiello Williams, barrister and CEO of Christian Concern.

Rev Dr David Hull, Methodist minister, chair of Methodist Evangelicals Together, council member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Professor Peter G Riddell, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities, Professorial Research Associate in the Department of History at SOAS University of London and Senior Research Fellow of the Australian College of Theology.

The Baroness Caroline Cox, Founder President of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust.

Chief Executive

Dr Martin Parsons

The Lindisfarne Centre for the Study of Christian Persecution

Registered charity No. 1204527

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

30 August 2023 to 5 April 2024

Income and expenditure account

	£
Income	
Donations	494
Grants	<u>0</u>
	<u>494</u>
Expenditure	
Office costs	159
Research costs	0
Website	75
	<u>234</u>
Net surplus	260

Bank balance at 260
5 April 2024

Balance sheet as at 5 April 2024

Fixed assets	0
Current Assets	
Debtors	0
Cash	260
	<u>260</u>
Represented by	
Surplus to 5 April 2024	260
	<u>260</u>



NOTES

The Directors also acknowledge approximately 350 hours of unremunerated professional work were undertaken for the charity during this accounting period by the CEO who worked unsalaried. This is notionally recognised as valued at £10,000, although provided on a voluntary basis at no cost to the charity.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	David Charlwood	Dr Martin Parsons
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair of trustees	CEO
Date	27 September 2024	