



Annual Report and
Financial Statements
for the Year Ended
31 March 2025

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Company Registration Number: NI015284
Charity Registration Number: NIC106767

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited



Image on Cover Page

Statue of St Oliver Plunkett

St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh
Sculptor: Mr Dony MacManus

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

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St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Name

The name of the Charity is St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

The name of the Corporate Trustee is St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Company Registration Number: NI015284

Charity Registration Number: 106767

Directors and Officers of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

(also referred to as the Council of the Trust)

Most Reverend Eamon Martin (Archbishop of Armagh)

Most Reverend Michael Router

Monsignor Colum Curry

Dean Kevin Donaghy

Anne Garvey

Very Reverend Peter McAnenly

Enda McLernon

Canon Peter Murphy

Very Reverend Mark O'Hagan

Rhona Quinn

Canon Eugene Sweeney

Registered Office

Archdiocese of Armagh, Ara Coeli, Cathedral Road, Armagh, BT61 7QY

Company Secretary

Reverend Colm Hagan

Auditor

Cooper Parry Audit (Ireland) Limited, 36-38 Northland Row, Dungannon BT71 6AP

Primary Bankers

Bank of Ireland, 11 Upper English St, Armagh BT61 7BH

Investment Managers

IQ-EQ Fund Management (Ireland) Limited, 5th floor, 76 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Grand Canal Dock, Dublin, D02 C9D0

Solicitors

Lennon Toner O'Neill, 54 Upper English St, Armagh BT61 7DU

Napier & Sons, 1-9 Castle Arcade, Belfast BT1 5DF

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited is the Corporate Trustee (the Trustee) for the Parishes, the Curia and other associated charitable bodies which constitute the Archdiocese of Armagh. The Council of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited presents the Strategic Report, the Directors' Report and the audited financial statements of the Charity, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited, for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Council has adopted the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and 2022, and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities finalising their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charitable company.

HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE

The Church of Armagh was founded by St Patrick in the middle of the fifth century. It soon became a noted ecclesiastical centre with many churches and a monastic school, which attracted students from all over Ireland and abroad.

The Diocese has been blessed with many saints through the centuries, not least the 'Apostle of Ireland', St Patrick, but also St Brigid, St Malachy, St Oliver Plunkett and many more.

It is one of the larger dioceses in Ireland covering almost all of Counties Armagh and Louth, approximately half of County Tyrone and a part of County Derry, as well as some townlands in County Meath. The Diocese is made up of sixty-one parishes of which thirty-seven are in Northern Ireland and twenty-four in the Republic of Ireland. The seat of administration is located in the city of Armagh.

CONSTITUTION AND AIMS

In Northern Ireland, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited (the Trust), a charitable trust, is a company limited by guarantee and was registered on 14 December 1981, registration number NI015284. On 20 June 2018, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited was registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and given the registration number 106767. For tax purposes, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited is also registered with HM Revenue and Customs – Reference XN76368. On 26 January 2015 the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland authorised St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited to act in any Charitable or Ecclesiastical Trust as a Trust Corporation. St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited became active on 1 April 2018 when the charitable activities of the Archdiocese of Armagh became subject to the oversight of the Council of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited.

In the Republic of Ireland, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Company Limited by Guarantee, a bare trust, is a company limited by guarantee and was registered on 29 November 1993, with registration company number 210040. On 4 December 2020, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited was registered as a Charity with the Charity Regulator in Ireland and given the registered charity number 20029104. For tax purposes, St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Company Limited by Guarantee is also registered with the Irish Revenue Commissioner – CHY (Revenue) Number 10987.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The principal objectives of the Charity are:

- the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Armagh subject to any future curtailment or addition made in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Roman Catholic Church;
- the advancement of any charitable purpose supported by the Roman Catholic Church throughout Ireland or in any part of the world.

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The Church in the Archdiocese of Armagh, in union with the Catholic Church worldwide, seeks to achieve its objectives through activities including the following:

- Proclamation of the Gospel
- Worship of God
- Provision of Clergy and pastoral personnel
- Support for families
- Formation and development of parish communities
- Provision of educational, pastoral and youth ministries
- Provision and maintenance of places of worship
- Aid for impoverished and needy communities worldwide

The means used to fulfil the purposes of the Trust are constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the principal aims and objectives of the Charity are adhered to.

STATEMENT THAT THE TRUST HAS HAD REGARD TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC BENEFIT REQUIREMENT STATUTORY GUIDANCE

The Trust confirms that it has complied with the requirements of Section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland in determining the activities undertaken by the Charity. Throughout this Annual Report, the Trust seeks to demonstrate that the Charity's aims and objectives are for the public benefit.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Diocese consists of sixty-one parishes predominantly in Counties Armagh and Louth and in parts of Counties Tyrone, Derry and Meath. The parishes are clustered into seventeen Pastoral Areas. Each Pastoral Area consists of a number of adjoining parishes united in promoting and realising the objects and the mission of the Church in the Archdiocese of Armagh within their local communities.

Reflecting Canon Law (the Universal Law of the Catholic Church), the activities of the Charity are separated in this report into Parish and Curia functions.

Parishes

The Diocese is divided into parish communities. Parish Priests/ Administrators and Curates are appointed by the Archbishop to provide pastoral care for Parish communities and to manage parishes in all juridical affairs, thus ensuring parishes are administered in accordance with the norms of Canon and Civil Law, while also fulfilling the aims of the Charity. A major function of parishes is the celebration of the liturgy and the provision of spiritual and pastoral care. However, much other unseen and unheralded charitable work also occurs, greatly enriching the local communities which they serve.

Each parish is required by Canon Law to have a Parish Finance Committee to assist the Parish Priest/ Administrator in the governance of the parish. Parish Finance Committees include parishioners with knowledge and experience in finance, property management, personnel and administration. Additionally, each Parish Priest/ Administrator in his own parish, with his Parish Finance Committee, and in accordance with the norms and guidelines of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited, is entrusted with the responsibility of conserving and maintaining items and articles of artistic and historical value, as well as keeping an inventory of such objects. Priests have been diligent in this task, often employing the services of experts to assist them. Parish employees include secretaries, newsletter writers, choir directors, organists, bookkeepers, financial administrators, cleaners, grounds staff, and parish centre managers. In some instances, people offer their services on an entirely voluntary basis.

Parishes are central to fulfilling the Charity's mission. They are communities whose daily activities contribute, both directly and indirectly, to the spiritual and moral well-being of everyone living and working within them. They are the places where local communities come together to worship, where sacraments are administered, where children are educated in the faith, and where social outreach programmes are developed which allow communities to care for those in need and work for the common good of society.

Curia

The Diocesan Curia consists of those institutions and persons which furnish assistance to the Archbishop in the governance of the entire Diocese, especially in directing pastoral activity, in providing for the administration of the Diocese, and in exercising juridical governance. It also includes all who participate in the overall administration of the Diocese, particularly those who direct diocesan activities such as pastoral support, safeguarding, youth work, education, family life, liturgy, lay voluntary involvement and other facets of the local Church's life. Its central base is Armagh City.

The Council of the Trust delegates oversight of the Diocese's day-to-day finances, property, investments and administration to the Diocesan Financial Administrator, the Diocesan Secretary and other staff within the Curia. All personnel in the service of the Diocese undergo continuous professional development training.

As a registered charity, it is imperative that the Diocese continues to ensure good practice legally and financially in all areas, including health and safety, data protection, insurance, and the maintenance of property, while also conforming to the prescripts of Canon Law and best ecclesiastical practice.

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Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Proclamation of the Gospel, Worship of God and other Ministries

Within the Diocese religion is advanced through the provision of places of worship, the facilitation of religious practice and, particularly, through community celebration of Mass. Normally there is a public celebration of Mass or other liturgy every day in the majority of parishes, and every weekend several public Masses are offered in each parish. All such liturgies are open to the public without restriction.

Other activities of the Charity include conducting religious ceremonies (such as baptisms, weddings and funerals); presenting programmes pertaining to spiritual formation and development; encouraging and supporting ecumenical relationships; and maintaining places of worship, many of which are listed and contain religious works of art and other artefacts, many of which form part of our national heritage. All these places of worship are open to the general public including people of all faiths and none. They provide a public benefit for the whole community and for many people they are spaces which offer the opportunity for quiet reflection and spiritual contemplation.

It is primarily within parishes that people experience what it is to be a member of the Catholic Church. They are the settings where faith is nurtured and given expression. Parishes, through various means, provide for the spiritual and moral well-being of parishioners, young and old. Practical expressions of faith are manifested by means of parish-organised pastoral, social and educational activities many of which rely on the voluntary involvement of parishioners. During the reporting period a total of 3,235 baptisms took place within the Diocese. First Holy Communion was administered to 3,988 young people and the Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred on 4,093 individuals. In the same period 620 marriages were celebrated and some 2,071 funerals conducted.

The Diocese has engaged with social and digital media platforms for some time through its website, Facebook and Twitter sites. The www.armaghprays.com website, dedicated to disseminating diocesan pastoral resources, continued to be widely used. Webcams for the live streaming of Mass and other liturgies have become an invaluable element in the pastoral outreach of parishes. Parishes in the Archdiocese also contributed to the celebration of liturgies on the network channel RTÉ News and on local radio.

In addition to pastoral care and the provision of the sacraments to the faithful, the Diocese offers chaplaincy services to those who cannot be part of a regular parish community. Hospital Chaplains and lay pastoral visitors are available at major hospitals within the Archdiocese of Armagh. The Chaplains are regularly at the disposal of patients, their relatives and staff, as well as being on call to attend in emergencies. Other clergy and lay pastoral visitors regularly attend hospitals and nursing homes in the area frequented by members of the Diocese. Moreover, the Diocese assists with the provision of chaplaincy services to those in penal institutions located outside its territory.

Each year the clergy and people of the Archdiocese of Armagh journey to ancient pilgrimage sites within the Diocese and beyond. The yearly diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, France took place in May 2024 and the annual day pilgrimage to Knock, Co. Mayo occurred on Sunday 26 May 2024. Organised pilgrimages provide much valued support for the sick who participate as well as for all the volunteers who give so much of their time and energy. They become model experiences of the Church as the pilgrim People of God.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

The important role played by volunteers who participate in the various activities of their parish cannot be overstated and their contribution is vital in enabling the Diocese to continue to fulfil and develop its stated objectives. Many people play a key role in our parishes, offering their services as volunteers. They include those involved in various aspects of parish life: those who help with the sacred liturgy – Ministers of the Word and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, members of altar societies, altar serving coordinators, choirs and music groups, organists, instrumentalists, and stewards; people who assist with finance, church collectors, counters, envelope distributors and dues collectors; and other assorted roles including cemetery upkeep, various apostolic and charitable groups too numerous to mention as well as prayer and perpetual adoration groups. Volunteers generously give of their time serving in various ministries, caring for and visiting the sick, the housebound, and those on the margins of society. They play a significant role in helping to maintain parish property and assisting in financial and other administrative duties, including membership of Parish Pastoral, Finance and Safeguarding Committees. Such parishioners are the lifeblood of their communities, and their contributions are significant. It has not been possible to quantify the number of volunteers active throughout the Diocese, nor is it possible to estimate the financial value of their involvement.

Although the Charity relies principally on donations from parishioners for its funding, access to religious services is never restricted on the grounds of ability to contribute financially. In addition, members of the Catholic community are encouraged to contribute towards creating a more just society by becoming active volunteers for the Common Good within their local area through membership of charities, local societies, community groups, and by volunteering in all sorts of other ways to the benefit of society in general.

Besides the work accomplished at parish level, the Curia coordinates and carries out a number of functions necessary to the advancement of the Catholic religion at local, national and international level. To this end, the Curia operates by way of diocesan commissions, committees and through various personnel charged with specific responsibilities.

The Diocesan commissions include a Vocations Commission, the Diocesan Clerical Benefit Society, the Diocesan Education Committee, Armagh Diocesan Youth Commission, a Diocesan Pastoral Plan, the Prayer and Spirituality Commission, Adult Faith Formation and a Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. Personnel with specific responsibilities include Diocesan Pastoral Workers, Diocesan Youth Coordinators, the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage Director, the Diocesan Knock Pilgrimage Director, the Diocesan Pontifical Mission Societies Director, the Diocesan Safeguarding Director, the Diocesan Advisory Team on Religious Education, and the Diocesan Vocations Director. Mention also needs to be made of those who work in the administration of Catholic education.

Provision of Clergy and Pastoral Personnel

Central to Parish life is the relationship between the clergy and parishioners. Clergy are not employees of the Diocese. However, in Canon Law the care and welfare of incardinated priests of the Diocese is mandatory and therefore forms part of the Charity's ongoing commitments.

It is the priests ministering in parishes who, working in collaboration with their parishioners, are charged in a special way with organising, animating and motivating the local faith communities. They constantly strive to be witnesses of hope and authentic shepherds for their people. The provision of dedicated, well qualified and competent clergy to serve in parishes and other ministries is a priority for the Diocese. Through the means of regular conferences, gatherings, retreats, courses, workshops and sabbaticals, the priests of the Diocese are updated on current issues, developments and best practice in respect of all aspects of ministry and mission.

In the reporting period the Diocese had nineteen students for the priesthood, either in full-time study or on pastoral placement. They attended respectively St Patrick's College, Maynooth and the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary, based in Dundalk, Co. Louth. During the year, the Diocese had three candidates ordained for the priesthood and one candidate ordained as transitional deacon. The costs of this seminary formation are supported by the Diocesan Education Fund. As part of its missionary

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

outreach, the Diocese also sponsored a priest of the Missionaries of St Paul undertaking postgraduate studies in Rome. The Diocese also had one man in his final year of formation for the ministry of Permanent Diaconate. His training and formation has been financed from the Diocesan Education Fund.

A key to sustaining the advancement of Catholicism is the promotion and support of vocations to the Priesthood, Consecrated Life, Diaconate and of the wider apostolate of the lay faithful. The Diocese continues to engage with those people who wish to undertake discernment in connection with vocations to the Priesthood, the Permanent Diaconate or the Religious and Consecrated Life. The Diocesan Vocations Director, along with the Diocesan Vocations Commission, coordinates this essential mission mostly through the means of discernment groups, prayer vigils, retreats and chaplaincy work in post-primary schools and colleges throughout the Diocese.

The general well-being and care of clergy in active ministry is coordinated by the Diocesan Curia, Vicars General, Episcopal Vicars and Vicars Forane. Priests' stipends and related matters are overseen and regulated by the Archbishop with the Council of Priests and the Council of the Trust. Equally important is the welfare of priests who are sick or retired from active ministry. Many of the priests no longer in active ministry have served in parishes and local communities for over sixty years. Their welfare is the responsibility of a committee which administers the Armagh Diocesan Clerical Benefit Society Fund. During the reporting year, twenty-seven priests received assistance from the fund which necessitated a total spend of approximately £448,096.

The objectives of the Charity are greatly supported, and the life of the Diocese enriched, by the contribution made by the many members of Religious Institutions, Secular Institutions and/ or Societies of Apostolic Life serving in the Diocese. The Archdiocese of Armagh expresses its sincere gratitude to these men and women of faith for their ministries of generosity and sacrifice.

Support for Families

Family Ministry within the Diocese is dedicated to strengthening marriage and families by coordinating pastoral programmes and ministries that have faith as their foundation and Christ as their goal. By responding to the needs of families, as they strive to live in a very challenging culture and a rapidly changing world, Family Ministry serves as a resource for families, clergy and parish communities.

Family Ministry also offers services and practical resources to assist people at all stages of life in order to help them experience, more fully, the love and compassion of God in the ordinary events of life.

There are three Accord Marriage Preparation and Counselling centres in the Diocese - Drogheda, Dundalk and Portadown. These centres provide regular courses throughout the year for those preparing for marriage. Couples are encouraged to attend an accredited pre-marriage course as soon as they contact the parish to make arrangements for their marriage. Accord continues to provide face-to-face and online counselling for couples.

The Rainbows programme enables children and young people, who have experienced a significant loss in their lives, to access peer support and counselling. This service is offered through St Patrick's Parish, Dundalk and is available to all who seek it regardless of faith or church affiliation.

The Diocese also promotes the work of the Family Addiction Support Network (FASN) based in Dundalk. The Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese is the Patron and a board member of the organisation which supports families who are dealing with the drug addiction of a loved one. Often these families are desperate for help but have no one to turn to because of stigma and intimidation. FASN provides a safe place for families to find support and guidance to overcome their difficulties.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Provision of Educational, Pastoral and Youth Ministries

Armagh Diocesan Youth Commission (ADYC)

Established in 2000 by the Archdiocese of Armagh, the Armagh Diocesan Youth Commission (ADYC) remains steadfast in its mission to offer meaningful activities, events and programmes for young people across the Archdiocese. With a primary focus on fostering faith, confidence and self-esteem, the Commission plays a vital role in shaping and advancing youth ministry. Throughout the reporting year ADYC remained committed to finding creative and practical ways to engage, accompany and inspire young people across the Archdiocese of Armagh.

Faith Encounters and Awards

ADYC serves young people from post-Confirmation age to young adulthood, offering faith encounters in schools, parishes and through diocesan gatherings. A central feature of this ministry is the Pope John Paul II Award and the Muiredach Cross Award. The Diocesan Youth Team received 255 new applications in September 2024 and a celebratory event in the same month recognised the achievements of 202 young people who had previously signed up for the award, an increase on the previous year.

Ongoing efforts to integrate catechetical elements and aspects related to the social teaching of the Church into the awards have been well received. ADYC has also prioritised accompanying participants, leaders, and parishes, ensuring consistent support throughout the year.

The Archdiocese was pleased to honour the contribution of lay people to the life of their parishes and diocese by awarding St Patrick's Medals and Bene Merenti Medals to several well-deserving parishioners.

Events, Pilgrimages, and Partnerships

The financial Year 2024 - 2025 coincided in the main with St Brigid 1500, a year set aside to mark the 1500-year legacy of the life and ministry of our co-patron St Brigid. This year afforded the archdiocese and ADYC many opportunities to engage with young people and families across the Archdiocese.

ADYC's work extended into schools and parishes with retreats, prayer opportunities, and liturgies, many shaped by the synodal commitment to prioritising youth in the life of the Church. Highlights included:

- Young people's significant involvement in Holy Week and Easter liturgies across the Archdiocese.
- Organisation of a Family Day in Dundalk in June 2024, as part of St. Brigid 1500 celebrations.
- A diocesan wide Camino to St Brigid that was created and offered to schools and families across the Archdiocese.
- The opening of the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Archdiocese where young people and young families from across the Archdiocese participated in an opening Liturgy in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh on Sunday 29 December 2024.

ADYC continued to collaborate with St Patrick's Pontifical College, Maynooth, providing lecturing input to the Diploma in Youth Ministry Programme, ensuring that the Archdiocese helps shape the future of youth ministry across Ireland.

New Initiatives and Ongoing Development

Alongside these core activities, ADYC:

- Worked closely with parishes including Ballygawley, Dungannon, Loughgilly, Ardboe, St Patrick's Dundalk and Our Lady Queen of Peace Pastoral Area to develop youth initiatives and liturgies.
- Provided resources to parishes, schools and award leaders to support youth accompaniment, including liturgical and catechetical materials.
- Created multimedia and digital resources for the Season of Creation, World Rosary Day, Advent, Lent, St Brigid 1500, Sacred Heart 350 and resources for St Oliver 400.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

- Coordinated youth participation in diocesan and national gatherings, including the Embrace NI Seminar and the National Gathering on Youth at Clongowes Wood.
- Significantly developed youth ministry in the southern part of the Archdiocese of Armagh and continued to engage more broadly with schools and parishes as a priority during 2024/2025.

Communications and Digital Evangelisation

ADYC has embraced digital platforms to strengthen connections with young people and leaders. Throughout the year the team produced social media content, videos and online resources to accompany liturgical seasons, promote events, and share youth ministry stories. This work has been particularly important in sustaining engagement with those unable to participate in person.

The Diocese also held support evenings for parish secretaries and others who are engaged in media and communications outreach at local level.

Vision and Mission

ADYC's mission is to work in partnership with young people, the Church and wider society to encourage and affirm young people in their journey of faith. The vision is for them to experience the love of God and be inspired to engage fully in the life and mission of the Catholic Church, both in worship and in service to the wider community.

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese

A key aspect of the contribution of the Diocese to the local community is the large network of Catholic schools. There are 150 primary schools and 27 post primary in the Diocese with a total enrolment of approximately 50,900 pupils. The Diocese celebrates this contribution by taking part in Catholic Schools Week, an event held throughout Ireland in January for the last ten years. This annual celebration calls on Catholic schools to give expression, in a special way, to a particular aspect of Catholic Education. Catholic Schools Week took place in 2025 on Sunday 19 – Saturday 25 January on the theme of Catholic schools as “Fully Alive in Christ”.

In Catholic schools we look to Jesus as our role model and teacher and we come to a greater understanding of the depth of Christian service. The theme this year was used to encourage reflection on how Catholic schools help students to live life to the full by connecting them to Faith, fostering a sense of community and encouraging service to others. Services were held in St John the Baptist Church, Portadown (21 January) and in the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Dundalk (23 January). The services, led by our two bishops, were very well attended and received by schools and the wider community. Schools are always very willing to undertake music, drama and liturgical roles within these services which demonstrate the joy of the Gospel.

In our schools we are called to support each other and to have faith in the promise of the Good News. Catholic schools are inspired by the belief that God has created each one of us with a capacity to give and receive love. While each Catholic school is such a community, every Catholic school fosters the holistic development of its students, promotes their well-being and offers them cultivation of a deeper, loving relationship with God. Jesus teaches us to love one another as he has loved us.

Schools in our diocese also fulfil a very specific catechetical role in preparing students for the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Working alongside local parishes, these occasions are opportune moments to promote catechetical co-operation between the home, school and parish, even if many schools feel they bear an uneven proportion of the work involved. Visiting parishes for Confirmation is a valuable chance for bishops to meet students, teachers and parents and to affirm the work being done in schools.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

The Archdiocese of Armagh remains fully committed through its Catholic schools to maintaining, by way of a holistic methodology, the highest standards in learning, and thus continuing to offer academic excellence and faith-filled education to all young people. Many non-Catholic parents choose to educate their children in Catholic schools, not least because of the high-quality education on offer, but also due to the identifiable ethos of trust, mutual respect and recognition of responsibility to those in need. The diocese acknowledges the important role of the principal as faith leader of a school and the Archbishop held an in-service day to support newly appointed principals. Principals appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their role, to view resources and to network with each other.

The Diocese appoints personnel to act, on behalf of the bishop, as the Diocesan Advisory Team for Religious Education in both the primary and post-primary sectors. These teams visit the Catholic schools and offer help and guidance to the teachers. Each school enjoys an annual visit from their appointed Diocesan adviser. The adviser is an established link between schools and the Church and visits of a pastoral nature help strengthen the link between the Church and school. The visits also offer an opportunity to listen to the concerns and challenges experienced by principals and to offer assistance where appropriate. All Advisers report a very positive engagement with principals and school staff and express how heartening it is to see the hunger, thirst and awe that children have for God. The primary advisers visit classrooms and offer practical help by providing a range of online resources for use alongside the Grow in Love series and for preparing children for the Sacraments. The secondary adviser provides monthly resources to all RE teachers, visits schools and provides annual retreat days for both chaplains and RE teachers.

Many schools have concerns about the ever changing and diverse world children come from. Principals recognise the complementary, connected, but different roles of the home, school and parish in the faith education of the children. Parents are the first and the primary teachers of their children in faith. The parish is where children learn to worship and meet Jesus Christ, and Religious Education in Catholic primary schools focuses on the formal curriculum and faith formation. Very often elements of this partnership are missing, and the path is not straight. The Diocesan Advisory team will continue to work alongside schools to help meet these challenges.

The successful 'Schools Singing Programme' continued to bring joy and confidence to students in the greater Armagh and Newry areas.

Formation and Development of Parish Communities

Diocesan Pastoral Plan

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan continues to guide the mission and outreach of the Archdiocese of Armagh. It remains the principal framework through which priests, deacons, pastoral councils, and lay people collaborate to further the mission of Christ across the diocese. As the process of updating the Pastoral Plan remains aligned with the ongoing National and Universal Synodal journeys, the present plan, published in 2015, continues to provide a strong foundation for pastoral development.

Throughout 2024 and into 2025, the Diocesan Pastoral Team has built upon the progress of the previous year, engaging parishes and pastoral councils in training, consultation, and renewal. Several parishes, including Dromintee, Termonmaguirc, Loughgilly and Our Lady Queen of Peace Pastoral Area, continued their renewal processes. Each council has sought to refresh membership and deepen participation among parishioners, encouraging collaborative leadership and shared responsibility.

Mission and Outreach

A mission and Outreach remain at the heart of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. In this reporting year, the Archdiocese continued its strong partnership with the Family Addiction Support Network (FASN) based in Dundalk. The Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese serves as chairperson of the Board of Directors of

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

FASN, which provides essential support to families dealing with the impact of drug addiction. The Network offers a safe and compassionate environment where families can find understanding, encouragement, and practical guidance.

The *Sycamore* programme, a parish resource designed to foster dialogue about faith and community, was a key initiative in 2024. A diocesan webinar and information night took place on 7 November 2024, followed by an in-person session in Dundalk later that month with participation from five Parish Pastoral Councils. The full parish series took place with representatives from four parishes at Easter 2025, with continued support from the diocesan team.

The Archdiocese also continued to emphasise the importance of reaching out to marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Pastoral care for immigrants and asylum seekers remained a priority, with regular Masses celebrated in the native languages of the East Timorese, Polish, and Indian Malayalam-speaking communities. These services, offered in collaboration with clergy from the communities' home countries, continue to foster inclusion and cultural unity within the diocese.

The 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees was held on Sunday 29 September 2024. The theme for 2024 was 'God Walks with His People'. The theme highlighted the presence of God with migrants and refugees. It encouraged a synodal path of walking together with the most vulnerable, overcoming obstacles, and recognising the presence of God in every migrant. The World Day of Migrants and Refugees is celebrated with care in the Diocese, and the Holy Father's Message for this Day is noted each year and circulated among the clergy and laity.

The Archbishop was the invited homilist at Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral, New York on 17 March 2025. His visit also included outreach to members of the Irish community based in the Bronx borough of New York.

Spirit Filled Worship and Engagement

The Archdiocese placed significant focus on promoting prayer, unity, and collaboration among Christian communities. On 25 April 2024, an ecumenical synodal gathering took place at the Parish Pastoral Centre in Portadown. The event brought together representatives from various denominations to engage in dialogue and shared reflection on faith and service in the local community.

As part of the Year of St Brigid 1500, several major diocesan celebrations took place. A Family Fun Day and Procession was held on 16 June 2024 in Dundalk, featuring music, food, and community activities on the grounds of St. Patrick's Church, followed by a procession to the Church of St Nicholas. The event, organised by the Diocesan Pastoral Team with parish support, attracted strong participation from families and young people.

The Feast of St Mary Magdalene was marked with a special Mass on 22 July 2024 in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, celebrating the role of women in the Church. Presided over by Archbishop Eamon Martin and Bishop Michael Router, the liturgy featured a reflection by Sr Briege O'Hare, music from the Cathedral Choir and Comhaltas, and rich symbolism highlighting the contribution of women to the life of the Church.

The closing months of 2024 saw the launch of the Jubilee of Hope which marked the start of the Jubilee Year at a diocesan level. The Opening Mass on 29 December 2024 in St Patrick's Cathedral brought together clergy and laity in a liturgy designed and led by the Diocesan Pastoral Team, emphasising participation and hope-filled renewal. The Jubilee celebrations continue into 2025, supported by diocesan resources and parish engagement.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

The Year of St Brigid concluded with two significant events in early 2025. On 1 February 2025, St. Brigid's Day Masses and the blessing of an Icon of St Brigid were celebrated at the Cathedral in Armagh. At Mass in St Brigid's Shrine, Faughart, young participants proclaimed the readings and presented symbolic offerings. That evening a parish-led candlelight procession took place in both Armagh and Faughart. It was a powerful act of faith and community. The Closing Celebration of St Brigid 1500 took place on 13 February 2025 in St Gerard's Hall, Dundalk, featuring hospitality, music by Leah and Shauna Marron and Blackwatertown Comhaltas, a talk by Marjorie Doherty, and an original music and prose presentation by Sr Briege O'Hare and Carmel Boyle.

On 12 February 2025 in St Peter's Church, Drogheda, custodian of the relic of the head of martyred Archbishop of Armagh, St Oliver Plunkett (1669 - 1681), Archbishop Eamon Martin launched a year of celebration, well attended by both religious and civic dignitaries, to the mark the 400th anniversary of the Saint's birth and the 50th anniversary of his canonisation. A commemorative book was also launched on the day.

In December 2024, 'The Twelve' – a prayer support group – celebrated its 12th anniversary. Its members offer prayerful guidance and spiritual accompaniment to many people across the archdiocese.

Understanding Our Faith

The Diocesan Theology Programme, accredited by St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth, continued to offer adult faith formation opportunities, with strong participation across parishes in 2024-2025. Ten people enrolled for the programme in the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

The promotion of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA), which prepares adults for baptism and reception into the Church, along with the training of teams to facilitate the programme, is also an important component in the work of evangelisation. In September 2024, five new OCIA facilitators were trained in delivering the programme. The areas of Dungannon, Dundalk and Armagh continue to provide this growing ministry.

In October 2024, twelve adults and three children, one of whom required additional support due to special needs, embarked on their spiritual journey towards full reception into the Catholic Church. The OCIA programme ran for 32 weeks from September 2024 to the Easter Vigil in 2025. At the Vigil in St Patrick's, Dundalk, there was a wonderful celebration of the sacraments of initiation. The programme concluded in May 2025 after the period of Mystagogy. Leading up to Pentecost, the neophytes engaged in other courses to support their faith and help integrate them into their local faith community.

Online resources for prayer, catechesis, and family spirituality remained available through the armaghprays.com website, ensuring that individuals and families could nurture their faith in homes, schools, hospitals, and parish settings.

The Diocesan Pastoral Team also continued collaboration with the Northern Pastoral Network, sharing resources and strategies in adult faith formation, pastoral development, and youth ministry.

Care for Our Common Home

Environmental stewardship remains a cornerstone of diocesan pastoral life. Guided by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Archdiocese celebrated the Season of Creation 2024 throughout September, focusing on the theme "*To Hope and Act with Creation*". Resources from the Holy See were distributed to parishes, many of which incorporated them into Sunday liturgies and Pastoral Council discussions, fostering a renewed sense of responsibility for protecting God's creation.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Synodality

The Archdiocese of Armagh's journey in synodality continued to deepen between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, shaped by both the ongoing Universal Synodal process, *Towards a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, and the National Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church in Ireland. In light of these developments, it was agreed to align the timeline for renewing the Diocesan Pastoral Plan with the unfolding stages of the National and Universal Synods.

Over the current financial period, the Archdiocese hosted a series of prayerful listening and discernment gatherings across parishes, pastoral areas and with diocesan bodies. These gatherings focused on key synodal themes emerging locally and nationally. Co-responsibility in mission, the role of young people and families in the life of the Church, fostering inclusion and participation, striving for healing and renewal, along with a call to deepen spirituality were some of the priorities that emerged. Feedback was collated from and shared with both the National Synodal Team and the General Secretariat of the Synod in Rome, ensuring the voice of the Archdiocese was represented in the wider Church's discernment.

Particular attention was given during this financial year, to preparing for the Archdiocesan Congress on Youth, Faith, and Family which will take place in March 2026. Planning for the Congress, preparation of processes and development of delegate formation gatherings were critical elements of work during the latter part of this financial year. The hope is that investment in terms of time and financial resources will ensure that the Congress will be fruitful and contribute both to the broader synodal journey worldwide and most importantly help to shape the pastoral priorities of the Archdiocese in the years ahead.

Throughout this period, the Archdiocese continued to invest in resourcing parishes for synodal engagement, training facilitators and building capacity for shared decision-making. The commitment remains clear: to listen attentively, discern faithfully and act courageously so that our diocesan pastoral planning might be firmly rooted in the lived faith and hopes of the people the Archdiocese of Armagh serves.

Online Resources

In an ever-evolving landscape of social and digital media, the Archdiocese of Armagh through its Pastoral Team has played an important role in fostering evangelisation and community engagement using digital and social media platforms. The team oversaw the further development of the Armagh Prays website, a key platform for sharing resources across the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocesan YouTube channel now hosts over 502 videos and has received 184,700 views and interactions to date. The Archdiocese has active social media platforms with 11,200 followers on the Archdiocese of Armagh and St Patrick's Youth Facebook accounts. The Archdiocese has a presence on X (formerly Twitter) by means of Archbishop Eamon Martin's own profile, Bishop Michael Router's profile, Armagh Priest and St Patrick's Youth.

During the last fiscal year the Archdiocese of Armagh, conscious of the growing need for formation in the area of social and digital media and evangelisation, began a process of accompanying parishes in respect of Digital evangelisation and specifically Copyright. Parish Workshops took place at the Clergy conference in Dromantine in November 2024 and are planned for late 2025.

The Pastoral Team's multifaceted approach includes educational initiatives and collaborative projects that strengthen the Church's presence in the digital age and demonstrate its commitment to reaching diverse and dynamic audiences.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Ecumenism

The heads of the four main Churches and ecclesial communities in Ireland: the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Church of Ireland (Anglican) Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, together with the President of the Irish Council of Churches, meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of religious, social, community and political importance. At a diocesan level work is promoted to foster spiritual ecumenism according to the principles laid down in the Decree on Ecumenism about public and private prayer for the unity of Christians. Parishes and clergy are encouraged to promote friendship, cooperation and charity between Catholics and their brothers and sisters from other Christian communities. Ecumenical prayer services, coffee mornings and pilgrimage walks took place in various parts of the Archdiocese on significant moments throughout the year. Noteworthy too was the work of the Armagh Cathedrals' Partnership which included an event to celebrate the life, work and witness of St Patrick and which took place in Armagh on 11 March 2025.

In June 2024 Archbishops Eamon Martin and John McDowell attended a Service of Remembrance near Sword Beach in Normandy, France to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. The Archbishops developed the theme of peace and reconciliation by sharing reflections on the lives and service of two wartime military chaplains on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday Worship* programme which was aired on Remembrance Sunday. The Church Leaders' Group (Ireland) made a two-day visit to the European Union institutions in Brussels in September where they discussed issues concerning the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Union with representatives from the Parliament and Commission. The Group also met with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Hilary Benn, MP, on 6 November 2024. The Church leaders raised issues including relationships with the European Union, concerns regarding the UK Government's proposals around legacy, and the stability of the devolved institutions in N. Ireland.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was observed in the Archdiocese on 18 – 25 January 2025 using resources produced by the ecumenical community of Bose, Italy on the theme 'Do you believe this?' (*John* 11:26). In that regard, Archbishop Martin and his Church of Ireland counterpart, Archbishop John McDowell, produced a joint video message based on the role of faith in sustaining hope including reflections on the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting held its 34th plenary gathering on 12-13 November 2024 at the Dromantine Conference Centre in Newry. Bringing together Christian leaders from across Ireland, the event addressed the theme, 'Finding the Face of God in One Another' and focused on social fracturing in Ireland today and the need to respond with an affirmation of the dignity of the human person. The Armagh Archdiocese organised an ecumenical seminar in October 2024 at Drumcree Pastoral Centre on the theme 'Embracing the Stranger'. The event attracted participants from across Northern Ireland.

The Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops issued a number of joint statements during the reporting year, including: a message for Easter with an emphasis on reconciliation based on *2 Corinthians* 5:18-19; an autumn reflection entitled 'Daring to Dream'; a Christmas message focusing on the light of Christ of *John* 1:5; and a New Year Message delivered with other members of the Church Leaders' Group.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults continues to be a priority for the Archdiocese of Armagh. The Safeguarding agenda is informed by legislation, policy and procedures which are updated and fully complied with.

The Safeguarding Office ensures the Archdiocese of Armagh adheres to the requirements of the new Policy & Guidance "*A Safe and Welcoming Church Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*" (National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland) (NBSCCI), and the Diocesan Policy on Adult Safeguarding 2017.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

The Safeguarding Office of the Archdiocese consists of one part-time equivalent Director of Safeguarding, one part-time Safeguarding Officer, one part-time Safeguarding Trainer and one part-time Administrative Officer. Both the Director and the Diocesan Trainer are Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) and available to receive any complaints in respect of the safeguarding of either children or vulnerable adults. The contact details for the DLPs are publicised through the Safeguarding page of the Diocesan Website (www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding), and also on posters which are displayed in every church and church building throughout the Archdiocese.

The Director, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Trainer attend the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee meetings at which they provide updates on work carried out and progress on the delivery of the objectives of the Diocesan Three-Year Strategic Safeguarding Plan (2025-2028). Four meetings were held during the reporting period on 2 July 2024, 26 September 2024, 10 December 2024 and 25 February 2025. The Archbishop attended the European Conference on Safeguarding in November 2024 hosted by the Pontifical Commission for Protection of Minors.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee is responsible for overseeing the work of the Safeguarding Office in the Archdiocese of Armagh. Membership is for a three-year period with the option to renew for one further period of three years. This membership is made up of lay members and clergy reflecting experiences in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Archdiocese undertook a parish self-audit during the reporting period in line with guidance received from the NBSCCCI. A report of the Audit feedback was compiled and shared with the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee alongside an associated action plan.

The Diocesan Advisory Panel continued to meet during the reporting period.

In total 249 participants completed the Safeguarding Children training and 64 completed their Adult Safeguarding training (including Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage Volunteers) over the course of the reporting period. In total 95 people were vetted through Access NI during the reporting period and 909 were vetted through the Garda Vetting Office during the same period.

The Director of Safeguarding continues to participate in the Southern Trust Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership (LASP) where the Director is also a member of the Prevention Workstream.

Provision and Maintenance of Places of Worship and Other Properties

Churches play a central role in the spiritual life of parishioners and along with Parochial Houses and other associated parish buildings they are often significant landmarks within the wider local community. Public benefit is provided through the provision of safe and worthy places of worship and assembly, not only for the Catholic community, but also for those also who wish to make use of them for personal or spiritual contemplation. Many of the churches and associated buildings are protected as being of special or historic architectural interest. The proper care of these buildings can be onerous and costly, but they are essential for the ongoing realisation of the principal object of the Charity, the advancement of the Catholic religion.

General maintenance, minor and major schemes of renewal, and projects of construction in regard to church buildings and properties often require major outlays which are essential if these important structures, which form part of our national heritage, are to be maintained, not just for present use but for future generations. The management of this responsibility is ongoing and is carefully regulated and professionally monitored so that legitimate requests for new works, renovations and adaptations can be readily assessed and progressed. This is led by the Diocesan Building and Development Committee.

During this year there was a number of building and development projects undertaken throughout the Archdiocese, including: ongoing construction works at the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Seminary, Dundalk; renovation works to the Parochial House, Tenure; installation of a new heating system in the Church of Our Lady of the Wayside, Jenkinstown; window repairs at the Churches of St Jarlath and St John in Clonfeacle Parish; renovations to the Parochial House in Newbridge Parish; improvement works to the Church of St Matthew in Errigal Ciaran Parish; remedial works to the Church of St Patrick in Eglish; construction of a new entrance to the Parochial House grounds in Ardee; and renovations to a diocesan property at 8 Killymeal Road, Dungannon. Various maintenance works continue across the Diocese to help protect and preserve the beauty and integrity of many of our old buildings. The Diocese has in place insurance cover in respect of all its buildings so that public access should not be unduly restricted by lack of funds to repair or restore buildings harmed as a result of accidental or other damage.

Fundraising

The Trust receives a large proportion of its income from donations, bequests and legacies from its supporters who are generally parishioners or those who have close connections to the Church. The Trust also receives support from other various groups such as the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, National Churches Trust, All Churches Trust and other funders. Without this valuable support the Trust would not be able to carry out much of its mission. The Council members of the Trust are mindful of their duty of care to those who may support the Trust, including vulnerable people, and therefore ensure that fundraising is carried out in a responsible and caring manner. The Trust does not use external professional fundraisers or require its parishioners to donate in order to share in the generous resources that God has provided for their use. It rather encourages a culture of giving where this is possible and therefore places no pressure on its donors to contribute. The Trust encourages the use of tax relief (Gift Aid and CHY) to maximise giving where this is possible and ensures that donors are fully informed of the scope of tax relief in relation to their tax status so that they can make an informed choice.

Donations

The charity made charitable donations amounting to £92,781 (2024: £81,404) during the financial year. No donations for political purposes were made during this period.

Aid for Impoverished and Needy Communities Worldwide

Trócaire is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It was established by the Irish Bishops' Conference in 1973 as a means through which people contribute to overseas emergency relief and development aid programmes. Its dual mandate is to support the most vulnerable people in the developing world, while also raising awareness of injustice and global poverty. The Diocese is a significant contributor to the charitable work of Trócaire and in the year under review contributed over £204,000 (2024: £270,000), achieved mostly via the Trócaire Lenten collection at parish level. The Archdiocese of Armagh and its parishes also financially assist, facilitate and work in collaboration with the St Vincent de Paul Society and other charitable groups that look after the poor, the homeless and migrants.

Management of Resources

Council of the Trust

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited (the Trust) is governed by the Council of the Trust (the Directors) who meet regularly throughout the year to attend to the financial, property, building, personnel, legal and administrative affairs of the Diocese. All Parish Priests and Administrators of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Armagh are members of the Trust and are entitled to attend General Meetings of the Trust, including the Annual General Meeting. Parish Finance Committee members are also invited to these meetings.

There are eleven members of the Council. The Archbishop of Armagh is the Chairperson of the Council. The Vicars General are *ex officio* members of the Council. There are three lay and three other priest members of the Council chosen by the Archbishop for their integrity, experience and expertise.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

The Secretary for the Trust is appointed by the Archbishop. The Council of the Trust has adopted a three-year development plan with appropriate objectives and targets. During the year, the Council met five times mainly to ensure the plan is continuously monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

The Council has instituted a number of committees to assist and advise in the proper performance of its duties, including the Diocesan Building and Development Committee, the Diocesan Advisory Finance Committee, the Diocesan Personnel Committee, and the Diocesan Property Committee. Each member of the Council is a member of at least one of the Committees.

The Diocesan Building and Development Committee provides oversight and makes recommendations in relation to the area of Building and Development as set out in the Diocesan Building & Development Manual (October 2017). The membership of the Committee comprises three Directors of the Council of the Trust (one of whom is Chair) and such other persons appointed by the Council with integrity and expertise in this field. The Chairperson of this Committee reports directly to the Council of the Trust. The Committee met four times during the year.

The Diocesan Advisory Finance Committee provides oversight and makes recommendations in relation to the area of Finance within the Diocese and parishes as set out in the Finance Manual (October 2017). This includes strategic planning, fundraising, audit and reporting requirements, controls, investments, budgets and the review of financial resources. The membership of the Committee comprises three Directors of the Council of the Trust (one of whom is Chair) and such other persons with integrity and relevant financial expertise appointed by the Council. The Chairperson of this Committee reports directly to the Council of the Trust. The Committee met five times during the year.

The Diocesan Personnel Committee makes strategic recommendations on behalf of and to the Council in relation to the area of Parish and Diocesan Personnel and Human Resource management. It monitors the implementation and effectiveness of all personnel-related policies and ensures that resources are in place for implementation of policies. To this end the Committee has devised a Parish Recruitment and Selection manual, and Staff Handbooks. The membership of the Committee comprises three Directors of the Council of the Trust (one of whom is Chair) and such other persons appointed by the Council with integrity and relevant human resources expertise. The Chairperson of this Committee reports directly to the Council of the Trust. The Committee met five times during the year.

The Diocesan Property Committee provides oversight and makes recommendations in relation to the area of Property as set out in the Property Manual (October 2017). This includes ownership, acquisitions, disposals, letting, leasing, licensing and any other form of alienation which alters the value or legal status of a property. The membership of the Committee comprises five Directors of the Council of the Trust (one of whom is Chair) and such other persons with integrity and relevant expertise appointed by the Council. The Chairperson of this Committee reports directly to the Council of the Trust. The Committee met five times during the year.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Risk Management

The Council of the Trust actively reviews all major strategic and operational risks to which the Charity is exposed. It confirms that these have been reviewed and ensures that strategies and systems are established to manage exposure to these risks. Each Committee is required to monitor changes and to develop systems to manage risk whenever possible. The main areas of risk identified and monitored by the Council of the Trust include:

- Compliance with Health & Safety and listed buildings legislation
- Reduction in active clergy numbers
- Reduction in voluntary income
- Increasing costs for the care of sick and retired clergy
- Operational risks in the areas of finance, personnel and property
- Board failing in its responsibilities
- Funding volatility
- Reduction in central reserves due to capital projects and long-term commitments
- Compliance with data protection regulations
- Compliance with good governance procedures
- Safeguarding

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The detailed financial results for the year ended 31 March 2025 are set out in the financial statements that accompany this report.

The table below summarises the financial activities of the Diocese:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Parishes		
Income	12,913	12,413
Expenditure	(12,883)	(11,712)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net surplus before transfers	30	701
Transfer between funds	361	177
Net gains on disposal of assets	643	369
Net gains/(losses) on investments	8	(2)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Increase in reserves	1,042	1,245
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Curia		
Income	2,614	2,722
Expenditure	(1,416)	(1,320)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus before transfers and investment gains	1,198	1,402
Transfer between funds	(361)	(177)
Net gains on investments	87	628
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Increase in reserves	924	1,853
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total increase in Parish and Curia reserves	1,966	3,098
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Complete details of the income and expenditure are shown in the statement of financial activities on page 31 and in the notes to the accounts.

Review of transactions and financial position of the Charity

The reserves of the Charity at 31 March 2025 total £112m (2024 - £111m) and of this total £92.7m (2024-£92.3m) relate solely to the assets and activities of individual Parishes and are not available for the non-parish general purposes of the Charity. Curia reserves total £20m at the year-end (2024 - £19m) of which £0.6m (2024 - £0.6m) is unrestricted with £4.8m (2024 - £4.1m) of this relating to fixed assets.

Most of the income received by Parishes is through the Sunday offertory and other donations. This source of income is 62% of the parish total. Total income was £12.9m (2024 - £12.4m) and total expenditure was £12.9m in 2025 (2024 - £11.7m).

Total Curia income was £2.6m in 2025 (2024 - £2.7m). Total expenditure was £1.4m in 2025 (2024 - £1.3m).

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Investment policy

The Memorandum of Association of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited provides the Trust with the powers to deposit or invest funds in any manner and to delegate the management of investments to a financial expert.

Investment Managers

The Trust has appointed IQ-EQ Fund Management (Ireland) Limited as investment managers who operate a 'total return' policy over the medium to long-term with emphasis on current income with a low-medium risk profile. The managers have full discretion to invest, subject to the parameters laid down by the Trust. There is a review of information from the Investment Managers on a regular basis.

At present the Diocesan Finance Committee liaises with the investment managers, monitors their performance, and reports to the Council of the Trust at each of its meetings. A review of the Diocesan Investment Portfolio is currently being undertaken by the Diocesan Finance Committee with some assistance from independent advisors to ensure the attainment of best results consistent with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Under Charity Law the Council of the Trust must seek to obtain the best financial return possible consistent with commercial prudence.

The Diocesan Trust Investment Portfolio value at 31 March 2025 is £13,803,839 (2024 - £15,554,699).

Investment Objectives

The overall objectives of the Trust are to meet the diverse needs of the Portfolio's Beneficiaries by pursuing a reasonable level of capital growth in a risk-controlled manner to meet benefit payments that will be largely Sterling denominated.

In fulfilling these objectives, the Council of the Trust adheres to an Ethical Policy that precludes investment in asset classes directly or mainly involved in the manufacture and/or supply of goods and services which are not in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel, the promotion of the dignity and sanctity of human life, and the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Environmental issues are also a significant factor.

Ethical Investment Policy

The agreed Trust's Ethical Investment Policy is as follows:

- Preclusion of investment in companies known to be racist or otherwise exploitative of human rights
- Preclusion of investment in companies which either produce or promote:
 - armaments including biological and chemical weapons, landmines and general weapons and arms of war and mass destruction
 - contraceptives and/or birth control devices
 - offensive written material
 - gambling, tobacco or alcohol

Preclusion of investment in companies involved:

- in the provision of abortion or euthanasia
- in the violation of currently approved environmental conventions.
- directly in fossil fuels.

It is understood that a complete control over monies, for instance, those held in Funds, is not possible. The Council of the Trust may, therefore, have indirect exposure to activities which may give rise to ethical concerns where these are considered minimal in relation to the portfolio's overall composition.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

Reserves policy

The Trust recognises that its income arises primarily from voluntary donations and that accordingly it is important to seek to carry adequate levels of reserves to ensure its ability to meet future expenditure commitments as they arise. Parishes are encouraged to maintain adequate short-term reserves to ensure that they can meet operating costs in the short-term and to build longer-term reserves that will be available if substantial commitments, such as building refurbishment projects, arise. The Diocese centrally aims to maintain adequate levels of reserves to meet Diocesan operating costs in the short to medium term and to provide for any significant expenditures and contingencies that may arise at future dates. The policy of maintaining significant long-term reserves is considered consistent with the expectation that the Archdiocese of Armagh will continue to exist in perpetuity.

Financial Management and Key Performance Indicators

With the pro-active involvement of the Council Committees, diocesan resources are managed to tightly control all costs, in particular property and human resources/employment costs. The Council Committees pursue a policy of obtaining value for money and protection of diocesan assets. The management of the diocesan property holdings, with input from the Property and Building and Development Committees, is costly (costs amounted to £5.6m in the last financial year - see Pages 43 and 44 of this report under the headings Premises Costs, Repairs and Maintenance, and Rates and Insurance expenditure). Yet, the resource of property is key to engaging with the Charity's stakeholders and essential for the public benefit it provides.

The Personnel Committee focuses on the costs of employment and compensating employees fairly. The Finance Committee monitors general overheads, one-off expenditures and the financial implications of Property and Building and Development decisions, as well as acting in an advisory capacity for all the Council's Committees.

To respond to unexpected calls for financial support whilst funding predictable recurring expenditure, the Charity has a policy of keeping liquid reserves (cash and cash equivalents) at least equal to annual running costs currently estimated at £14.3m.

Targeted fundraising is employed when major expenditure projects are being planned which would otherwise put too much of a strain on existing resources.

Plans for the Future

This brief overlook reflects the work of the Charity in the current year and also indicates its ongoing commitment with regard to fulfilling the principal aims and objectives of the Charitable Trust into the future.

The Archdiocese of Armagh will continue to build upon and develop the initiatives and activities outlined in the narrative above and so continue to advance the primary goals of the Charity. In addition, a particular focus of the Trust is to secure the long-term financial stability of the Archdiocese.

Periodically, the Trust undertakes a review exercise in respect of all aspects of the activities of the Charity through reports from parishes and the various bodies which are constituent parts of the Diocese.

The Diocese is in the final stages of planning for a Diocesan Congress on Youth, Family and Faith which will take place in March 2026. A third round of preliminary meetings will take place in February to continue the work begun with parish, school and fraternal delegates in May 2025 to prepare for the Congress. The Congress will lead to the formulation of a comprehensive medium to long-term Diocesan Pastoral Plan. This plan will ensure that resources are focused on the key themes that have been identified through extensive consultations, and which are central to the work of the Archdiocese.

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Strategic Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

The Strategic Report has been approved by the Trustees on 11 December 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Reverend Colm Hagan
Secretary of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025

Structure, Governance and Management

The operation of the Charity is overseen by the Corporate Trustee. The Directors of the Corporate Trustee (Council of the Trust) are appointed by the Archbishop of Armagh who is the Chair. Recruitment of Directors is based upon their knowledge of the local Church and professional skills and expertise necessary for overseeing the affairs of the Charity by ensuring it is solvent, well run, and that it delivers the outcomes for which it was established.

On appointment, new Directors of the Council of the Trust are introduced to their role by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Diocesan Secretary and the Diocesan Financial Administrator, and are provided with copies of documentation relating to the Trust and the latest financial information and reports. Directors attend formal and informal training sessions as required (see page 3 for legal and administrative details).

In accordance with the Code of Canon Law a Council of Priests, that is a group of priests which represents the Presbyterium, advises the Archbishop according to the norm of law so as to promote, as much as possible, the pastoral good of the People of God entrusted to him. The Archbishop also relies upon the advice and guidance of the Cathedral Chapter, the College of Consultors, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Episcopal Vicars, all of whom meet regularly to discuss matters of pastoral concern within the Diocese.

At parish level, the Parish Priest is responsible for all aspects of governing the parish. Parish Priests are not employees but act as agents of the Trust. Each parish is required to have a Finance Committee which meets at least four times per year to support and advise the Parish Priest, particularly in the areas of finance, property, buildings and personnel. A comprehensive manual, "Finance Manual – financial controls and related processes within Parishes" is issued by the Diocese to parishes. Letters and updates are issued by the Archbishop regularly through which policies are communicated to parishes covering liturgical, pastoral, financial and administrative matters. Further support is also available from the Curia office.

The Council has instituted a number of committees to assist and advise it in the proper performance of its duties, including the Diocesan Building and Development Committee, the Diocesan Finance Committee, the Diocesan Personnel Committee, and the Diocesan Property Committee (see page 19).

Statement of Trustee's responsibilities

The Trustee is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustee has prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustee must not approve the financial statements unless it is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2015);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial

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position of the charitable company and enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustee is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Future developments

Future developments are set out in the Strategic report and included in this report by cross reference. The plan for future periods is detailed on pages 23.

Reference and administrative details

Administrative details are included on page 3.

Funds held as a custodian trustee on behalf of others

There are no funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

Independent auditor

The auditors, Cooper Parry Audit (Ireland) Limited, have indicated their willingness to continue in office, and a resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

The Report of the Directors was approved and authorised for issue by the Directors of the Corporate Trustee on 11 December 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Most Reverend Eamon Martin
Director of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited



Reverend Colm Hagan
Secretary of St Patrick's Archdiocesan Trust Limited