

City Church Belfast

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Structure, Governance and Management

City Church is a charity registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission. It is governed by its trustees in line with its governing document, a deed of Trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity. Leaders may also be trustees but should not form the majority of the trustee group. Employees may also not be trustees.

Organisational Structure

The organisation is managed by the leaders who meet regularly. The leaders who served in 2023 were.

Carlos Neto – Key leader and employee

Joan Vaughan – Key leader and employee (resigned May 2023)

Karen Shaw

Ros Kyle

Neil Armstrong

Raymond Harrison

Jonathan Harris (appointed November 23)

Ashleigh Harris (appointed November 23)

Trustees and leaders are briefed on their legal obligations under charity law, the committee and decision-making process, operational decisions and the financial position of the church. They are free to discuss any issue with any other trustee, leader or employee. Trustees and leaders are encouraged to attend any appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

City Church maintains links with the Tobar Group of Irish Churches and with the Pioneer Organisation. Both these groups provide support and training (as required).

Public Benefit Statement

The purpose of City Church Belfast is to advance the Christian Faith in Northern Ireland and elsewhere by: -

(a) Holding church services and public meetings for praise, worship, bible teaching, prayer, healing and fellowship. The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include the spiritual, social, emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the general public who attend. These benefits can be demonstrated by feedback from those who attend the various public meetings.

(b) Providing activities, education and teaching for children and young people. The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include the spiritual, social, emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the children and young people who attend. These benefits can be demonstrated by feedback from both parents and those who attend the various children's and youth meetings.

(c) The support and encouragement of the Christian Church at home and overseas. The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include the creation, maintenance and development of Christian Churches in other parts of the world. These benefits can be demonstrated by feedback and evaluations from our overseas partners of the resources provided to support our partner churches and organisations.

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(d) Such other charitable acts and things as will (or will tend to) promote or encourage the Christian faith and which are in sympathy with the other aims and objects of the Churches Trust Deed. The direct benefits which flow from this purpose include the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, by as many means as possible. These benefits can be demonstrated by feedback from any group or partner that we work with.

The charities beneficiaries include: The General Public, Preschool (0-5 year olds), Children (5-13 year olds), Youth (14-25 year olds), Men, Women, Volunteers, Unemployed /low income There is no harm flowing from the purposes. There is no private benefit flowing from the purposes.

Key Activities of 2023

City Church continued to provide support for its members and congregation through Sunday Morning services, Childrens Church, regular praise meetings and life groups. The children have been a particular focus with the appointment of a new children's worker and the continuation of their dedicated service, 'Encounter'. Kids Klub, an outreach for children into the local community has continued and the 'Light Party', an alternative Halloween event for children was sold out and successful.

Leading up to St Patrick's Day, local community tensions increased and representatives from City Church worked tirelessly to build and maintain good relationships with the Universities, local community, landlords, security forces, students and relevant statutory bodies. On St Patrick's Day itself, the church hosts representatives from each of the afore-mentioned groups who use the building as a 'hub' from which to operate to try to bring stability to the Holyland area during this period.

Also, of note has been the formation of a Youth Band which regularly leads worship in our main service. Teaching and preaching are undertaken by a cross-section of leaders and has been well received. The resignation of Joan Vaughan from her role as one of the Key Leaders is notable and the team are especially grateful for the drive and vigour she brought to the role, particularly in the areas of community and development of the building. Joan's responsibilities are being passed on in an enhanced role for her co-worker, Carlos Neto.

The Church continues to reach out and provides services to the community weekly English Conversation Classes, 'Playgrounds', the open-air playgroup and the activities in Holyland Community Garden to the rear of church. In addition, the free Christmas Dinner was exceptionally busy, providing approximately 150 meals. City Church continues to partner with South Belfast Food Bank and CAP.

Work to maintain and develop our building has continued including the completion of the kitchen area in the main hall and essential upgrades to the electrical and lighting systems. The premises are used by a range of community groups including Forward South, the Brazilian Church and Friendship Club. The café on-site run by Aleksanders Bakery is busy, providing a focal point and supporting the work of the church.

The Church continued to support Christian work overseas and were delighted when a married couple from the congregation started new roles in India. The church continues to support this and other work in India and North Africa.

Risk Management

The trustees have a risk management strategy which is implemented by the Operational Staff, escalated to the trustees as required. The trustees meet regularly and review church finances and other potential areas of risk.

Financial Review

The trustees remain satisfied that the finances of City Church remain sound. As our accounts show, we ended the year with a surplus of £8,954.00, (2022 Deficit £8,402.00). The accounts also show that our income from donations has decreased, but that this has been offset by a reduction in salary costs, increased Grant Income and a slight increase in rental income. The church reserves at the year-end are £67,157, (Unrestricted £38,892, Restricted £28,265). The church still aims to increase its' unrestricted reserves to

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achieve a minimum of 3 months' running costs in reserve. The trustees are aware that financial conditions remain challenging and will continue to monitor the finances carefully whilst ensuring the church continues to support those in need at home and overseas.

Reserves Level

The trustees have determined that reserves of 3 months operating costs should be held. Regular contributions have been made throughout 2023 as cash-flow has permitted and reserves have approached the desired level. The finance team will continue to monitor the reserves and make contributions when possible.

Plans for future Periods.

The Church wishes to continue to fulfil its goal to be a 'Church without walls' by providing a warm welcome and great activities, promoting personal and spiritual growth. The Church aims to be a 'light' in the Community and create a welcoming place to come together.

Of note is the partnership with Belfast City Council providing a new seating/planting area at the front of Church to be known as Welcome Corner, aiming to enhance the Public Realm in the Holyland and due to be completed in Feb 2024.

Employee Involvement

The Trustees are grateful for the dedication and commitment of the staff team and particularly note the work of the children and youth workers over the last year.

Appointment of New Trustees

New Trustees are appointed when appropriate. Suitable candidates, who are generally, but not exclusively selected from within the membership of the church, are considered on the basis of their skills, experience and sympathy with the aims of the church. New trustees have the opportunity of reviewing appropriate documents, including the accounts as part of the induction process. One of the objectives of the trustee team is to increase the number of City Church Trustees in 2024.

Trustees Interests

None of the trustees held a beneficial interest in the assets of the charity. Emoluments and expenses paid to trustees are detailed on note 4.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

102157

Principal address

12/24 University Avenue
Belfast
Co. Antrim
BT7 1GY

Trustees

Mr Stephen McCrory
Mr Alan Ruddock
Mrs Joan Vaughan (resigned May 2023)
Mr Anthony Johnston
Dr Angela Page
Mr Damian Wharton (resigned September 2023)

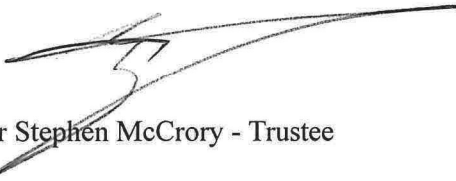
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**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

Independent Examiner

McCleary & Company Ltd
Chartered Accountants
Garvey Studios
14 Longstone Street
Lisburn
Co. Antrim
BT28 1TP

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 10 March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stephen McCrory', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Stephen McCrory - Trustee