

Charity number: NIC102557

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

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The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisers For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Trustees

Mr Thomas Stewart, Chair (resigned 4 December 2023)¹
Reverend Captain Colin Taylor, Vice chair. (Acting Chair 29 April 2024)¹
Mr James Diffin, Chair (appointed 2 October 2023, resigned 29 April 2024)¹
Ms Sarah Farling (resigned 13 March 2023)
Reverend Karen Salmon
Mr John Stewart¹
Mrs Rachel Swift (resigned 2 October 2023)¹
Reverend Brian Anderson
Mrs Lesley Anne Wilson (appointed 13 March 2023, resigned 2 October 2023)
Mr Mark Brown (appointed 13 June 2023, resigned 11 March 2024)
Mr Howard Davey (appointed 2 October 2023)¹
Neville McCormack (appointed 11 March 2024)

¹ Member of the Finance Committee

Charity registered number

NIC102557

Principal office

Bible House
27 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 6NB

Key Management Personnel

Mrs Catherine Hillcox, General Secretary (until May 2024)
Mr Campbell Moore, Office Manager
Miss Keren Roebuck, Communications and Fundraising Manager (until September 2023)
Ms Suyai Rodriguez Cameron, Project and Admin Support (until May 2023)
Mr Mark Wells, Community Partnership Manager (from January 2023)
Mr Aaron Sweeney, Project and Data Administrator (from November 2023)

Independent auditors

ASM (B) Ltd
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors
4th Floor
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisers (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Bankers

Danske Bank Limited
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Solicitors

Cleaver Fulton Rankin
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The Trustees of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland are pleased to present their report and the audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.

2023 was a year which provided opportunity for more face to face meetings within Northern Ireland and beyond. The United Bible Societies World Assembly gathered in October 2023 in the Netherlands – this was a valuable opportunity for the General Secretary and the Chair of the Board of Trustees to meet with colleagues from around the global fellowship.

There was change within the staff team with new colleagues joining, others leaving and some long term absence following surgery for one of the team.

The work of Bible Society NI continued with fundraising for our global colleagues and Bible engagement here in Northern Ireland. The Bibles for Babies project continues to be a highlight and source of joy for all involved.

Objectives and Activities

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland's stated mission is 'to reach everyone with God's Word in a language and medium they can access and afford, so that each person might experience God's purpose for their life.' Bible Society NI is one of over 150 different Bible Societies that make up the Global Fellowship of United Bible Societies (UBS).

During 2022 significant milestones were reached with Bible Translation meaning that more people than ever before have a complete Bible in their own language. Bible Society in Northern Ireland support Bible Translation, Publishing, Distribution projects as well as Literacy work, Bible Engagement and Advocacy around our global Fellowship and here in Northern Ireland.

Achievements and Performance

The Society's work is considered under the following headings.

1. Governance and Management

The Trustees of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland continue to focus on five strategic aims:

- Growth in awareness of the work of the Society to reach everyone with God's Word.
- Increase and development of the support base for the work of the Society by increasing the number of donors and developing new ways to generate funds.
- Increase of financial support for global Bible mission through United Bible Societies (UBS) and locally through collaboration and partnership.
- Promotion of Bible Engagement in Northern Ireland.
- Striving for best practice governance, finance and administration policies and procedures to ensure effective and efficient management of the society.

The 'Whole Family Bible Engagement' projects (Bibles for Babies, Daring to Hope and 52) continued. Bibles for Babies has a weekly involvement of volunteers in Bible House with Bibles and Birthday cards being sent out each week. Daring to Hope and 52 remain as resources available for us by congregations and individuals around Northern Ireland. A second print run of Daring to Hope Participant and Leader work books was completed in 2023.

During 2023 there were changes to the staff team. Mark Wells joined in late January as Community Partnerships Manager and Aaron Sweeney joined in November as Project and Data Administrator. Suyai Cameron Rodriguez moved on in May to a role with Fields of Life and Keren Roebuck moved to a new role with HOPE 365 in September.

Meetings with Trustees were both online and in person. Trustees met as a Board on 5 occasions (4 in person and 1 online). The Finance Committee met on 4 occasions online. It is anticipated that Board meetings will be in person whilst committees of the Board will meet online in the future.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

During 2023 there were changes to the Board of Trustee membership. Rev Lesley Ann Wilson joined the Board in March and left again in October feeling that the role of Trustee was not right for her. Mark Brown joined in June and Howard Davey in October. Sarah Farling and Rachel Swift also stepped down as Trustees during the year.

Bible House remained fully occupied during 2023 with no changes to the tenants.

2. Developing our fundraising potential

2023 proved to be a challenging year for fundraising with income down on 2022. 2023: £555,905 (2022: £616,232)

The main sources of income remain the same – Bible-a-Month Partnership, Direct Mail Appeals, Word at Work Supporters Magazine, and an alternative Christmas present option called Greatest Gift. We receive generous gifts from churches, church groups and individuals.

Three Direct Mail Appeals were sent out in 2023 focusing on Armenia, Cuba and Difficult places in the Middle East and North Africa. In comparison to the 2022 appeals which did include China the income was reduced; not every country generates the same response from our donors.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland supporters' magazine, 'Word at Work', was produced three times during the year. We shared news of our work around the fellowship and here in Northern Ireland and shared more in depth projects in Poland, Argentina and Pakistan.

Other income was received by the Society from Grant Making Trusts.

Support from church denominations continues with support from World Mission Partnership (Methodist Church in Ireland) for projects in Portugal and Cuba. Support was received from the Global Mission Department of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the Bible Society in Ukraine.

The Society receives rents under lease or licence agreements for occupation of the ground floor retail unit and the second-floor offices.

Legacy income was received in 2023 from individuals who often had supported the work of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland through their lifetime. (2023: £38,596 2022: £96,220). We are grateful to everyone who remembers the work of Bible Society NI in their will.

Bible Society NI continued to receive support from corporate donors.

Bible Society NI was involved again in a major donor fundraising movement IllumiNations in 2023. This movement presents Bible Translation to donors on behalf of a collaboration of charities; at the 2023 event these included Bible Society in Northern Ireland, Scottish Bible Society, Biblica, Word for the World and Wycliffe UK. This was a very positive experience to raise the profile of Bible Society NI with major donors several of whom were from Northern Ireland but invited by one of the other agencies or donors. Bible Society NI did receive donations of around £10,000 following this event for Bible Translation projects.

3. Achieving the public benefit of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland is one of a small number of grant making / resourcing Bible Societies within the United Bible Societies (Global Fellowship of Bible Societies). Projects are selected from within a database from Bible Societies all over the world; in 2023 support was given to Bible translation, publication and distribution, to literacy work using the Bible as a learning tool and to Bible engagement and advocacy. Care was taken to not only cover the various elements of Bible mission but to also reach across the globe providing support to Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and to South America.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Country	Project
Albania	Friends for Life - Sports Centre Bible Match
Algeria	Scriptures for Seekers
Argentina	West Toba translation
Armenia	Moving Gospel: Children's Bible camps in Border villages Bible Quiz at schools
Austria	Scriptures for refugees including those in detention centres or in prison
Azerbaijan	Bible distribution for the Azerbaijani nation
Cambodia	Literacy Programme: Learning through Listening
China	Affordable Bibles for the Millions in China Chinese Study Bibles for Lay Preachers
Cuba	A Bible for every Cuban with engagement strategies
Egypt Kingo	Festivals: instilling Biblical principals in children
El Salvador	New Testament Tour in Schools
Ethiopia	Children Bible in Amharic
Guatemala	Free to Live: Rescuing girls from trafficking
Gulf States	Sharing the Good News with migrant workers in Bahrain through Storytelling
Honduras	Bible distribution to Police and Prisoners in one of the most violent countries in the world
India	Translation projects: 8 languages in 2023
Israel	Core Presence to the Arab Israeli Bible Society
Jordan	Providing Jordanians with the Word of God
Kenya	Bible distribution among marginalised children and youth
Lebanon	Serving the persecuted church in the Middle East
Liberia	Equipping Rural Pastors for Mission
Lithuania	New Translation of the Lithuanian Bible
Macedonia	Youth who can't afford a Bible
Malawi	Family Scripture Engagement Packs
Morocco	A Spring in the Desert - Core Presence support for the Bible Society
Pakistan	Beacon in the darkness of illiteracy, Growing with the Bible project
Palestine	Child of Bethlehem - Bible Distribution through children's work Proclaim it! The Bible brings us together
Paraguay	El Amanecer boat - Distribution to remote and isolated communities
Peru	Bread of Life - Holistic project providing Bible materials alongside breakfast for School children
Poland	Response to the war in Ukraine for refugees
Portugal	Almeida Translation Support for Digital Engagement with local community World Youth Day in Portugal
Rwanda	Good Samaritan: Fighting against HIV and AIDS
Serbia	New Translation of the NT for a New Generation
Sri Lanka	Braille Bibles for Sri Lanka Tamil Old Version Bible Revision for Sri Lanka
Swaziland	Swati Study Bible
Togo	Faith Comes by Hearing
Uganda	Scriptures for People with Visual Disabiities The Bible in every Hand, Heart and Home Distribution Project
Lhukonzo	First Bible Translation with Publishing
Ukraine	Response to the war in Ukraine – Central Scripture supply for Ukraine and Ukrainian Refugees
Uruguay	Breakfast with Jesus – a holistic project providing breakfast and Bible materials for children

The above list of projects represents around £425,000 (2022: £515,000) worth of financial support to Bible Societies around the world through the International Support Programme of United Bible Societies. Support was also sent to help cover the costs of the 2023 UBS World Assembly in the Netherlands.

In addition to providing financial support the Society generates significant prayer support from across Northern Ireland through printed material in 'Word at Work', Direct Mails and our Bible-a-Month calendar as well as prayer and news emails each month. A monthly online prayer meeting has continued throughout the year for supporters to join the staff team as we pray for our colleagues around the world.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

During 2023 Bible Society NI received further support through the International Support Programme in UBS for our 'Whole Family Bible Engagement' project from Bible Society Australia. Whilst a new print run of Daring to Hope was completed Bibles for Babies had the most activity.

1600 Babies were registered for the programme who were born in 2021 and 1500 born in 2022. By the end of 2023 over 3000 Toddler Bibles had been sent out to homes in Northern Ireland to mark the 1st Birthday along with 2nd Birthday cards.

There is a group of around 25 volunteers who help regularly to write cards, wrap Bibles and pack the materials for each little one in Bible House. These volunteers have also helped at other Bible Society NI events and act as advocates within their own local churches and communities.

Feedback continues to be very positive with growth in the number of individuals following our social media channels as a result also.

4. Enhancing the Society's profile within the local Christian community and the United Bible Societies Fellowship

2023 continued to see opportunities to attend events in person to share about the world of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland.

The Society maintains strong links with the main Protestant denominations and annually presents a Bible to the new President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the new Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Society also participates in various networks which raises our profile and provide support to the Society team. Bible Society NI are members of MAP (Mission Action Partnership) and AMS (Association of Mission Societies – Church of Ireland).

In November 'The Gathering' Event was held by the Society to provide an opportunity for supporters to gather together. The evening was held in T3 at the House of Vic Ryn. The House of Vic Ryn generously make this space available for groups to use and it is equipped with many helpful resources and facilities. The Society was pleased with the number of supporters who attended and enjoyed listening to our guests – Julie McKinley from the National Bible Society of Ireland and Lídia Fletcher from the Bible Society of Portugal. James, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, gave some feedback on the UBS World Assembly and Jenna, a Bibles for Babies volunteer, shared her experience as a Mum and volunteer involved in the project.

The Society plays an important role within the United Bible Societies Fellowship. The highlight of this was attending the World Assembly in the Netherlands in October. This was a very important time of fellowship with colleagues in person for the first time since the COVID 19 pandemic. This was also a time of learning and setting the direction of the Fellowship for the coming years.

The General Secretary continues to serve the wider Fellowship through several committees including the Membership Committee of the Global Council, the Resource Mobilisation Group (the General Secretary has now taken up the position of Chair of this group) and the Europe Middle East Affinity Group.

The General Secretary and the Community Partnerships Manager were part of a second Bible Engagement Forum which met in Niagra, Canada in May 2023. This proved to be a rich time of sharing resources and experiences with other colleagues in contexts similar to Northern Ireland.

5. Complying with best practice in the day-to-day management of the Society

During 2023 the Board of Trustees of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland have continued to comply with best practice in the day-to-day management of the Society.

All Board Members are provided with monthly and quarterly financial statements which were discussed in depth at the Finance Committee.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report (continued) For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The Society has taken steps to ensure compliance with safeguarding issues and concerns in connection with children and vulnerable adults in the course of its work.

We continue to monitor our risk register and review other new policies in place for the society.

Financial Review

The accounts as presented show a deficit of £71,959 (2022: Surplus of £47,123) on the Income & Expenditure Account.

During the year, the Society's incoming resources from donations and legacies decreased by 10% to £555,905 (2022: £616,232) with the total incoming resources £624,567 (2022: £741,087), a decrease of 12%.

Total expenditure decreased by 8% to £696,526 (2022: £759,130) resulting in a deficit of £71,959 (2022: deficit of £18,043). The amount pledged to International Support Projects was reduced by the Board of Trustees to £439,845 (2022: £518,202) for 2023.

Reserves

At 31 December 2023 the Society's unrestricted funds totalled £740,006 (2022: £811,966). When added to the property revaluation reserve of £236,632 (unchanged from 2022) this brought the Balance Sheet total to £976,638 (2022: £1,048,597).

It is the Society's practice to release funds as quickly as possible to support the provision of God's Word to people globally and here in Northern Ireland. Accordingly, it keeps reserves to a level considered broadly necessary to support operating costs over a twelve-month period. This has been documented in a Reserves Policy adopted by the Board.

Key risks and uncertainties

Voluntary income is still the main source of funding for the society. Significant work has been continued in 2023 to increase our profile and the awareness that others have of what our core activities are, especially with younger online audiences.

The Board of Trustees continue to manage risk and plan for uncertainty as and where it is possible to in current circumstances.

Conclusion

Looking back on 2023, the Trustees continue to feel grateful for the generosity received from donors and supporters and for the new opportunities that have come about with direct support from other Bible Societies in the UBS Fellowship. The Society is reaching new audiences with new projects in Northern Ireland whilst still maintaining high levels of generosity to wider Bible mission.

We are grateful for our dedicated staff team and Board of Trustees who continue to show creativity and drive to reach our full potential.

We thank God for the many ways in which we have continued to commit to our mission statement of 'Reaching everyone with God's Word'.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Trustees' Report (continued)
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

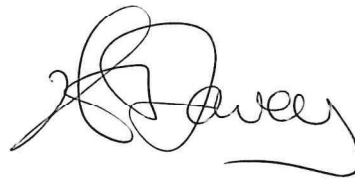
Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Reverend Captain Colin Taylor

Date: 21 May 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Mr Howard Davey

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Davey', written in a cursive style.

The Bible Society in Northern Ireland

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

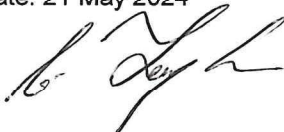
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the provisions of the Memorandum of Association. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Reverend Captain Colin Taylor

Date: 21 May 2024



Mr Howard Davey

