

## **City Church Belfast**

### **Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. 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).

#### **Trustees Interests**

None of the Trustees held a beneficial interest in the assets of the charity. There were no emoluments paid to the Trustees during the current year, Trustees did not claim any expenses during the current year in their capacity as directors.

#### **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 not also be Trustees.

#### **Organisational Structure**

The organisation is managed by the leaders who meet regularly. The leaders who served in 2024 were.

Carlos Neto – Key leader and employee

Karen Shaw

Ros Kyle

Neil Armstrong

Raymond Harrison

Jonathan Harris

Ashleigh Harris

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

**City Church Belfast**  
**Report of the Trustees**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

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.

(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 nor is there any private benefit flowing from the purposes.

**Key Activities of 2024**

City Church continued to provide support for its members and congregation through Sunday Morning services, Children's Church, regular praise meetings and life groups.

March saw the launch of "Welcome Corner", the planter and seating area built in conjunction with Belfast City Council at the front of Church. The church received funding for this from Belfast City Council. The launch of Welcome Corner coincided with an open day for the Wildflower Alley and other alleys around South Belfast so we had several visitors and were able to visit other events on the day. These activities were in conjunction with the 'Imagine! festival' and 'Social Farms and Gardens NI'.

St Patrick's Day and the period around the Bank Holiday were relatively quiet in 2024. Representatives from City Church worked to maintain good relationships with the Universities, local community, landlords, security forces, students and relevant statutory bodies. On St Patricks 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 bring stability to the Holyland area during this period.

At the end of March, we held a reflective Tenebrae Service in the run up to Easter.

In April we raised money to help our missionary friends in India, facilitating their stay and good work there.

In June many of our members attended the Nua Festival which is organised by churches across Ireland.

We were sad to say goodbye to Guilliana at the end of July. Guilliana had been working with us for a year as the children and youth worker. She was very organised and parents were very grateful for the care and help she gave to our children and young people. There was the family day on 29 June and she helped with the continuation of the dedicated children's service, 'Encounter'. Kids Klub, an outreach for children into the local community. We appointed a new Children and Youth Leader, Mariana, at the beginning of September and she carried on the work and the 'Light Party', an alternative Halloween event for children was again sold out and successful.

In September we took part in the "Open Botanic" event, and provided activities related to Church (music), Playgrounds (activities for little ones) and Community Garden (planting and free plants).

In October we welcomed Maressa in joining us as an Intern to work alongside Mariana and Neto. That month also saw a community meal where we shared food with City Church members, local residents, members of local organisations, asylum seekers, refugees and the Muslim community. There were around 50 residents.

On 22 November we held our annual thanksgiving meal.

On 7 December we opened our doors and hosted a community event in the Winter Festival where over 100 people came into the building. December also saw the Intercultural Carol service and the free Christmas Dinner was as busy as usual, providing approximately 150 meals.

**City Church Belfast**  
**Report of the Trustees**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

The Church continued to reach out and provide services to the community with weekly English Conversation Classes, 'Playgrounds', the open-air playgroup, and the activities in Holyland Community Garden to the rear of church. 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 gable wall. The premises are used by a range of community groups including Forward South, the Brazilian Church, the Ethiopian 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 including two families in India, and one in North Africa.

**Risk Management**

The Trustees have a risk management strategy which is implemented by the Operational Staff and 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 on our unrestricted funds, but a deficit on our restricted funds. The accounts also show that our total income has increased, but expenditure has also increased to create an overall deficit for the year. This is primarily due to expenditure on the Welcome Garden, where the funding had been received in the previous year. The church aim to increase its unrestricted reserves, currently £39,606 to achieve a minimum of 3 months running costs in reserve, has now been achieved. 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**

As noted above, the Trustees have determined that reserves of 3 months operating costs should be held. Regular contributions have been made throughout 2024 as cash-flow has permitted and reserves have now reached 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.

**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.

**City Church Belfast**

**Report of the Trustees  
for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

**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**

Stephen McCrory (Resigned Jan 2024)  
Alan Ruddock (Resigned Jan 2024)  
Anthony Johnston (Chair)  
Angela Page (Secretary)  
Peter Heaney  
Rosalind Kyle  
Busola

**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 6 April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Anthony Johnston - Trustee