

Trustees Annual Report for the Year ended 31st December 2024

Upper Falls Parish Church – St. John the Baptist Church – Registered No 102381

The trustees present the annual report and statements of Receipts and Payments and Assets and Liabilities for Upper Falls Parish Church for the year ended 31st December 2024.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland is the advancement of religion.

The principal function of Upper Falls Parish Church is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting, through the work of Upper Falls Parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole and offering support for those needing help are fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

As a result of activity in pursuit of advancement of the Christmas religion, Upper Falls has custody of property and of records, materials, and artefacts of significance to the cultural and religious heritage, the maintenance of which is undertaken by the select vestry of the Parish of Upper Falls.

ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Parish has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the Parish's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit. The following sets out the Achievements, Performance and Public Benefit in 2024.

At present the Parish does not have an Incumbent.

The Parish continues to be looked after by the Rural Dean and retired Clergy.

All the functions of the parish relate to the advancement of religion through holding regular worship and caring for parishioners and others in the local community.

The arrangement for Sunday Worship in Upper Falls is as follows:

8.30 a.m. Holy Communion on 3rd Sunday of each month (By Arrangement)

11.30 a.m. Morning Prayer (Holy Communion on 1st Sunday of each month)

6.30p.m. No Evening Service since Covid

In 2024 there were a number of Baptisms, Weddings and funerals.

The number can vary from year to year.

Pastoral visiting takes throughout the year, by the Priest in Charge, and by those parishioners who volunteer to take part in it. Visiting takes place in people's homes, nursing, and residential homes and in hospitals and hospices. Parishioners would also be visited at times of bereavement, as well as times of planning for baptism and weddings etc.

Parishioners or others may contact the Priest in Charge to request pastoral counselling. The Priest would also witness applications for passports and driving licences for both parishioners and other members of the public known to him.

Parish organisations meeting from time to time on parish premises are as follows:

The Parish has one uniformed organisation namely the 17th Belfast Boys Brigade Company which caters for boys from 5 – 18 years and is available to all interested boys. At present there are 35 -40 boys in the company at any one time. The boys took part in many and varied activities throughout the year. September 2024 – August 2025 the Company celebrated their 70th Anniversary season.

During this period the Company held many events to celebrate this significant milestone. They held an anniversary dinner for former and present members. A Church Service, Carol Service and fun events for the present membership.

Monday Evening – Craft Class

Wednesday Evening- Prayer and Praise Meeting

PUBLIC BENEFIT:

The expression of the precepts of the Christian religion through engagement with the general public, and in particular with the disadvantaged, the sick, the elderly and the young, is a public benefit, which activities such as those described above relate too. This can be measured and evidenced through increased social integration and pastoral care delivered at the giving and receiving of pastoral ministry, improved understanding of the values relating to civic engagement, community cohesion and providing a bridge between diverse groups, as well as improved educational outcomes through the Church's ministry of teaching. The beneficiaries are the general public, and the public valuation of the benefits can be evidenced through attendance at public worship, participation in church governance and willingness to support through contributions the continuing witness of the church. Upper Falls are involved with the local community forum committee. The wider benefit to the public will outweigh any detriment arising in the course of Christian outreach. Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our Christian ministry, to lay staff, is essential to the fulfilment of the purpose of the advancement of religion.

No trustee receives remuneration, reward, or other private benefit for carrying out their trustee responsibility. The principal function of the parish of Upper Falls is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting through the work of the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole, and offering support for those needing help is fundamental to the practical delivery of the tenets of Christianity. The parish has custody and responsibility for the maintenance of the church and church hall including lands surrounding same. The church hall is open to all and is used by community groups in the local area and beyond.

As a result of the Christian religion, the parish has custody of a large body of records, materials, and artefacts of significance to the cultural heritage. The parish also has custody of and responsibility for the maintenance of buildings. One of these is the Parish Church, situated on the Andersonstown Road and built in 1861, is a grade B2 listed building. The other building is a church hall situated in Black's Road. The provision of access to records and the public enjoyment of cultural and historic building and artefacts, such as church plates and furnishings as well as an overall improved appreciation of longstanding Christian Heritage, is a public benefit. This is demonstrated through ongoing provision of access to records and the use of these records in research and genealogy. The beneficiaries are the general public. There is no harm arising from the purpose. No private benefit is received by the Trustees fulfilling their trustee responsibilities in respect of these records, buildings or artefacts.

STUCTURE, GOVERANCE AND MAMAGEMENT

Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity

Chapter 111 of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland governs Parishes and Parochial Organisation. The Select Vestry members are the Charity Trustees.

SELECT VESTRY

All members of the Church of Ireland who are over the age of 18 and are either resident within the parish or live elsewhere but have been accustomed members of the congregation for at least 3 months, may register as members of the general vestry allowing them to attend and vote at meetings of the general vestry and to stand for election to the select vestry. Meetings of the general vestry are held once a year. The Select Vestry is elected as part of this General Vestry meeting. The Select Vestry will hold office for a period of 1 year. Select Vestry members may be re-elected annually and there is no limit on the number of years which may be served.

PAY AND REMUNERATION

The Trustees receive no remuneration or expenses.

The Incumbent of the Parish receives a stipend and expenses paid directly by the Parish.

The Parish is at present vacant, and looked after by Retired Clergy.

The gross figure for the year 2024 was £3,297

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCURE

The Select vestry is responsible for the day to day management of the Parish. The select vestry consists of the members of clergy serving in the parish, the churchwardens, the Glebe wardens and not more than twelve other members duly elected at the General Vestry.

The select vestry is chaired by the incumbent or other member of the clergy officiating in the parish. Select Vestry members are responsible for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how parish funds are to be applied.

The select vestry meets 10 times each year.

COMPLIANCE

The Parish has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the Parish's objectives and activities as well as providing public benefit.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the Statement of Receipts and Payments and Statement of Assets and Liabilities in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The Trustees are also responsible for keeping accounting records that are sufficient to show the Parish's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the assets and liabilities of the Parish. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES

Samuel Sedgewick

Mr Samuel Sedgewick (Honorary Secretary)