

**Christ Church (Congregational) Abbots Cross**

**Trustees Annual Report**

**Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

## **Trustees Annual Report**

**Charity** – Christ Church (Congregational) – also known as Abbots Cross Congregational

**NI charity reference** – NIC103423

**Principal address** – Christ Church (Congregational), Doagh Road, Newtownabbey, County Antrim, BT37 9QW.

### **Introduction**

This report covers the period **1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020** and is the fourth report required following registration as a charity on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

### **Structure**

The congregation at Abbots Cross is an unincorporated institution made up of all those who take up membership and governed by a constitution. Under the constitution there is provision for a leadership body made up of the Minister and Deacons (Diaconate). The serving Minister is generally regarded as the Chairperson, a Secretary and Treasurer are appointed from within the Diaconate and ratified by the members of the Congregation. The Annual Business Meeting at which accounts are brought to the members is held in February each year, with subsequent Church Meetings in June, September and December. The congregation is also subject to the trusts placed upon it by a Trust Deed in which the property is also settled, under the requirements of the Trust Deed a number of persons have been appointed by and on behalf of the congregation as 'holding trustees' to hold legal title to the buildings in which the congregation meet and to the manse.

### **Objects**

Our Charitable Purposes are set out in the Covenant section of our constitution as follows:

**We engage therefore, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to maintain the worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the Church; the relief of the needy; the spread of the Gospel to all nations.**

These purposes are advanced by means of our weekly public services, outreach into the local community, organisations meeting in our premises, missionary interest and practical support.

### **Trustees**

For the purpose of charity law, the Minister and Deacons have the day-to-day role for the administration and management of the church and are identified as the charity trustees and appointed by the members of the Congregation. The present Minister has been serving for 10 years. Deacons are elected for a period of 3 years and on retirement are eligible for re-election. Instead of all retiring at the same time, one third of the Deacons retire by rotation each year. During the period of this report the following persons served as charity trustees:

William Annette (Secretary), Jeffrey Adair, Brian Bell, Samuel Carson, Andrew Cuthbert, Rev. Trevor Gillanders (Chair), Andrew Kirkpatrick (elected February 2020), Richard Logan (retired February 2020), Paul McConnell, Thomas McLernon (Treasurer), Mark Thompson, David Walker.

### **Public Benefit Statement**

The trustees confirm they have regard to the Commission's public benefit requirement. While the Minister and 1 other trustee receive a salary and relevant expenses from the congregation, this is an incidental private benefit necessary to further our charitable purposes as set out in our purpose statement available to view on our registration page on the *Charity Commission for Northern Ireland* website.

Despite the restrictions brought in due to the Coronavirus outbreak, we continued to support our congregation in spiritual and practical matters. Our services were conducted and streamed on-line and we distributed discs of our services to those without on-line access.

We've had team of people involved in a 'telephone ministry' keeping in contact with our congregation. 'Drive-in' services which, even though subject to restrictions, proved popular and gave our congregation an opportunity to stay in contact.

In the periods when we were able to assemble as a congregation we followed the Executive's guidelines, for example, limiting the number attending, wearing face coverings. Despite these restrictions our congregation were glad to be able to meet.

Our live-streamed services are received in many different countries and it is also encouraging when some of our viewers/listeners contact us to say how they appreciate the ministry.

### **Safeguarding**

The Trustees remain aware of the 'duty of care' to children. All persons working with children must be subject to an enhanced disclosure under current legislation and this applies to persons working in organisations associated with the church such as Boys' and Girls' Brigade. Although our organisations were unable to conduct their programmes this year, our safeguarding policy remains in place and at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 there had not been any 'abuse' claims made, nor are we presently aware of any circumstances which might reasonably be expected to give rise to a claim for abuse.

### **Financial Review**

Given the very difficult financial situation in this year, we must record sincere appreciation to our congregation for continuing to support our freewill giving/offerings. When we were unable to meet, arrangements were made to enable the congregation to contribute and this made it possible for us to meet our ongoing financial commitments. A number of persons give under the Government's 'Gift Aid' scheme. Accounts are prepared on a receipts and payment (income and expenditure) basis and we have complied with the requirement to disclose and submit the information required in the Annual Monitoring Return and to publish our accounts.

Our **gross income** for the year as reported here at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 in our No.1 account was **£189,321** with **expenditure** of **£221,786**. We maintain a close interest in 'missionary' endeavour at home and abroad and each week we donate at least 10% of weekly income to students and full time Christian workers approved by the Church (full Church members) and on each tenth Sunday give the entire offerings to designated missionary work as disclosed in our accounts.

No.1 Account (balance 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020): **£59,954**.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:-

*10.10.20*

Trustee

*W. J. O'Brien*

Trustee

Dated:- .....