

**House of Worship Ireland  
127a Orby Drive  
Belfast BT5 6BB**

**Church Office  
29 Cedar Grove  
Belfast BT18 9QG**



**Trustees:  
James Alexander Connolly  
Susannah Connolly  
Martyn Alan Corbett  
Lois Susannah Corbett**

**Charity no: NIC103357  
HMRC no: XT28474**

**Accountants:  
FEB Chartered Accountants  
26 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BG**

**Bankers:  
Allied Irish Bank  
11-15 Donegal Square North  
Belfast BT1 5GB**

# **Trustees Annual Report**

## **Period 1st January - 31st December 2023**

### **Governing Document:**

House of Worship Ireland (HOW) is constituted as a charitable trust registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission in November 2015. It is governed by a Trust Deed.

### **Organisation structure:**

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits in their role as trustees. To assist in the smooth running of the charity the trustees have set up a leadership committee that help them oversee certain aspects of the charity's work.

### **Risk management:**

The trustees have assessed the risks the charity faces and are satisfied that systems are in place, or arrangements are in hand, to manage the risks that have been identified. In particular, appropriate insurance cover is ensured, child protection policies and protection for vulnerable adults/groups are in place and the finances of the Church are kept under review.

### **Strategies**

We want to make our Church an accessible and welcoming venue where all Christians, and/or those who wish to know more about the Christian faith and lifestyle, can gather together to learn about and put into practice their religion and worship. Through diverse ministry groups all sections of the community - women, men and children are all offered the opportunity to participate and be involved as part of the greater church community.

An important part of our faith is charitable giving, and we are pleased to receive gifts and give gifts for the sole purpose of the relief of need and financial hardship of others, both Christian and non-Christian in Ireland and other parts or a world mission field. In particular the focus is on those who have insufficient money to cover their basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, education or who are destitute with no means of support. We reach out to all sections of the community regardless of race, creed, colour or sexual orientation. Most of our activities are free and supported by donations of the church members. Where a charge is deemed to be made, concessions are made for students, people on means-tested benefits and senior citizens.



**Objectives and activities:**

The objects of the charity are set out in the charity's trust deed and are summarised as follows:

To advance the Christian faith in the Belfast and greater Castlereagh area for the benefit of the public in particular through the holding of church services, prayer meetings, lectures, the public celebration of religious festivals and the distribution of literature on the Christian faith to the interest and benefit of others.

To advance the education of, and provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for leisure-time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for all residents of Belfast and the Castlereagh neighbourhood by the provision, maintenance and management of a community programme.

Our aims remain to provide a place where Christians can worship and to provide a community facility for all the inhabitants of Belfast and the Castlereagh area in particular. Our long-term ambition is to build the self-confidence of Belfast's Christians in their faith, and through our community facilities and activities help make our area a peaceful, vibrant and harmonious community for everyone who lives there regardless of race, creed, colour or sexual orientation. Our church motto clearly indicates our aims..."Where Everybody is Somebody."

Our objectives are set to reflect our faith and community aims. Each year our trustees review our objectives and activities to ensure they continue to reflect our aims. In carrying out this review the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular its supplementary public guidance on the advancement of religion for the public benefit.

**Use of volunteers**

Volunteers are an important resource in both our faith and community work. Volunteers are involved in most of our faith and community activities and we have many people regularly giving their time. We encourage all members of our church to be involved in voluntary activities and to share their skills with others.



## **Activities and Events**

How our activities deliver public benefit: The charity carries out a wide range of activities in pursuance of its charitable aims. The trustees consider that these activities, summarised below, provide benefit both to those who worship at our church and the wider community of the Castlereagh district and the City of Belfast. We, like many church and charitable organisations are still recovering from the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, but in the past year have gradually resumed and restored most of our regular events and activities.

### **Religious activities:**

Our Church provides a centre for our ministry, worship and for the activities associated with our faith. During the year under review, we offered a range of religious services and activities including:

**Worship services:** Regular services are held for those who wish to participate in worship. Family Worship on Sunday mornings and another service each Tuesday which covers a variety of subjects including, prayer, worship, Bible study and social activities. These services provide not only religious and spiritual content, but we encourage social interaction and fellowship with refreshments provided at each service.

**Prayer:** The Church is open on a regular basis for prayer gatherings. We also have a social media prayer ministry where all who are interested can stay in touch and provide encouragement to those in need.

**Wedding and Funeral facilities:** The Church provides the facilities for wedding and funerals to be held in accordance with our belief system and faith. These facilities are open to non members of the church also as part of our ministry and service to the community.

**Inter-denominational ministry/dialogue:** Our Church reaches out to promote inter-denominational dialogue and cohesion with other churches and religious groups in the community. Over past years we have been delighted to be involved and help promote a much greater emphasis on inter-church dialogue and community activity. This has included interdenominational services and events, and social meetings with the clergy on a regular basis. In 2024 we look forward to continuing to build and foster more of this type of inclusive ministry by our church in the community.



Social activity: 'Tribe Kids' activities, 'Tribes' events for men and women. Discipleship classes, and regular Church social events, all provide opportunity for church members, and others from the community who wish to attend to get involved in the social aspect of the church's work. As we look forward into 2024 we will endeavour to host specialty events of both a religious and secular nature that are open to both church members and the community in general where participants not only have the opportunity to worship, share about faith, and relate to relevant issues and sometimes share a meal together.

Missions and outreach: As well as supporting the practical needs and education of under privileged children both locally and in overseas missions through the work of the 'Sonshine Club" Charity, the church also provides aid to other local charitable projects and church projects. We do this by not only financial donations, but by our support in offering time and by practical assistance to those in need. Plans are in place to also create a special fund set aside for "local almsgiving" for those going through hardship in the present financial situation.

### **Financial report**

The principle funding sources: The charity's main source of income is the Tithes and weekly offerings of its members. The level of voluntary giving in church tithing has continued to be both generous and encouraging from the faithful support of our church members.

Our outgoings this year have been higher than previous years for a number of reasons: Firstly as intimated in last years report we have upgraded our youth facilities to meet the changing demographic among our congregation. This involved some remodelling of the room sizes and the installation of new audio/visual systems and furnishings. It has proved a great success, and well worth the investment.

We also had to fund repairs due to flood damage caused by the storms in the autumn. This involved the lifting and replacing of floors and floor coverings in the rear of the buildings, and repairs to the outside roof area at the rear of the premises. The expense of this was assisted by the insurance cover we maintain on the buildings.

As good stewards of the monies donated to the church/charity the trustees always ensure that ample reserves are always kept in place to meet the ongoing needs of the church for unforeseen circumstances, and even with our unexpected outlay we still have a healthy balance in our account. The church has no investments which make profits.

**Future Plans:**

The current premises still generally accommodate all those who regularly attend, although we will continue to actively look for better buildings to meet our ministry to the regular church membership, but also to be able to develop further activities that reflect the needs of our wider local community in particular expanding our youth ministry and greater impact into community based and social needs. We continue to reach into and beyond our local community by internet broadcasting, and this helps secure the ability of the church to minister to those unable to attend in person, and to reach out beyond our local community.

**Statement of Trustees' responsibilities:**

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The trustees' are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose accurately at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the church's trust deed. The trustees' are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees and signed on its behalf by:

James A. Connolly (Chair)

Date: 1/5/24

