

**CHURCH OF IRELAND**

**GENERAL SYNOD**

**2024**

**BOOK OF REPORTS**

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\* The reports of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC (page 76) and the Church of Ireland Pensions Board (page 110) are incorporated into the Report of the Representative Church Body.

If you require the Book of Reports in another format, please contact the General Synod Office  
email: [synod@rcbcoi.org](mailto:synod@rcbcoi.org)

**CHURCH OF IRELAND**

**THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY**

**REPORT 2024**

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## THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

### Chair

The Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh



The Most Rev  
John McDowell

### Committee Chairpersons

Executive	Mr Henry Algeo
	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (Deputy)
Allocations	Canon Graham Richards
Investment	Mr Leslie Ruttle*
Property	Mr Keith Roberts
Stipends	Mr Michael Johnston
Library and Archives	Mr Oswyn Paulin
Legal Advisory	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC
Audit	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC

### Chief Officer and Secretary

Mr David Ritchie

The Representative Church Body (RCB) was incorporated by Charter in 1870 under the provisions of the *Irish Church Act, 1869*. Its legal structure is that of charitable trustee or trust corporation with perpetual succession.

The main activities of the RCB involve management of investments, administration of trusts and Gift Aid, payment of stipends and pensions, property and legal transactions and treasury management as well as supporting the core work of the Church by providing finance for the sustentation of the clergy and pensioners, training of ordinands, education, youth, communications etc. The RCB Library is the repository for the archives of the Church and the Library for the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and the Church at large. The committee structure is designed to reflect these activities and responsibilities.

#### Office

Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines Dublin 6

Tel 01-4978422 Fax 01-4978821

Email <office@rcbcoi.org>

Website <<https://rcb.ireland.anglican.org>>

#### Library

Braemor Park  
Churchtown  
Dublin 14

Tel 01-4923979

Fax 01-4924770

Email <library@ireland.anglican.org>

The Representative Church Body is Registered Charity Number 20003623.  
CHY (Revenue) Number: 2900.

The Representative Church Body has determined that it needs to meet the Additional Standards of the Charities Governance Code, and that it has complied with all sections of the Charities Governance Code.

\* appointed September 2023 in place of Mr Kevin Bowers (retired September 2023)

## THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

In accordance with the Charter of Incorporation (1870) the Representative Body is composed of *ex-officio*, elected and co-opted members. The *ex-officio* members are the archbishops and bishops, the elected members consist of one clerical and two lay representatives for each diocese and the co-opted members consist of persons equal in number to the number of dioceses. (See also *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* Chapter X).

The Representative Body is composed of the following members, shown with recorded attendance figures for the four meetings held during 2023. Two Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod are in attendance at meetings.

### A Archbishops and Bishops: *ex-officio* members (11)

4	The Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh	2	The Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield, Bishop of Kilmore
3	The Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin	3	The Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson, Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory
1	The Most Rev Pat Storey, Bishop of Meath and Kildare	3	The Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross
4	The Rt Rev Ian Ellis, Bishop of Clogher	4	The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe
4	The Rt Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe		
4	The Rt Rev David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore		
3	The Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor		

### B Elected members (33)

The date in brackets after a member's name denotes the year in which he/she is due to retire (*Constitution* Chapter X Section 3). Outgoing members are eligible for re-election provided they have not reached 74 years of age by 1 January preceding election.

Armagh	1	Ven Dr Peter Thompson* (2024)	Dublin and	1	Ven David Pierpoint (2024)
	1	Mrs Yvonne McFarland† (2025)	Glendalough	4	Mr Robert Neill (2025)
	2	Mrs Jane Leighton (2026)		2	Mr Derek Neilson (2026)
Clogher	4	Rev Canon Paul Thompson (2024)	Meath	3	Ven Leslie Stevenson (2024)
	4	Dr John Graham (2025)	and	4	Mr Mark Potterton (2025)
	3	Mrs Ethne McCord (2026)	Kildare	1	Mr Timothy Smyth   (2026)
Derry and Raphoe	3	Rev Canon Henry Gilmore (2024)	Cashel,	1	Very Rev Stephen Farrell¶ (2026)
	3	Mr Stanley McFarland (2025)	Ferns and	1	Mr William Galloway (2024)
	1	Mr Samuel Hudson‡ (2026)	Ossory	4	Mrs Hazel Corrigan (2025)
Down and Dromore	1	Ven Mark Harvey§ (2024)	Cork,	3	Very Rev Nigel Dunne# (2026)
	3	Mrs Diane Ruddock (2025)	Cloyne and	3	Mr Keith Roberts (2024)
	4	Mr Michael Johnston (2026)	Ross	2	Mrs Helen Arnopp (2025)
Connor	1	Ven Stephen McBride (2024)	Tuam,	3	Very Rev Niall Sloane (2026)
	0	Mrs Cynthia Cherry (2025)	Limerick	3	Mrs Heather Pope (2025)
	4	Mr Oswyn Paulin (2026)	and Killaloe	3	Mr Roy Benson (2025)
Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh	4	Very Rev Nigel Crossey (2026)			
	1	Ms Sarah Taylor (2024)			
	0	Dr Rita Day (2025)			

### C Co-opted members (11)

2	Mr Henry Algeo (2024)	2	Mr William Oliver** (2026)	0	Mr Leslie Ruttle** (2026)
1	Ms Julie Beck** (2026)	2	Mrs Judith Peters (2025)	3	Mr Henry Saville (2024)
0	Mr David Lowe (2025)	2	Ms Hilary Prentice (2024)	1	Mrs Wendy Taylor** (2026)
3	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (2024)	4	Canon Graham Richards (2024)		

\* elected October 2023 in place of Ven Terence Scott (retired January 2023)

† elected October 2023 in place of Mrs Ethne Harkness (resigned May 2021)

‡ elected October 2023 in place of Mr John Junkin (retired October 2023)

§ elected December 2023 in place of Ven Roderic West (retired September 2023)

|| elected September 2023 in place of Mr Kevin Bowers (retired September 2023)

¶ elected October 2023 in place of Rev Canon Nicola Halford (retired October 2023)

# elected March 2023 in place of Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson (consecrated to the episcopate October 2022)

\*\* eligible to attend three meetings maximum due to triennial retirement (re-elected May 2023)

## COMMITTEES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY

The Executive, Allocations, Investment, Property, Stipends, Library and Archives, Legal Advisory and Audit Committees are elected triennially from the members of the Representative Body. The current triennium for members and chairpersons ends in September 2025. Membership details together with numbers of meetings held and record of attendances for the year 2023 are shown below.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8 meetings

Mr Henry Algeo - 7  
(Chair)



Mr Henry Algeo

Most Rev John McDowell	6	Very Rev Nigel Crossey†	5
Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson	0	Rev Canon Henry Gilmore	8
Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton	5	Very Rev Niall Sloane	6
Canon Graham Richards	8	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (Deputy Chair)	7
Mr Leslie Ruttle*	2	Mr Robert Neill	7
Mr Keith Roberts	6	Ms Hilary Prentice	7
Mr Michael Johnston	7	Mr Henry Saville	5
		Advisers: Mr Oswyn Paulin	5
		Mr Geoffrey Perrin‡	4
Honorary Secretary of General Synod in attendance:		Rev Canon Gillian Wharton	6

The Executive Committee has an overall responsibility to protect the interests of the Representative Body and its trusts, to consider and, if thought fit, to give approval to the recommendations of the subsidiary committees, to give formal approval to routine property and trust transactions, to formulate legislative proposals and policy for approval, to liaise with other central organisations and dioceses and to deal with all matters affecting the employment and remuneration of staff including specialist appointments where the Representative Body is a party to any contract of employment.

The Archbishops and the Chairpersons of the Allocations, Investment, Property and Stipends Committees are *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. Mr Geoffrey Perrin was appointed as an Adviser in 2020. Mr Oswyn Paulin was appointed as an Adviser in 2022. During 2023 Rev Canon Gillian Wharton attended Executive Committee meetings as an Honorary Secretary of the General Synod.

#### Prayer read at the commencement of all Executive Committee meetings

*Almighty God, we meet in your presence to exercise stewardship of the resources of this Church. Grant to us a clear mind and judgement in all things, a willingness to seek your will for the Church and an awareness of the trust and responsibility given to us. Guide us with your wisdom and lead us in the paths of truth. This we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

\* appointed September 2023 in place of Mr Kevin Bowers (retired September 2023)

† elected March 2023 in place of Ven Terence Scott (retired January 2023)

‡ retired as an Adviser to the Executive Committee in June 2023



**ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE**

3 meetings

Canon Graham Richards - 3  
(Chair)

Canon Graham Richards

Mrs Helen Arnopp	1	Most Rev John McDowell	2
Rt Rev Andrew Forster	3	Mr Robert Neill	3

The function of the Allocations Committee is to investigate requests for financial support and make recommendations to the Executive Committee or the Representative Body for the annual allocation; to maintain a ‘watching brief’ on the use and deployment of resources allocated to committees and organisations including their budgetary procedures and accounting policies; to anticipate financial pressures ahead and plan forward accordingly, to ensure that trust limitations are observed in the use of Representative Body funds and to co-ordinate with other financial bodies (Priorities Fund Committee, Investment Committee, Stipends Committee, Pensions Board etc).



**INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

5 meetings

Mr Leslie Ruttle\* - 5  
(Chair)

Mr Leslie Ruttle

Mr Roy Benson	5	Ms Hilary Prentice	4
Mr William Galloway	5	Ms Wendy Taylor	5
Mr David Lowe	5	Vacant†	

The function of the Investment Committee is to undertake oversight and supervisory duties in relation to the investment of funds managed by the Representative Body (RB). The Committee reports to the RB through the Executive Committee and conducts its business in accordance with the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, the Committee’s Terms of Reference, applicable legislation or regulation, the RB’s policy in relation to Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) and the RB’s general policies, principles and values.

\* formerly a member of Investment Committee, appointed Chair September 2023 in place of Mr Kevin Bowers (retired September 2023)

† due to the appointment of Mr Leslie Ruttle to the Chair

‡ elected March 2023 in place of Ven Terence Scott (retired January 2023)

§ retired September 2023 (replacement to be elected)



### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

5 meetings

Mr Keith Roberts - 5  
(Chair)



Mr Keith Roberts

Very Rev Nigel Crossey*	1	Mrs Ethne McCord	5
Dr Rita Day	4	Mr Stanley McFarland	4
Mrs Jane Leighton	5	Mr Mark Potterton	4
Ven Stephen McBride	3	Ven Roderic West†	4
		Adviser: Mr Sam Harper	2

The function of the Property Committee is to process all matters affecting glebes, churches, parochial buildings and graveyards vested in the Representative Body in accordance with statutory responsibilities as laid down in the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, to manage the buildings directly under the control of the Representative Body, to co-ordinate with diocesan see house committees and care for see houses and all residences provided for the use of church officers, to care for all properties assigned by the Representative Body for the use and occupation of retired clergy and surviving spouses, to assist and provide guidance in the planning and disposal of redundant churches and the contents thereof, to provide technical support and advice to parishes and dioceses, to maintain property records and registers and generally to report to the Executive Committee or to the Representative Body as appropriate.

**Note:** Representatives of the dioceses who are members of the Representative Body are entitled to attend meetings of the Property Committee when relevant diocesan property matters are under consideration.

### STIPENDS COMMITTEE

2 meetings

Mr Michael Johnston - 2  
(Chair)



Mr Michael Johnston

Mrs Helen Arnopp	2	Rev Canon Nicola Halford‡	2
Ms Julie Beck	2	Mrs Jane Leighton	2
Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton	2	Mr William Oliver	2
Ms Hazel Corrigan	2	Rev Canon Paul Thompson	1

The function of the Stipends Committee is to make recommendations concerning Minimum Approved Stipends, mileage rates for locomotory expenses, and the remuneration, expenses and budgets for the episcopate and other church officers, to monitor changes in taxation and State legislation insofar as clerical remuneration matters are concerned, to investigate and make recommendations in relation to grant aid requests from dioceses for the support of the Ministry and the training of newly ordained clergy, to consult with dioceses and make recommendations to provide for the better maintenance of the Ministry generally, to monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Clergy Remuneration and Benefits Committee as approved by General Synod in 1990 and report to the Executive Committee or to the Representative Body as appropriate.

\* elected March 2023 in place of Ven Terence Scott (retired January 2023)

† retired September 2023 (replacement to be elected)

‡ retired October 2023 (replacement to be elected)



**LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE**

3 meetings

Mr Oswyn Paulin - 3  
(Chair)

Mr Oswyn Paulin

Rt Rev Michael Burrows	2	Very Rev Niall Sloane	1
Mrs Heather Pope	2	Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson	3
Advisers:			
Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott	2	Canon Dr Kenneth Milne	3
Rev Dr Adrian Empey	2	Rev Robin Bantry White	3

The function of the Library and Archives Committee is to oversee the management of the RCB Library and its resources having regard to trusts and objectives; to oversee the maintenance of the archives and Church records generally (including records of contents of churches and of church plate); to co-operate with the Theological Institute and committees using the Library premises and to provide a cost-effective service to the Church and the public at large subject to the approval of the Executive Committee or the Representative Body as appropriate and budget limitations.



**LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

0 meetings

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC  
(Chair)

Mr Lyndon MacCann

Mr Anthony Aston SC	Mrs Judith Peters
The Hon Mr Justice Declan Budd	Mr William Prentice
Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton	Mr Andrew Walker

The function of the Legal Advisory Committee is to advise the Representative Body on any legal or trust matter which the Executive Committee or the Representative Body may properly refer to it.



**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

3 meetings

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC - 3  
(Chair)

Mr Lyndon MacCann

Ms Julie Beck	3	Mr Henry Saville	3
Mr Roy Benson	3		

The Audit Committee’s primary function is to assist the Representative Body in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing the financial statements, the systems of internal control, the audit process and the risk register. The Committee meets twice yearly with the auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, to review the scope of the audit programme prior to audit, the outcomes for the year when the audit is completed and any issues arising from the audit. The Committee reviews the risk register annually.

## REPORT ON THE YEAR 2023

### Background

Global markets performed well in 2023 after a weak 2022, while the political tensions of the war in Ukraine and the more recent Israel-Palestine conflict added to market uncertainty, central banks were successful in managing inflation. This economic stability led to the expectation that interest rates would fall driving economic growth. With this macroeconomic environment, financial markets performed well providing a solid financial performance for the RCB General Funds, the RCB managed Unit Trusts and the Clergy Pensions Fund.

The RCB operates a Total Return methodology to determine the funds that can be allocated towards the operation of the RCB and for allocations to church activities. During 2023, the General Funds achieved a Total Return for the year of 9.8% versus a market benchmark of 14%, some of this underperformance can be attributed to an underweight exposure to technology stocks while the General Funds bond portfolio actually outperformed its benchmark for the year.

### Total Return

The Representative Church Body (RCB) relies on its General Funds to generate income to pay for allocations and operational costs. As it was over five years since the RCB reviewed the basis of the calculation of the sustainable withdrawal from General Funds, a sub-group representing the Executive Committee, the Allocations Committee and the Investment Committee met to review the Investment Committee’s expected sustainable return and to propose a sustainable withdrawal rate from the RB General Funds. This review considered historical investment returns, the expected long-term investment returns, and the impact on medium term allocations and expenditure.

Following consultation with external fund managers, consideration of the sustainable investment return, and consideration of the forecast of the expected income and expenditure, the sub-group proposed a modest increase in the allowable withdrawal, from 3.5% of the previous 5-year average opening General Funds balance to:

Total Return maximum withdrawal = 3.6% of the previous 5-year average opening General Funds balance

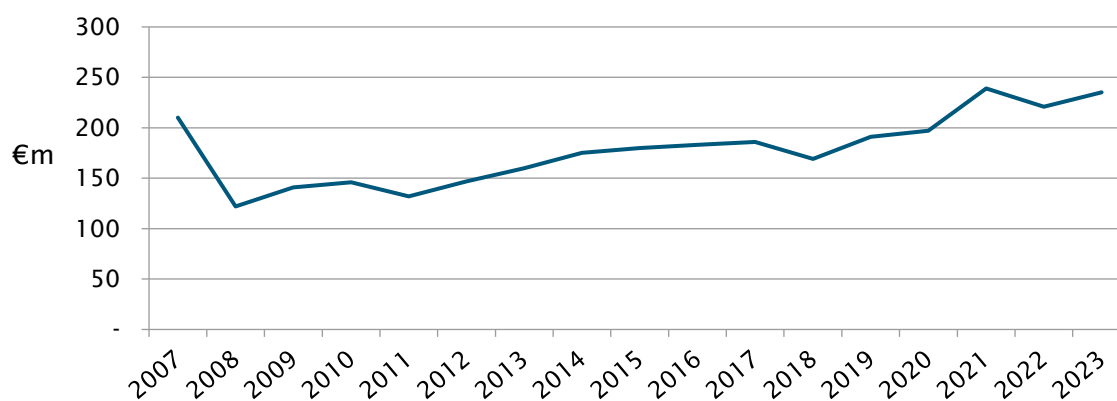
Given recent market volatility and the changes experienced in both interest rates and inflation, the sub-group recommended that the basis proposed to the Executive Committee should apply for the coming two years (2024 and 2025) with a further review in advance of determining the 2026 Total Return maximum withdrawal from General Funds.

### Financial Performance

During 2023 the total funds available to the RCB increased by 6.5% to €246m (2022: €231m), this increase is attributed to general improvements in global financial markets.

The value of General Funds invested assets at the end of the year was €235m (2022: €221m). Between 2010 and 2014 €25m of General Funds was transferred to the Clergy Pensions Fund. Since this exceptional withdrawal General Funds has steadily recovered as shown in the graph below.

#### *General Funds Invested Assets*



**Mission and strategy of the RCB**

The Executive Committee held its annual Strategy Away Day in June, this was an opportunity for the members of the Executive Committee, as the trustees for the RCB, to consider progress towards the strategic objectives identified during the previous year’s strategic review.

The RCB’s mission is to support the mission and ministry of the Church of Ireland, and to:

- Provide support to parishes so they can fulfil their vocational purpose
- Fulfil the trustee responsibilities (financial and property) to ensure financial viability
- Oversight, management and ethos of the Church of Ireland
- Remaining connected, accessible, and approachable to clergy, committees, and staff

The trustees defined their three- to five-year priorities as:

- (i) Providing a funding model for curacies
- (ii) Developing a consistent funding strategy for third level chaplaincy
- (iii) Integrating Pioneer Ministry within the Church of Ireland
- (iv) Developing a comprehensive property and library strategy
- (v) Extending the MindMatters COI mental health programme
- (vi) Introducing a committee agenda and papers management system
- (vii) Focus on committee succession planning, and
- (viii) Developing a clergy leadership development programme

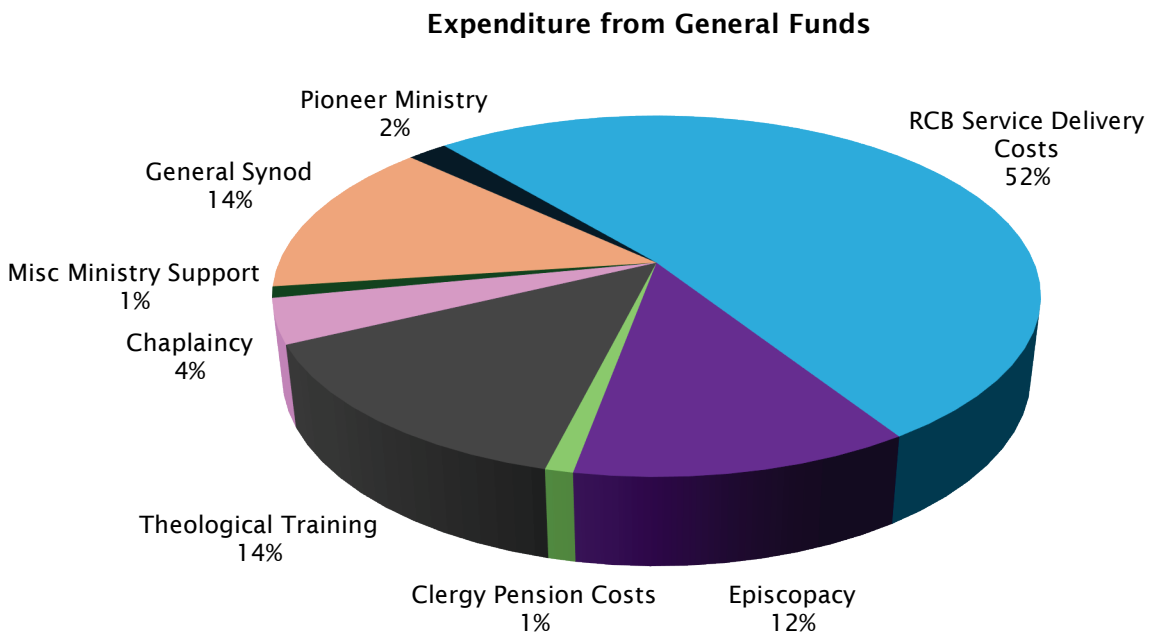
Progress on these initiatives is regularly reported at the meetings of the Executive Committee held during the year.

During 2023, the Executive Committee reviewed compliance with the Charities Regulator’s Charities Governance Code, and determined that the RCB was fully compliant.

**Allocations**

The RB General Funds are the unrestricted funds for which the RCB is the trustee, for which the Total Return withdrawal is used to cover the cost of providing services to parishes and dioceses and to finance other RCB activities.

During 2023 budgeted expenditure from General Funds and other central funds was as shown below:



	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
RCB service delivery including staff costs	€4.1m	€3.9m
Episcopacy including maintenance of See Houses	€1.0m	€0.9m
Theological Institute including grants and housing	€1.1m	€1.2m
Chaplaincy including Belfast and Dublin	€0.3m	€0.3m
Clergy Pension costs	€0.1m	€0.1m
Misc. Ministry Support	€0.1m	€0.1m
General Synod including CIYD, education and press office	€1.1m	€1.1m
Pioneer Ministry	€0.2m	-
<b>Total budgeted expenditure</b>	<b>€8.0m</b>	<b>€7.6m</b>

In addition to the costs attributed to Clergy Pension Costs, the RCB incurred consultancy costs implementing the requirements of IORP II, the European legislation governing pension administration, with these costs attributed to RCB service delivery. The expenditure above is before the exceptional cost of providing clergy pensioner cost-of-living grants for 2022 and 2023, at a total cost to the RCB of €1m.

The RCB on behalf of the Church of Ireland wishes to acknowledge its appreciation for the Department of Education’s support for the work of the Board of Education in the Republic of Ireland.

### **Grants administered by the RCB**

#### ***Pioneer Ministry***

During 2022, the Executive Committee approved a fifteen-year funding proposal to cover the costs of the Pioneer Ministry National Leadership Team and to provide funding to support the development of Pioneer Ministry across the Church of Ireland. Pioneer Ministry is a movement within the Church of Ireland to reach those with little or no connection to the good news of Jesus Christ.

During 2023, the governance arrangements for Pioneer Ministry were presented to and approved by the Executive Committee, these included detailing committee oversight, the submission of the budget each year to the Allocations Committee, and the support provided by the staff of the RCB. The cost of funding the National Leadership Team is expected to be approximately €0.2m per year with the expectation of starting three Pioneer Ministry initiatives a year with this forecast increased at the end of 2023 to five initiatives per year expected to cost up to €0.5m per year after when the initiative is fully operational after the first five years.

#### ***MindMatters COI***

On 20 October 2023, the RCB MindMatters team, chaired by Bishop Storey, facilitated a major, all-island end of Phase One conference. With over 300 attendees, this fully booked conference provided an opportunity for seed funding project recipients to share the impact of the mental health promotion grants within their community. The keynote speaker was the Most Rev Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The first phase of MindMatters was launched on World Mental Health Day 2020 with the aim of increasing awareness of mental health across the Church and promoting a greater understanding of mental health issues. The project began by commissioning the largest survey on mental health attitudes ever carried out by a church on this island, the results of which provided an evidence-based foundation for all its subsequent activities. These included a mental health awareness training programme, clergy supports through the Clergy Assistance Programme and the provision of seed funding to 74 mental health related initiatives. During 2023, the Church Fabric and Development Fund committed €50,000 towards the second phase of the MindMatters COI project.

The RCB is grateful for the generosity of Benefact Trust in support of this project.

#### ***Church of Ireland Flood Appeal Fund***

The RCB is the trustee and administrator of the Church of Ireland Flood Appeal Fund. At the end of December, the RCB appealed to parishes affected by flooding for applications towards capital and non-capital costs not covered by insurance. Following this appeal the remaining funds will be made available by way of grants, for which application forms will be available on the Property section of Parish Resources on the Church of Ireland website.

## Church Fabric and Development Fund

In 2016 the Church Fabric and Development Fund was broadened to allow the application of some of the central fund towards initiatives that would facilitate the strategic growth of the Church of Ireland. The guidelines for application to the central fund were that initiatives should:

- Develop the strategic advancement of church or mission
- Be applicable to more than one diocese
- Raise the public profile of the Church of Ireland
- Be sustainable in the medium term.

During 2023 the Church Fabric and Development Fund sub-group approved the following grants from the central fund to support the:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| ➤ Church of Ireland stand at the national Ploughing Championships for 2023 | €8,500   |
| ➤ Carraig Centre ‘centre of mission’ in Cork                               | €10,000  |
| ➤ Belfast Cathedral Centre for Acknowledgement Learning and Memory         | €100,000 |
| ➤ MindMatters COI – Second phase grant                                     | €50,000  |

In 2022, the Church Fabric and Development Fund sub-group approved the allocation of €100,000 as additional grants towards the works on church buildings vested in the RCB that would reduce their ongoing carbon footprint. Any parish submitting a property grant application which includes expenditure that will reduce energy usage should highlight this in their application.

## RCB staff organisation

The RCB as the charitable trustee of the Church of Ireland for dioceses and parishes in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland acts as the steward for the church financial and property resources. RCB staff work from Church House Dublin, the RCB Library, and Church House Belfast providing the following services:

- Investment management
- Property and trust administration
- Clergy payroll and pension administration
- Safeguarding and human resource advice
- Legal, GDPR and charities advice
- Library and archive management
- Synod, communications, education, and committee support

RCB staff activities are managed by RCB Heads of Departments with operational coordination through the RCB Coordination Group which comprises of the Heads of Departments plus the heads of smaller departments. The Heads of Departments meet weekly while the RCB Coordination group meets every two weeks, both over Zoom.

During 2023, the joint committee of the Dioceses of Down & Dromore and Connor sold Church House Belfast, and in July RCB staff relocated to a leased premises at 18-22 Hill Street. Safeguarding, Access NI Vetting, Education, and CIYD staff will be located in these offices, while the RCB considers the longer-term office requirements for staff working from Northern Ireland.

## Communications

The staff of the RCB provide training and support to dioceses and parishes and specifically to diocesan secretaries; diocesan communications officers; parish treasurers, and members of select vestries. During 2023, the staff of the RCB delivered training in relation to safeguarding, GDPR, charities governance, financial reporting, and the implementation of the Dignity in Church Life policies.

The RCB provides guidance to members of the Church of Ireland through the Church of Ireland website, the Safeguarding website, the Church of Ireland Youth Department website, and the Children’s and Family Ministry website. In particular, the departments provide guidance on many aspects of church administration through Parish Resources on the Church of Ireland website.

## ***Safeguarding***

The development of safeguarding policy, delivery of training, and provision of advice in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a key focus for the RCB. Oversight of safeguarding policy is provided by the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board.

### *Safeguarding review*

During 2023, the Chief Officer and the Safeguarding Officers drafted a paper proposing a clear division of roles and responsibility for the management of safeguarding, with the RCB staff developing policy and guidelines, providing diocesan training and advice, and with dioceses responsible for implementation of and adherence to safeguarding policy by all parishes, clergy and diocesan bodies within their dioceses.

The Safeguarding Board has initiated an external review to address the roles and responsibilities of RCB staff, the Safeguarding Board, and the dioceses of the Church of Ireland. The scope will include consideration of comparable organisations, interviews with members of the Safeguarding Board, House of Bishops, Executive Committee and staff of the RCB, and the review will make recommendations for consideration of the Safeguarding Board.

### ***RCB Right to Request Flexible Working Policy and Remote Meetings***

The RCB has a Right to Request Flexible Working Policy, with staff required to work from an RCB office on certain days per week, and otherwise staff may work either from their office or from home. The policy was introduced in May 2022, with a review to begin within a year of implementation. The Executive Committee commenced this review in April 2023, and has met with the RCB Coordination Group, which is the RCB operational management committee, to discuss the operation of the RCB staff organisation under the current arrangements.

RCB management has focused on ensuring that there is regular communication to all staff through regular management meetings, issuing a weekly staff update and by providing monthly all staff meetings covering topics of staff and organisational interest.

The RCB Right to Request Flexible Working Policy introduced certain measures to ensure a continued high level of operational performance from the staff organisation. These measures included extending the hours of coverage at reception such that reception is staffed 5 days per week, the introduction of phone call forwarding technology, providing staff with laptop computers, and upgrading videoconference equipment in meeting rooms.

The RCB has refurbished the former Church of Ireland College of Education Chapel so that the former chapel can be used for large committee meetings. The decision as to whether meetings are held in person, remotely, or as a hybrid meeting is made by the chair of each committee, generally in consultation with committee members and with the support of attending staff.

## **RB General Unit Trusts**

Parishes, Dioceses and other Church of Ireland organisations can invest in the RB General Unit Trusts. There are two separate Unit Trusts: one for euro investments, the RB General Unit Trust (RI), and one for sterling investments, the RB General Unit Trust (NI). During 2023, RCB investment staff provided the Investment Committee with return and benchmark information enabling the Committee to make appropriate and timely investment decisions. Half-yearly unit trust income and valuation statements are issued to Unit Holders and monthly unit prices made available through the Parish Resources section of the Church of Ireland website.

The Unit Trust funds are managed by the RCB investment team, with much of the funds allocated among external fund managers, with the units paying bi-annual dividends. The Executive Committee took the decision during 2023 to increase the December dividend per unit to 5.2c for the RB General Unit Trust (RI) (2022: 4.7c) and to 5.5p for the RB General Unit Trust (NI) (2022: 5p).

The dividend paid and yield based on average bid price for the year to 31 December 2023 and the year-end unit prices for both units were:

	<u>Dividend per unit (yield)</u>	<u>Year-end unit price</u>
RB General Unit Trust (RI)	12.5c (2.75%)	€4.54 (2022: €4.21)
RB General Unit Trust (NI)	11.8p (2.77%)	£4.25 (2022: £4.13)

## Clergy Pensions

There are three clergy pension schemes supporting the post-retirement needs of clergy.

### *Clergy Pensions Fund*

The defined benefit pension scheme, the Clergy Pensions Fund (‘CPF’), which was closed to future accruals in May 2013, is administered by the RCB. At the end of 2023, the fund value was €206m (2022: €192m). During 2022, the RCB (as Sponsor) provided the CPF with a contingent secured loan for €20m to support the current investment strategy.

During 2023, the RCB developed the policies required to ensure compliance with the European Union (Occupational Pension Schemes) Regulations, 2021 (‘IORP II’). The Clergy Pensions Trustee appointed Key Function Holders and a professional investment advisor, Lane Clark Peacock who will work with the Trustee to develop a liability-focused investment strategy.

During 2023, as the scheme approached the end of the term of the Funding Proposal, the Clergy Pensions Trustee, considering the advice of the scheme Actuary, assessed the ability of the scheme to offer pension increases following the end of the term of the Funding Proposal on 31 December 2023. In May 2023, the RCB brought legislation to General Synod, which was approved, to facilitate increases in Pensionable Stipend and to remove the restrictions on increasing pensions in payment. The Trustee determined, with the approval of the Representative Body, that pensions in payment would increase on 1 January 2024, as follows:

Pensions payable in Sterling:	24.7% (less any percentage increases required by law)
Pensions payable in Euro:	12.2%

The Standing Committee of General Synod approved a recommendation from the Representative Body and the Trustee that Pensionable Stipend would increase on 1 January 2024, as follows:

	<u>Sterling</u>	<u>Euro</u>
Pensionable Stipend	£31,800 (2023: £25,498)	€40,622 (2023: €36,219)

The increases were granted on condition that the CPF continues to receive a solvency levy, to be paid by each diocese, at a rate of 3% of Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024, 2025 and 2026.

The Trustee has determined that it is no longer in the interests of members of the CPF to administer the Standard Life AVC Schemes. The Trustee has recommended to transfer the existing member proceeds to the appropriate Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, and then to wind up the Standard Life Schemes. Legislation will be brought by the RCB, on behalf of the Trustee, to General Synod in 2024 to seek the appropriate approval. Further detail is included in the report of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee, on page 81.

### *Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes*

Since 2013, stipendiary members of the clergy have been entitled to become members of either the Clergy Defined Pension Scheme for Northern Ireland or the Clergy Defined Pension Scheme for the Republic of Ireland. Any benefits accruing from these schemes are in addition to any benefits accruing under the Clergy Pensions Fund.

During 2023, the RCB reviewed the expected benefits that could accrue under the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes and recommended that the parish contribution rate be increased from 8% to 13%. Legislation was approved by General Synod in May 2023 to effect the required change to the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* from 1 January 2024.

### **Dignity in Church Life policies**

The Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy and the Clergy Permanent Health Insurance Policy (‘Clergy PHI Policy’) under the Dignity in Church Life Charter were reported to the 2023 General Synod, and an implementation oversight committee was established to monitor the implementation of the Clergy PHI Policy. The implementation date was set as 1 July 2023. The only precondition for implementation of the Clergy PHI Policy was the approval of the Licence for the Ministry of Contemplation, which was subsequently approved. Both of these policies are available on the Parish Resources page on the Church of Ireland website.



## Property and Trusts

During 2023, Pauline High was appointed Head of Property and Trusts, and several new staff were appointed to key roles within the Department.

The RCB acts as trustee for over 2,000 properties ensuring that for these properties the title documentation is kept secure, reducing trustee liability and removing the need to have local trustees. During 2023, property activity increased following the end of Covid, the Department receives purchase, disposal and alteration applications which are presented to the Property Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee for approval. The Department administers the Church Fabric and Development Fund Fabric Grants and the Marshal Beresford's Fund for the benefit of parishes.

As trustee for approximately 18,000 trusts entrusted to the RCB by parishes, dioceses and by way of bequest, the RCB has a responsibility to administer these trusts and to manage the distribution of trust income. During the year the Property and Trusts Department began a review of trusts to make it easier to identify and apply them for the benefit of the Church.

The Property and Trusts Department is supporting the RCB Campus Review Group to identify the future needs of Church of Ireland Theological Institute and the RCB Library. The RCB and the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust have properties in Rathmines and Braemor Park which could accommodate a single Church of Ireland campus.

## Library and Archives

The RCB Library holds the records of over 1,200 parishes, 20 cathedrals and the dioceses of the Church of Ireland, across the island of Ireland. In addition the Library holds valuable ecclesiastical manuscripts and RCB records. The Library provides public access to much of its resources both by opening the Library to the public and through the digitisation of material which can be accessed over the internet. The RCB is appreciative of grants provided by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media which has facilitated the digitisation of material held at the Library.

The Library provides editorial support for the annual publication of the *Church of Ireland Directory*. The material in the Library provides a rich resource for publication, and during 2023 the architectural historian Dr Michael O'Neill, using the digitised architectural drawings collection, published the illustrated volume 'An Architectural History of the Church of Ireland' which is available for purchase through the Church of Ireland online store. The Library provides study resources for students of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

The current Library building is inadequate for the storage of the volume of records and archival resources. In the year ahead the future requirements of the Library will be addressed in plans for a future Church of Ireland campus.

## Climate Change

The RB Climate Change Policy is included as Appendix A (page 61). This policy identifies four priorities:

1. Energy usage
2. Transportation
3. Waste
4. Biodiversity

The four priorities above are considered by the RCB as it develops policies for the consideration of committees and as management manage the operations of the RCB. This has been achieved through remote committee participation, hybrid working, and financial support for climate change initiatives. The RCB remains one of the largest funders of Eco-Congregation Ireland, through which we seek to encourage parishes to take steps to protect the environment. Each year the Investment Committee reviews the ESG Investment Policy Statement and compliance with this policy.

## The year ahead

At the beginning of 2024, both Pauline Dunlop, Manager Investment Administration and Kate Williams, Head of Finance and IT announced their retirements from the RCB. We are grateful to Pauline for her over 40 years of service and to Kate for her over 12 years of service. We wish Pauline and Kate all the very best in their retirements.

## Acknowledgements

The membership of the Representative Body and its committees comprises of clergy and lay volunteers who give generously of their time and expertise, without whom the work of the RCB could not be achieved.

The Representative Body and its committees acknowledge the dedication of the staff in Church of Ireland House Dublin, Church of Ireland House Belfast and in the RCB Library. In particular we would like to thank the following staff who retired or left the RCB during 2023: Robert Dunne, Church of Ireland Safeguarding Officer; Bryan Whelan, Assistant Librarian; Aisling Irwin, Assistant Archivist; Ian Walshe, Property Administration; Charlotte Howard, IT Support; and Lydia Monds, Education Advisor for Bishops' Appeal.

We welcomed the following staff to the RCB: Louise Connolly, Financial Accountant; Kate Byrne, Property Department Information Officer; Barry Cosgrave, Property Officer; Gladstone Ogbonna, Property Department Intern; Helen Crawford Walsh, Assistant Librarian; Ella Squire, Assistant Archivist; Elizabeth Hassell, Library Administrator (Part-time); Alex Kinch, Garda Vetting Administrator; Hilary McClay, Bishops' Appeal Education Adviser, and Sukhneet Dhir providing maternity cover as Synod Officer.

## FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW 2023

The Finance and IT Department provides a range of services to the RCB and to the wider Church. These services are delivered by a professional and experienced team, who focus on continuous improvement and enhanced service delivery. Services provided include financial reporting and budgeting, pension administration and payroll services to serving clergy, retired clergy and RCB staff, compliance with legislation and regulations, investment administration and fund accounting, treasury management for funds held on deposit for the RCB and wider Church, RCB supplier and committee payments, specific parish and grant payments, bi-annual trust distributions to RCB General Unit Trust holders, support to central Church committees, recovery of Gift Aid for specific Northern Ireland parishes, recovery of VAT under the RI VAT compensation scheme, Priorities Fund administration and other services. On top of normal day-to-day operations, significant project work was delivered during 2023 which included the payment of cost-of-living grants to retired clergy, preparatory work for rollout of increases to pensions in payment and increased retirement benefits from 1 January 2024, planning the transition to and the development of a reporting framework for Charities SORP (FRS 102), upgrade of the financial management information and reporting system to latest version, roadshows for parishes on charities reporting, IORP II compliance work and review of pension Master Trust arrangements in Ireland and the UK.

Information Technology is a critical part of business and service delivery for the RCB. IT has rolled out significant infrastructure, software application, security, and communication developments in recent years. Future development work includes a move to cloud-based solutions. The RCB has rolled out enhanced systems security and cybersecurity detection and response solutions as part of day-to-day operations.

The accounts of the Representative Church Body (RCB) commence on page 40.

### • Commentary

- A) The Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) of the RCB is shown on page 50. While the RCB has moved to a Total Return model for managing General Funds and for budgeting the annual withdrawal from General Funds, the SoFA is presented in the traditional format in line with generally accepted accounting standards and recognises actual income.

The SoFA shows the income and expenditure, investment and currency gains or losses and capital receipts or withdrawals of funds. The SoFA layout shows the income generated from General Funds and Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds along with the costs of operations and distributions which support the wider Church.

The column showing RCB activities is the cost of operations for central service, trustee and governance costs of the RCB. In the General Funds column these costs represent the charge out of costs from the RCB to General Funds, central Church allocations, investment and currency gains and losses and the opening and closing value of funds.

The Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds column shows the income and expenditure relating to trusts, cash managed for the wider Church, Gift Aid claimed for and repaid to parishes, investment and currency gains or losses and opening and closing value of the funds.

### ***RCB activities and General Funds***

General Funds total funds at 31 December 2023 totalled €245.63m, an increase of €15.04m. This increase in total funds is due to unrealised gains on investment revaluation, gains on the sale of investments and currency gains, which were partly off-set by a decrease in resources and other recognised losses. Investment markets saw a strong recovery in 2023 against a challenging year in 2022.

#### ***Incoming resources***

The RCB operates a Total Return model which recognises income and capital appreciation. The Total Return model facilitates a more diversified longer-term investment focus and moves away from a pure income focus.

The SoFA recognises the traditional income received by the RCB. Total incoming resources under the traditional income model of €6.04m (2022: €5.09m), shows an increase on the prior year of €0.95m. Incoming resources is made up of investment income of €5.11m and other income of €0.93m. Investment income of €5.11m (2022: €3.95m) sees an increase on the prior year by €1.2m. The increase in investment income is mainly due to additional funds placed under external fund management from cash, the rising interest rate environment, and positive corporate earnings.

As noted, General Funds is a Total Return fund which is not biased towards income generation.

Grants and other income of €0.40m include €0.19m from Benefact Trust to support the Church-wide MindMatters projects along with other specific projects for which the RCB is most grateful, and €0.11m investment income generated from the proceeds of the sale of St Mary's Home to support ministerial training. The RCB received €0.02m under the VAT compensation scheme in 2023 relating to VAT paid in 2022 on goods and services. RCB funds on deposit benefited from an increase in bank deposit interest rates during 2023, with total deposit interest of €0.16m (2022: €0.04m). Subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Trust Fund of €0.15m (2022: €0.15m) is received to support ministerial training costs.

#### ***Resources expended***

Expenditure for 2023 shown in the SoFA is analysed in greater detail on page 56 (Note 5).

The cost of generating funds includes payroll costs of financial and investment management, legal and accounting services (which includes services available to the wider Church), other investment professional service costs and allocated overheads.

Charitable activities costs include salary and allocated overheads charged to trust and property management, communications, education and the RCB Library.

Governance costs include salary and allocated overheads to support General Synod, central committee expenses and episcopal electoral expenses.

Other operating costs are those relating to professional fees (which include professional services to support the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes) and payroll payments to retired staff.

Total cost of operations of €4.12m shows an increase of €0.25m on the prior year (2022: €3.87m). A simplified analysis of cost of operations can be found on page 21 within the table "Simplified RCB and General Funds Income and Expenditure".

Payroll and related costs less and central office costs see an increase on the prior year due to inflationary adjustments along with lower recharges. Cost of charitable activities in the prior year saw project costs relating to the MindMatters and Refugee projects of €0.30m against lower project costs in 2023 of €0.10m as these projects substantially completed their initial phases. Pioneer Ministry 2022 set up costs are included in the prior year cost of operations, while Pioneer Ministry 2023 costs are funded through Allocations.

Other operating costs of €0.52m see an increase of €0.14m on the prior year. Costs include professional fees to support the Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes totalling €0.23m, cost to support the clergy death in service premiums due to the 2% diocesan levy being insufficient to meet total death in service premiums paid during 2023, payments to support retired staff totalling €0.06m and other professional fees of €0.05m. Other operating costs include the provision of legal, taxation, financial and general professional services. Significant pension related professional fees and IORP II compliance costs were incurred during 2023.

The total resources expended which are chargeable against General Funds of €3.34m (2022: €3.11m) an increase of €0.23m on the prior year.

### ***Allocations expended***

Allocations expended in the year of €3.86m (2022: €3.44m) show an increase on the prior year by €0.42m, due to the new Church-wide Pioneer Ministry initiative being funded from 2023 Allocations and an increase in the allocation required to support the maintenance of the stipendiary ministry and General Synod activities. Total underspent allocations for the year amounted to €0.21m (2022: €0.24m).

### ***General Funds gains and losses***

General Funds results for the year shown in the SoFA sees the total fund value of General Funds increase by €15.04m (6.5%) to €245.63m (2022: €230.59m). This increase is accounted for by unrealised gains on year-end revaluation of invested assets of €12.76m, realised gains on the sale of investments of €3.39m and currency gains due to a more favourable sterling year end exchange rate. Both equity and bond markets saw strong recovery in 2023 driven by better economic resilience than forecast, cooling off in global inflation and higher than expected interest rate cuts towards the end of the year.

### ***Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds gains and losses***

Incoming resources in relation to the RB General Unit Trusts are represented by investment income, deposit income and Gift Aid refunded. All incoming resources net of expenses are distributed to parishes, dioceses, and other trusts. Total funds increased by €25.40m (7.02%) to €386.89m (2022: €361.50m). This increase is accounted for by unrealised gains of €21.44m on year end investment revaluations, realised gains on the sale of invested assets of €0.39m and currency gains due to a more favourable year end currency exchange. Net receipts amounted to €1.92m (2022: €13.80m net receipts).

The 2023 distribution payment to unit holders saw an increase of 0.5 cent in ROI to 12.5 cent per unit and an increase of 0.5 pence in NI to 11.8 pence.

## **B) Balance Sheets**

The net assets shown in the Balance Sheets (page 51) belong to three separate fund groupings.

- RCB activities are the assets and liabilities which are used to provide services from the central Church. The net current balance on these is offset against General Funds.
- General Funds are the funds available for the operating expense of the RCB and for funding allocations. Total fund values increased by €15.04m to €245.63m as detailed above in General Funds. Invested fund assets increased from €219.49m to €233.43m, an increase of 6.35%. Investment markets saw a strong recovery in both equity and bond markets during 2023 due to better economic performance than forecast and a cooling off in global inflationary pressures.

Fixed Assets, loans, cash and bank balances, debtors and creditors make up €12.20m of net other assets. During the year Covid-19 stipend loans totalling €0.58m were repaid by dioceses who availed of this RCB loan facility. Included in the RCB debtors balance are loan facilities of €2.26m, made available to cathedrals and collegiate churches with choral foundations to support with essential costs of operations during the Covid-19 restrictions.

- Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds invested assets and bank deposits shown on the balance sheet belongs to parishes, dioceses and to other Church of Ireland trusts. Total fund values increased by €25.40m to €386.89m as detailed above in Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds. Invested fund assets increased from €322.87m to €349.34m, an increase of 8.20%. Investment markets performed strongly during 2023 with many global benchmarks returning double digit growth. The fund is bias towards dividend paying stocks. Cash balances held by the RCB on behalf Parishes, Dioceses and other trust funds are €37.55m at 31 December 2023.

### **• Allocations (page 50)**

Allocations budgeted for 2024 are provided for in 2023 as a reserve and will be drawn down in 2024. The amount provided is €4.26m and is gross of subventions. A detailed table of the 2024 budget is available on page 23. Allocations have been supported by a subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust of €0.15m (2023: €0.15m). The Allocations Committee is most grateful to the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust for this valuable support.

- **Simplified income and expenditure**

A simplified table is included below to aid understanding of RCB income and expenditure for 2023 with comparatives for 2022. This is based on the traditional income and expenditure model. Analysis under the Total Return model is included in the table on page 22.

**Simplified RCB and General Funds (GF) income and expenditure**

	2023		2022	
	RCB €'000	GF €'000	RCB €'000	GF €'000
Investment Income		5,107		3,954
Other Income		932		1,136
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>6,039</b>		<b>5,090</b>
Expenditure				
Payroll (less recharges) and related costs	(2,163)		(1,936)	
Central Office costs	(538)		(406)	
Depreciation	(311)		(317)	
RCB Library Costs	(267)		(254)	
Custodian and investment analysis fees	(79)		(91)	
Professional Fees (general)	(224)		(177)	
Professional Fees (Clergy DC Pension Funds)	(233)		(144)	
Payroll to retired staff	(62)		(62)	
Central Committee Expenses	(57)		(59)	
Audit Fees	(88)		(79)	
Church-wide MindMatters project	(97)		(207)	
Church-wide Refugee project	-		(96)	
Pioneer Ministry initiative	-		(39)	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(4,119)</b>		<b>(3,867)</b>	
Expenses to be charged to Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds	783		761	
<b>Total expenses to be charged to GF</b>	<b>3,336</b>	<b>(3,336)</b>	<b>3,106</b>	<b>(3,106)</b>
Allocations expended		(3,860)		(3,437)
Special cost of living payments to retired clergy		-		(949)
Covid-19 Parish Support Grants		-		-
<b>Total expenditure, allocations and grants</b>		<b>(7,196)</b>		<b>(7,492)</b>
<b>Decrease in resources</b>		<b>(1,157)</b>		<b>(2,402)</b>
Other recognised gains and (losses)				
Investment gains / (losses)		16,143		(15,706)
Other reserve movements		53		26
<b>Net gain in funds</b>		<b>15,039</b>		<b>(18,082)</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>230,586</b>		<b>248,668</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>245,625</b>		<b>230,586</b>

Note: This table will reconcile to the SoFA (page 50) under the General Funds column.

- **Total Return**

The RCB adopted a Total Return approach in 2012 to managing General Funds invested assets and the withdrawals from General Funds. Subsequent to a review of Total Return the RCB set a sustainable target return from invested assets in 2017 of 3.5% (2016: 4.0%). For 2023 the long-term sustainable target return was 3.5%, with the target withdrawal or spend set at 3.5% (based on the five-year average fund value) to meet cost of operations and allocations in 2023 of €6.83m (2022: €6.43m). The actual withdrawal required to support cost of operations, allocations, net

exceptional items, net of other income was below the target withdrawal of 3.5% at 3.21% (2022: 3.46%). On a total return basis 2023 recorded a surplus of €0.56m.

The RCB remains committed to delivering the services required by the wider Church while seeking to encourage efficiency, best practice and the prudent management of costs. The table below presents the Total Return model for year ended 31 December 2023 with prior year comparison.

<b>Total Return</b>	<b>2023 €m</b>	<b>2022 €m</b>
Permitted Total Return withdrawal from invested assets	€6.83m	€6.43m
Other operating income	€0.93m	€0.94m
Profit on disposal of Fixed Assets	-	€0.18m
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>€7.76m</b>	<b>€7.55m</b>
Cost of operations and allocations	(€7.20m)	(€6.53m)
Special cost of living payments to retired clergy	-	(€0.95m)
<b>Surplus from invested assets</b>	<b>€0.56m</b>	<b>€0.07m</b>

Note: It is not intended that this table will reconcile back to the SoFA on page 50.

- **Currency translation rates**

Year-end sterling balances have been translated into euro a rate of €1 = £0.8669 or £1 = €1.153 (2022: €1 = £0.8853 or £1 = €1.129).

- **Charities SORP**

The Charities SORP (FRS 102) is not currently obligatory in Ireland, however, it is expected that all charities should start to plan their transition to the Charities SORP (FRS 102). The RCB has considered a transition plan and expects to be fully transitioned for financial reporting 2025. The transition to the Charities SORP (FRS 102) will represent a fundamental change in the accounting and the presentation of the RCB financial statements, with financial information being combined into one set of financial statements which will represent the charitable activities of all RCB activities.

## **ALLOCATIONS BUDGET PROVIDED FOR 2024**

Allocations provide financial support for Church-wide activities. The detailed allocations analysis for 2024 with 2023 comparisons is provided overleaf. The table shows the net amounts to be allocated after taking into account income from endowment funds, the episcopal levy, the safeguarding levy and any other sources of funding which offset the costs of financing ministry and other central commitments.

The summary position of 2024 allocations budget is set out below and is net of subventions. Sterling balances have been exchanged at 0.8669 for 2024 budget and 2023 comparisons.

	<b>2024 €</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2023 €</b>	<b>%</b>
A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry				
• Episcopal costs	1,047,776	25.5	967,262	24.6
• Chaplaincy costs	317,328	7.7	303,199	7.7
• Miscellaneous	126,266	3.1	77,514	2.0
B. Pension related costs	-	0.0	100,179	2.6
C. Training of ordinands	1,152,292	28.1	1,101,092	28.3
D. General Synod activities	1,205,048	29.3	1,161,074	29.6
E. Miscellaneous	16,461	0.4	16,461	0.4
F. Pioneer Ministry	241,377	5.9	190,259	4.8
	<b>4,106,548</b>		<b>3,917,040</b>	

**2024 ALLOCATIONS BUDGET**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	€	€	£	£
<b>A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry</b>				
Episcopal Stipends and Expenses	1,055,825	1,023,431	917,504	847,387
less Episcopal Levy	(485,157)	(471,176)	(503,899)	(487,617)
	570,668	552,255	413,605	359,770
Deans of Residences/University Chaplains	109,631	106,704	156,869	148,593
Queen’s University, Belfast, Bursar	-	-	19,450	18,015
C of I in Queen’s University, Belfast	-	-	2,000	2,000
C of I in Trinity College, Dublin	2,000	2,000	-	-
Clerical Relief - Children’s Allowances	53,000	23,000	39,000	23,000
- Discretionary Grants	4,000	4,000	3,000	3,000
Stipends Related Costs	19,817	19,522	-	-
St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin	1,000	1,000	-	-
	<u>760,116</u>	<u>708,481</u>	<u>633,924</u>	<u>554,378</u>
<b>B. Pension related costs</b>				
Clergy Pensions Fund	-	50,000	-	43,500
Discretionary Grants				
- Retired Clergy	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>43,500</u>
<b>C. Training of Ordinands</b>				
Training of Ordinands	367,292	328,092	-	-
Theological Institute	910,000	900,000	-	-
C of I College of Education	(150,000)	(150,000)	-	-
Stipends Fund	-	-	-	-
Bishops’ Selection Conference	25,000	23,000	-	-
	<u>1,152,292</u>	<u>1,101,092</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>D. General Synod activities</b>				
General Synod/Standing Committee	529,359	531,622	270,971	236,181
Board of Education	49,330	40,217	95,184	97,791
Church of Ireland Youth Department	-	-	155,000	155,000
Safeguarding Officers	11,000	11,000	12,300	12,300
	<u>589,689</u>	<u>582,839</u>	<u>533,455</u>	<u>501,272</u>
<b>E. Miscellaneous</b>				
RCB Library	12,000	12,000	3,000	3,000
Regular Sunday Services in Irish	1,000	1,000	-	-
	<u>13,000</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>
<b>F. Pioneer Ministry</b>				
Pioneer Ministry	237,877	186,759	-	-
RCB Co-Ordination Support	3,500	3,500	-	-
	<u>241,377</u>	<u>190,259</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>2,756,474</u>	<u>2,645,671</u>	<u>1,170,379</u>	<u>1,102,150</u>

• **Commentary**

**A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry – €1,491,370**

The total cost of Group A is budgeted at €1,491,370 and is the cost relating to financing the episcopacy, university chaplaincy, clerical grants and stipends related costs.

The cost of financing the episcopacy is the largest part of this allocation at €1,047,776. The episcopal costs are shared on a percentage basis between central Church and dioceses. Dioceses contribute to episcopal costs through the episcopal levy, which is calculated based on the number of cures multiplied by a percentage of Minimum Approved

Stipend (MAS). Episcopal costs include stipend, pension, state taxes, travel costs, office and administration costs and financing cost of see houses.

The total gross episcopal costs are budgeted for 2024 at €2.11m (2023: €2.00m). The episcopal costs net of episcopal levy contributions are budgeted at €1.05m or 70% of Group A costs (2023: €0.96m or 72%). The episcopal levy for 2024 is set at 5.6% of MAS, a decrease from 5.8% in 2023. The episcopal levy for 2024 is budgeted to contribute €1.06m or 50.4% (2023: €1.03m or 51.6%) of the total episcopal costs. The cost per cure for 2024 is £2,048 and €2,501 (2023: £1,966 and €2,441). A more detailed breakdown of episcopal costs is shown on page 28.

Other amounts included in Group A support university deans of residence and children's and discretionary allowances paid to clergy. Funding is provided to support a Belfast city-wide university chaplaincy project which will run up to 31 August 2026. Total allocation to support third level chaplaincy is budgeted at €0.32m for 2024 (2023: €0.30m).

#### ***B. Pension related costs – €0***

The Clergy Pensions Fund exits the long-term Funding Proposal to restore solvency over a ten-year period on 31 December 2023. No allocation funding has been provided by the scheme Actuary as part of the ongoing funding requirements and therefore no allocation is requested for 2024 (2023: €100,179).

#### ***C. Training of ordinands – €1,152,292***

Total costs budgeted for Group C represents the costs of training for the ministry. These costs include the running costs of the Theological Institute, training of ordinands costs and the cost of the selection process for entering training.

The total budgeted for 2024, which is net of subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust, shows an increase of €0.51m to €1.15m on the 2023 cost of €1.10m.

The training of ordinands budget includes the cost of student grants, student accommodation, fees paid to Trinity College Dublin and external lecturer fees. Married students in 2023/24 receive a personal grant of €8,698 and the single student's grant is €6,932. The Allocations Committee recommended once off cost-of-living student personal grants for the academic year 2023/2024 of €3,500 for married students and €2,000 for single students. The Allocations Committee is reviewing student personal grants for the academic year 2024/2025. Accommodation grants and travel allowances are provided to students in their final intern year. The total budgeted costs for 2023/24 of training of ordinands are €367,292 (2022/23: €328,092). For the academic year 2023/24 total student numbers are 14 ordinands in full-time training and 16 in part-time training.

The cost category Theological Institute includes the costs of running the Institute and includes academic, administration and facilities costs. The total budgeted for the academic year 2024/25 is €910,000 (2023/24: €900,000).

Extracts from the accounts of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute for the year ended 30 June 2023 are included as Appendix B (page 62).

#### ***D. General Synod activities – €1,205,048***

The General Synod budget of €1,205,048 is made up of costs relating to General Synod and its Standing Committee, the Boards of Education, the Church of Ireland Youth Department and the centrally funded portion of the Safeguarding Officers.

Total costs show an increase on prior year of €44k. This increase is mainly due to an increase in specific committee costs.

The cost of the Board of Education in the Republic of Ireland and the Church of Ireland Youth Department are supported by grants from the Irish government. The RCB on behalf of the Church of Ireland wishes to acknowledge its appreciation for this support.

#### ***E. Miscellaneous – €16,461***

The total cost of Group E is €16,461 and represents an allocation of €15,461 to the RCB Library. €1,000 is provided for the maintenance of the Irish language as part of regular Church of Ireland worship.



### ***F. Pioneer Ministry – €241,377***

The total cost of Group F is €241,377 and represents an allocation of €237,877 to support the Pioneer Ministry National Leadership team costs, part-time administrator, annual national conference and other general expenses. There is also an allocation of €3,500 to provide RCB co-ordination support for the project.

## **INVESTMENTS AND MARKETS**

### **• Economic environment and 2024 outlook**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts a slight decline in global growth to 2.9% in 2024, down from 3% in 2023 and 3.5% in 2022. However, much of this growth is made up of emerging markets activity, while growth in advanced economies remains tepid and there are widening divergences among regions.

The economy ended 2023 in better shape than expected and risks to the outlook are more balanced than they were six months ago, on account of the resolution of US debt ceiling tensions and Swiss and US authorities' having acted decisively to contain financial turbulence. Although the likelihood of a hard landing has receded, the balance of risks to global growth remains tilted to the downside. China's property sector crisis could deepen and intensifying geoeconomic fragmentation could cause food and energy spikes and add to volatility.

On a positive note, inflation expectations have been pared back from their high levels across all regions and some central bankers have signalled likely interest rate cuts in the coming year. Economists also expect labour markets and financial conditions to loosen over the course of 2024. Core inflation is generally projected to decline more gradually and is not expected to return to target until 2025 in most cases. The key issue now is whether inflation will stay on its moderating path, and whether Central Banks will cut rates as aggressively as investors currently expect.

### ***Equities***

For most investors, 2023 marked a much-needed comeback when it came to both stock and bond market performance after a difficult 2022.

Global equities ended 2023 strongly amid hopes central banks will pivot to a less restrictive stance. US equities led with the S&P 500 stock market index gaining an impressive 26% in 2023. European Equities also performed well rising 17% (total return) while the UK lagged with the FTSE All-Share up 8% (local currency).

Various factors contributed including better than expected corporate earnings, a stronger US economy than forecast and an apparent end to the Fed's interest rate hiking cycle. In the US the headline figure for the S&P 500 obscures the fact that equity returns were driven largely by the Technology sector and a focus on Artificial Intelligence. Stripping out the "Magnificent Seven" whose share prices appreciated an average of 111% last year (Nvidia, Tesla, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta/Facebook, and Alphabet/Google), the index would have risen only 8%, or 12% on an equally weighted basis.

As central banks conclude their tightening cycles investors will look to global equity valuations which are currently trading at a 12-month forward price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of 16.6x, broadly in line with their 10-year average, although the US remains elevated. The earnings outlook will be key, and we expect some moderation having been resilient to date and with consensus already appearing quite optimistic. We remain neutral on global equities and hold a preference for quality companies with growth at a reasonable price.

### ***Interest rates and bonds***

Bonds performed well in 2023 overall with the European Broad market Index gaining 7% and the UK Broad market Index up 5.1% (total return, local currency). It was volatile though for fixed income as inflation proved to be stickier than anticipated and markets underestimated the peak of interest rates leading to negative returns for most government bond indices in Q2 and Q3 before rallying sharply in Q4.

The exposure of the portfolios to Corporate Bonds and High Yield proved beneficial and contributed positively to performance. There were tender offers for a number of high yield legacy bonds which were at an attractive premium to market prices and this has improved overall portfolio liquidity.

Markets may have got ahead of the game in terms of the extent and pace of which rate cuts are priced in, but as growth is expected to slow and inflation ease, the risk of further rate increases has diminished and should provide support to credit and offer attractive income streams at current rates.

Bond yields were volatile over 2023 but came down in Q4 with 10-year yields in the US ending the year at 3.9% (unchanged). In Germany the 10-year yield declined to 2.0% from 2.6% (year on year) whilst in the UK yields fell approximately 20 basis points over the year to end 2023 at 3.5%.

### ***Property***

Property is held as a diversifier versus conventional bonds and equities and offers an attractive and relatively secure source of income. Property investments are mainly owned via IPUT and PITCH, while the external fund managers may also allocate some of their equity holdings via quoted REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts).

Property investments performed poorly over the year with IPUT recording a -11.6% return while UK property returns fared better with PITCH showing -0.6%. The performance differential reflecting higher yield compression in the UK and more secondary assets.

### ***Alternatives***

Alternatives achieved a modest positive performance in 2023 but underperformed other growth asset classes with returns in the region of 1.5-4.0 per cent across the funds. This follows strong relative performance in 2022. Various portfolios across infrastructure and private equity funds made additional disposals at attractive multiples and returned capital to investors during the year while others are still in capital drawdown phase.

## • **General Funds**

Total return for the year was 9.8% versus the benchmark return of 14%. The Fund operates on a Total Return basis facilitating a more flexible approach to a broader market range, i.e. both value and growth stocks with no dividend yield demands.

The Equity element of the Fund returned 11.4% over the period behind the equity benchmark at 17.9%. The equity underperformance reflects the strong impact of the Tech rally on the US market and the discipline of the external managers in relation to a) valuation or growth at a reasonable price and b) risk management in terms of maximum position size.

On the Fixed Income side bonds performed well. AllianceBernstein, who manage the majority of the Fixed Income exposure generated a total return of 11.5% significantly ahead of the bond benchmark at 6.8%. Following the tender offers for legacy bank debt and preference shares exposure here has been reduced and the liquidity profile of the Fund has improved (with reinvestment into more liquid bonds).

## • **Unit Trusts**

The RB General Unit Trust (RI) delivered a total return for the year end 31 December 2023 of 11.7% versus the benchmark return of 10.4%. Cyclical stocks outperformed their more defensive counterparts and an overweight to some of these sectors helped. The geographic weighting in favour of Europe and UK relative to benchmark and less exposure to Global equities was also positive. On the Fixed Income side exposure to corporate bonds and high yield was a positive contributor.

The RB General Unit Trust (NI) delivered a total return for the year ended 31 December 2022 of 7.0% versus the benchmark return of 5.6%. Outperformance here was driven by an underweight global equity position and an exposure to European equities. The ESG restriction on Energy (Fossil fuel extraction) was positive in the lower oil and gas price environment. This return is particularly pleasing in the context of exposure to property and alternatives both of which underperformed on a relative basis.

The distribution rate for the RB General Unit Trust (RI) was 12.5c for the calendar year to 31 December, representing a yield of 2.75% and an increase of 4.2% year on year. The distribution for the RB General Unit Trust (NI) was 11.8p for the calendar year for an equivalent yield of 2.77% and an increase of 4.4%. This marks the second consecutive year of increases in the distribution rate.

The financial statements for the RB General Unit Trusts (RI) and (NI) and extracts from the investment manager's reports for the year ended 31 December are set out in Appendix C (page 64).

- **Clergy Pensions Fund**

The Clergy Pensions Fund achieved a return of 9.7% for the year vs its temporary benchmark of 11.1% (2022: -6.8%).

The passive element of the Fund managed by ILIM represented 69% of total assets at the end of 2023, up from 55% at the end of 2022. The ILIM portfolio increased by 13.7% in 2023 following a 12.6% decrease in 2022.

The overall fund was split 57% growth assets (including equities and real assets) 43% 'de-risked assets' (including cash and low risk bonds) and is broadly consistent with the agreed 60/40 Growth/De-risked objective outlined in the Statement of Investment Policy Principles (SIPP) as agreed by the Trustee.

Cash was partially redeployed to Government Bonds during the year as interest rates and bond yields moved higher and to improve the liability matching profile. Duration was also extended on the same basis. The Trustee has appointed an independent investment advisor to review the investment strategy of the Fund.

- **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) review**

The Investment Committee conducted its usual annual assessment of ESG risk and portfolio holdings in 2023. The standardised ESG reporting template was circulated to all External Funds and one breach was reported. The breach arose due to a 'coding error', was not material (<1% of General Funds value) and the position was sold. The RCB's ESG restrictions are also applied to the Clergy Pensions Fund which is managed passively by ILIM.

From time to time investments may be made in pooled Funds to which ESG criteria may not be applied. The Investment Committee monitors exposure of these Funds to excluded sectors as per the RCB's ESG Investment Policy and shall consider divestment where any material breaches are identified.

The RCB's updated ESG Investment Policy Statement is included as Appendix D (page 73).

## **CLERGY REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

- **Minimum Approved Stipends (MAS) 2024**

The Standing Committee of General Synod determines levels of MAS annually on behalf of the General Synod in accordance with Section 51(1) of Chapter IV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*. MAS levels are determined in September for the following year, taking into account economic data, conditions, earnings trends and indices on 30 June. Recommendations on MAS levels are initially brought to the Representative Body by the Stipends Committee, which considers movements in inflation and general earnings levels as well as the ability of parishes in both jurisdictions to pay. The Stipends Committee was also mindful of the extent to which MAS has tracked CPI over the past number of years and the dangers of allowing MAS to fall behind inflation.

*Northern Ireland* – The Consumer Price Index for the year to 30 June 2023 was 7.9% reflecting the cost-of-living issues which have been prevalent throughout 2023. The Stipends Committee in reviewing Northern Ireland MAS recommended to the Representative Body a 7.9% increase from 1 January 2024.

*Republic of Ireland* — Similar to UK inflationary statistics, inflation in the Republic of Ireland has remained high. The Consumer Price Index to 30 June 2023 was 6.1%. The Stipends Committee in reviewing the Republic of Ireland MAS recommended to the Representative Body that a 6.1% increase be applied.

The Standing Committee received and agreed a recommendation from the Representative Body that increases of 7.9% in Northern Ireland and 6.1% in the Republic of Ireland be applied to the Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024. Consequently, levels of Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024 are:

	2024	2023
Northern Ireland	£36,578	£33,900
Republic of Ireland	€44,658	€42,090

• **Episcopal costs**

The breakdown of total episcopal costs is summarised as follows:

	Republic of Ireland		Northern Ireland	
	€	€	£	£
	2024	2023	2024	2023
(1) Stipends together with state insurance costs	512,707	483,231	386,547	357,747
(2) Pension costs	87,975	103,910	61,378	72,159
(3) Offices of the Sees expenses	305,854	294,979	192,597	183,255
(4) See Houses and other costs	395,550	372,106	317,975	273,616
<b>Totals (gross)</b>	<b>1,302,086</b>	<b>1,254,226</b>	<b>958,497</b>	<b>886,777</b>
(5) Less endowment income	(246,261)	(230,795)	(40,993)	(39,390)
<b>Totals (net of income)</b>	<b>1,055,825</b>	<b>1,023,431</b>	<b>917,504</b>	<b>847,387</b>

*Note: Amounts are denominated in the currency relating to the jurisdiction of the See. For allocations purposes, amounts are denominated in the currency in which expenditure will occur. From 2021 onwards administration recharges are included in the above figures.*

Notes relating to the figures above:

- (1) Gross stipend and employer's state insurance contribution.  
(ie costs that relate to the bishops on a personal basis)

Stipends are multiples of Minimum Approved Stipends as follows:

Archbishop of Armagh	2.45
Archbishop of Dublin	2.25
All Bishops	1.75

- (2) Contributions towards episcopal pensions including CPF levies.
- (3) Secretarial and office services and allowances relating to expenses of travel and hospitality. (ie costs that relate to the running of the office of the See)
- (4) Heating, grounds and house maintenance, insurance and service charges, secretary to the House of Bishops. (ie property maintenance and other costs that are shared across all the Episcopacies)
- (5) Income from investments and rent of See House lands.

• **Locomotory allowances 2024**

Since 1 January 2017, the rate of locomotory allowances has been set at the relevant revenue authority rates for each jurisdiction, plus an additional rate which would be subject to social insurance payments. No changes to these rates were made for 2024 and the Locomotory rates for 2024 are as shown below:

**Republic of Ireland** – Revenue Commissioners approved rates:

Distance bands	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Addtl rate	Engine capacity 1201-1500cc	Addtl rate	Engine capacity 1501cc & over	Addtl rate
1 0-1,500km	41.80c	44c	43.40c	44c	51.82c	39c
2 1,501-5,500km	72.64c	20c	79.18c	17c	90.63c	9c
3 5,501-25,000km	31.78c	17c	31.79c	15c	39.22c	10c
4 25,001km & over	20.56c	15c	23.85c	13c	25.87c	9c

**Northern Ireland** – Clergy are now requested to submit, annually, a return of mileage carried out in the course of their ministerial duties.

Should the locomotory allowance paid exceed the HMRC permitted allowance by the number of miles travelled (45p per mile on all miles for NIC purposes) there will be a calculation for NIC on the excess.

HMRC approved rates (liability to income tax on any allowance paid which exceeds business miles travelled by HMRC rates).

- first 10,000 miles @ 45p per mile
- after 10,000 miles @ 25p per mile

In 2021 the RCB simplified the existing mileage bands and introduced new mileage bands. The rates were increased for 2023. The bands provide for an allowance of the first 10,000 miles at 60p and miles after 10,000 at a rate of 20p per mile. The bands are illustrated in the table below:

Example miles	Allowance at 60p per mile up to 10,000 miles	Addtl rate per mile	Addtl allowance	Total rate per mile	Total allowance
Up to 10,000	£6,000	0p	Nil	60p	£6,000
At 15,000	£6,000	20p	£1,000	46.67p	£7,000
At 17,000	£6,000	20p	£1,400	43.53p	£7,400

• **Children’s Allowances 2023/2024**

The Children’s Allowances Scheme is designed to assist clergy and surviving spouses with the cost of secondary school education or higher-level education leading to primary qualifications including certificate, diploma and degree.

Grants are paid on a *per capita* basis, without any form of means test, in respect of each child as follows:

	Academic year starting 1 September 2023	
	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Over 11 attending secondary school	€600	£100
Third level students (up to age 23)	€300	£400
Eligible orphans	€600	£400

Grants may be paid in respect of a child under 11 years of age where that child is in residence at a boarding school or, in exceptional cases, in respect of a student who may be over age 23. In either case, grants are at the sole discretion of the Representative Body.

Grants are also available from other sources and a list of such possible sources is available on the Church of Ireland website at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/EducationAssistance.pdf](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/EducationAssistance.pdf)>

- **Clergy car loans**

In 2020 the RCB reviewed the practice of providing car loans to members of the stipendiary clergy. Following this review the RCB suspended the provision of providing new car loans from 1 July 2020 onwards and in December 2022 decided that the practice of providing car loans should cease permanently.

At 31 December 2023 there were no remaining outstanding car loans.

- **Central Church Fund – removal (relocation) grants**

Grant assistance is available to clergy towards the cost of moving household belongings to/from a rectory/curatage on a new appointment or retirement. Grants are generally not made to any one individual more frequently than at a three-year interval other than in exceptional circumstances or on appointment as a dean or bishop/archbishop.

The approved level for an individual relocation grant is limited to 2/3 of actual cost and is subject to a maximum of €4,000 or £2,000 in the case of moves within the island. In the case of moves to the island the maximums are €5,000 and £4,000.

With prior approval an equivalent grant amount may be paid towards the procurement of furniture in lieu of the cost of a move into the island. Claims for such grants must be supported by receipted documentation.

## CLERGY PENSIONS

There are three separate schemes providing pension benefits for Church of Ireland clergy. Contributions in relation to service from 1 June 2013 onwards are held in the Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, Northern Ireland and the Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, Republic of Ireland. The Clergy Pensions Fund holds assets to fund the pension benefits earned by clergy up to 31 May 2013.

The RCB acts as Sponsor of all three schemes.

- **The Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes (NI and RI)**

Details of the operation of the schemes are set out in the members' handbooks and at:

**Northern Ireland members:** <[www.scottishwidows.co.uk/save/churchofirelandclergy/](http://www.scottishwidows.co.uk/save/churchofirelandclergy/)>

**Republic of Ireland members:** <[www.zurich.ie/connect/coi/home/](http://www.zurich.ie/connect/coi/home/)>

The annual reports of the scheme trustees are included in Appendix E (page 74).

Since 1 January 2017 clergy who remain in the service of the Church of Ireland after reaching their normal retirement age may continue to make contributions to their pension scheme. If a member continues to make such contributions their parish must also make the appropriate contribution. Such contributions put the member on equal footing with the colleague who has not yet reached normal retirement age.

Members of both Schemes are encouraged to review their pension scheme to ensure that it is invested in the most appropriate funds to suit their requirements especially as they approach retirement age.

During 2023, the RCB reviewed the expected benefits that could accrue under the Schemes and recommended that the parish contribution rate be increased from 8% to 13%. Legislation was approved by General Synod in May 2023 to affect the required change to the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* from 1 January 2024.

It was also agreed during 2023 that the parish contribution to death in service insured benefit for members of the Schemes be increased from 2% to 3% with effect from 1 January 2024. This increase in contribution is required to cover the annual cost of death in service benefit.

- **The Clergy Pensions Fund (defined benefit scheme)**

The annual report of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Designated Activity Company (DAC), which in accordance with Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* is the Trustee of the Clergy Pensions Fund, is included as Appendix F (page 76). The RCB is the sole member of the Trustee Company.

*Supplemental Fund and other funds*

The Church of Ireland Pensions Board administers the Supplemental Fund and certain other funds on behalf of the RCB. A report on the administration of these funds during the year ended 31 December 2023 is attached as Appendix G (page 110).

Further information on clergy pensions is available from:

The Pensions Administration Manager  
Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6  
Email <pensions@rcbcoi.org> Tel +353-(0)1-4125630

## PROPERTY AND TRUSTS

- **Summary**

2023 was a year of change for the Property and Trusts Department. In March the Department bid farewell to Ian Walshe, who had been with the RCB some 36 years. Ian is now working as the Diocesan Secretary for Dublin and Glendalough. In December Gordon Woods who had been working part-time in Property and part-time in Finance took up a full-time post in the Finance Department. We wish them both well in their respective positions and pay tribute to the service they both gave to the Property Team of the RCB over the years.

In terms of the Property Committee we also saw a number changes over the year. Archdeacon Terry Scott attended his last meeting in March just prior to his retirement from full-time ministry and in August Archdeacon Roderic West attended his last meeting just prior to his retirement from full-time ministry. We wish Terry and Roderic well for the future.

There were also some new faces on the Committee. In January we welcomed Mr Mark Potterton from Meath and Kildare Dioceses to his first meeting and in March we were joined by Dean Nigel Crossey from Kilmore Diocese.

We were also delighted to welcome new staff to the Property and Trusts Department. In September Barry Cosgrave took up post as Property Officer and then in December Kate Byrne joined us as Property Information Officer and Gladstone Ogbonna joined as an intern. We welcome all three of them to the team and wish them well in their new posts.

- **Property**

With the pandemic behind us the volume of work within the Property Department continued to increase steadily during 2023. Projects that had to be postponed during Covid were once again back on the agenda and things were getting back to normal. Throughout the course of the year the Property Committee considered a total of 161 transactions from parishes across the country. These included plans for refurbishment and some new build projects along with requests to access funds to pay for these schemes. There were also requests to sell property that had been identified as being surplus to requirements.

In the Republic of Ireland 2023 saw the introduction of two new taxes that will have an impact on some of our parishes. The Vacant Home Tax came into effect incurring a liability on any habitable property that is not occupied for a minimum of 30 days between 1 November and 31 October. The 2023 levy was three times the Local Property Tax amount, however this is rising in 2024 to five times the LPT and will be a considerable burden for parishes who are in possession of such properties. This does give rise to concerns where a parish becomes vacant and the time taken to fill the vacancy leaves the parish liable for this tax.

When this is coupled with the tenancy legislation of 2022 allowing tenants the right to remain indefinitely in a property once they have been *in situ* for more than six months it is a matter of concern and we do understand the pressure this is putting on some parishes. We are working to try and resolve the issues this may cause.

There were also plans to introduce a tax on lands that were zoned for residential development, however these were deferred for at least 12 months but may come into effect in the year ahead. The basis of this tax is to identify lands which are zoned for redevelopment, but which do not currently have any plans for development attached to them thus by definition they are not achieving their development potential. The expected level of tax in this case is 3% of the market value of the land. Parishes are encouraged to check and see if they have lands which would fall under this scheme and to consider their options going forward.

If there are queries relating to either of these two schemes then please do get in touch with the Property Department on <property@rcbcoi.org> or give us a call.

- **Trusts**

2023 was an extremely busy year for the Trusts Team. In addition to meeting the ever-increasing demands for reports to satisfy charities legislation, work was completed on the analysis of those trusts which fall under the remit of the House of Bishops and the Church of Ireland Pensions Board. The first phase of the review of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute trusts was completed and a more streamlined approval and allocation process was proposed and approved by the Executive Committee in January 2024. In conjunction with the Finance Team, third party trusts invested in the RB General Unit Trusts were analysed and categorised into two categories – those whose trustee is the RCB and those whose trustee is another entity – for both euro and sterling as part of the preparation for SORP compliant annual reporting.

The last quarter of the year saw work start on a major body of work to review, analyse and rationalise the trusts held by the RCB, which will take a number of years to complete.

In 2023 there were totals of €4,398,636 and £544,818 invested in the RB General Unit Trusts (RI) and (NI) respectively.

A list of funds received in 2023 on behalf of parishes, dioceses and special trusts is included as Appendix H (page 115).

- **Church Fabric and Development Fund**

The Church Fabric Fund has been held for the repair of certain church buildings since 1930 and is governed by Part IV of Chapter X of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* <[www.ireland.anglican.org/about/the-constitution](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/about/the-constitution)> and managed by the RCB. In 2016 it was renamed “Church Fabric and Development Fund” with Chapter X being amended to extend the scope of the Fund to include the development of initiatives supporting the long-term mission of the Church. These changes allow the Fund be used more widely than before, in order to more effectively serve the wider life, outreach and witness of the Church into the longer term.

Church Fabric and Development Fund grants of £95,050 and €133,250 were allocated by the RCB during 2023 from the income of the Fund on the recommendation of the Archbishop of Armagh. Please see below for a list of churches who were awarded grants in 2023.

Diocese	Church	Amount	
		£	€
Ardfert	Ballymacelligott		700
Dublin	Boosterstown		37,600
	Irishtown (St Matthew)		59,000
	Milltown		250
Ferns	Ferns Cathedral		1,000
Killaloe	Killaloe Cathedral		18,200
Kilmore	Corrawallen		3,200
Ross	Timoleague		9,500
Tuam	Aughaval		3,800
Armagh	Moy	27,600	
Connor	Kildollagh	1,450	
Down	Bright	8,600	



Diocese	Church	Amount	
		£	€
	Cregagh	1,300	
Dromore	Shankill	56,100	
		<u>95,050</u>	<u>133,250</u>

- **Marshal Beresford’s Fund**

Grants of £47,750 and €56,150 for repairs to churches were made from the Fund in 2023. The allocation of the income, in accordance with the trusts, is made by the Archbishop of Armagh who does so in conjunction with his recommendations from the Church Fabric and Development Fund. Please see below for a list of churches who were awarded grants in 2023.

Diocese	Church	Amount	
		£	€
Cloyne	Castletownroche		3,700
	Doneraile		1,050
Dublin	Swords		9,500
	Taney		12,300
Glendalough	Rathdrum		4,450
Kildare	Lea		10,300
Killaloe	Templeharry		600
Kilmore	Drung		4,100
	Athlone (St Mary)		1,650
Meath	Forgney		1,700
	Kilcleagh		3,450
	Navan		1,100
Ossory	Offerlane		1,450
Tuam	Moyrus		800
Armagh	Ballymore	7,050	
	Mullabrack	1,900	
Connor	Magheragall	4,050	
	Carnmoney	2,600	
Derry	Ardstraw	500	
	Dunnaalong	11,750	
	Edenderry	400	
Dromore	Castlewellan	4,100	
	Dromore Cathedral	2,300	
	Magheralin	2,950	
	Magheralin (St Saviours)	10,150	
		<u>47,750</u>	<u>56,150</u>

## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

- **Summary**

The principal focus of the Library’s work continues to be the provision of resources for ministerial training by sourcing, accessioning and cataloguing new books and other reading materials; re-cataloguing the existing book stock and removing duplicate materials as appropriate; also managing the borrowing facility; providing study/research space; and promoting and making more accessible the Library’s varied collections.

Despite some significant challenges for staff during 2023 arising from extended medical leave for the Librarian and Archivist and resignation of two professional staff (to work elsewhere from August 2023) the work of the Library came back on track towards the end of the year. In December, following a series of parallel recruitment/appointment processes of an Assistant Librarian, an Assistant Archivist and two half-time administrators, thereby bringing the staff quota back to a respectable four people, the Library reopened to its pre-pandemic normality of five weekdays. The online desk reservation system continued to enable researchers to pre-book materials in advance of research visits, but

walk-in visits have again become possible, and by the final quarter of the year there was a noticeable return of footfall for a variety of research interests.

The Library manages, and makes available to researchers, the records from 1,232 parishes, chapels of ease and chaplaincies, 20 dioceses and 20 cathedrals as well as 1,152 collections of ecclesiastical manuscripts and the non-current records of the General Synod and the RCB. The work of cataloguing new books to the online Library catalogue of printed books (available through the Church of Ireland website) has steadily increased at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library)>.

The Library marked the conclusion of the national Decade of Centenaries Programme by digitizing and making available online the typescript journal entries and letters of its founding benefactor, Rosamond Stephen (1868–1952) – collectively known as the ‘Record’ - for the period 1912–23 in full, with additional excerpts for 1902–07 capturing Stephen’s observations about changing Ireland north and south. The project was made possible through funding provided by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries Programme. The digital release was accompanied by an in–depth assessment of the value of source for recovering the Irish Revolutionary Period (1912–23) by the historian Dr Ian d’Alton, in an illustrated piece entitled “‘We have all got to go on living together’: Evaluating Rosamond Stephen’s ‘Record’ of a turbulent Ireland, 1912–23”.

In collaboration with Church of Ireland Publishing and the author and architectural historian Dr Michael O’Neill, the Library marked the finale of the digitization of its architectural drawings collection with publication of *An Architectural History of the Church of Ireland* (Church of Ireland Publications, Dublin, 2023). The 394-page fully illustrated volume has been handsomely designed and provides a fitting showcase of these rich and colourful resources. The online catalogue continues to be available at <<https://archdrawing.ireland.anglican.org/>>.

During 2023, the Library continued to discharge its curatorial responsibilities for church plate and episcopal portraits; the management of publishing projects for Church of Ireland Publishing and the editorial dimension of the *Church of Ireland Directory*. The Library oversees additional responsibilities including the administration of requests for digital images and data from *Gloine*, the Church of Ireland stained glass project.

- **Donations received**

The RCB again allocated €12,000 and £3,000 for the purchase of new books and conservation work. Additional capital funds totalling €16,800 and £5,000 were provided by the RCB to complete outstanding mandatory fire-regulation requirements and conclusion of the conservation of materials afflicted by mould during 2022. With the addition of lagging and casing in the strongroom area, the bespoke new cooling/AC system is now working very well and there have been no further contamination issues.

Further welcome donations were received from:

APCK (€3,000)  
Cashel, Ferns and Ossory diocese (€800)  
Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland Irish section (€100 towards Huguenot-related publications)  
Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh diocese (€300)  
Monkstown (Dublin) (€200)  
Rossorry (Clogher) (€200)  
St Mary’s Cathedral Limerick (€250)  
Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe diocese (€500)

- **Accessions**

Books and periodicals were purchased to meet the needs of ordinands in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and the wider Church readership. These purchases were augmented by donations of books from publishers, authors and others.

The most significant book collection donation that the Library has probably ever been gifted is the collection of the late John Bartlett, who died in 2022. The former chapel on the Rathmines site has been fitted out with bespoke shelving to house the collection (containing at least 4,000 volumes on topics ranging from theology and history to archaeology, travel and cartoons), together with a bronze bust of the subject. The Library and Archives Committee will formally mark this significant gift from his widow, Olivia, at a later date.

The Library received additional welcome donations of books from Commandant Daniel Agiotis (Irish Military Archives), Sarah Cave (from the library of Revd Stephen Cave formerly rector of Donegal and Dean of Raphoe), the Revd Leslie Crampton, the Revd Martin Hilliard, the Revd Cecil Hyland, the Revd Iain Jamieson, the Revd Kingsley E. Long, Dr Kenneth Milne, the Revd Martin O'Connor, the Revd Prof. Thomas O'Loughlin, Gail Peard (from the library of late Ven. Derek Johnston former archdeacon of Kilmore), the Revd Olivia Williams (from the library of the late Very Revd Matthew Byrne), with additional donations from Patricia Sides (daughter of the late Canon James Robert Sides) and the Revd Demond Sinnamon.

Additionally the following authors: Elizabeth Beasley (former Rector of Rathkeale, Limerick), Clifton F. Carbin, Revd David Coe (former rector of Richill), Sean Farrell, Dr Seán Gannon (with Brian Huges), Risteárd Giltrap, Richard Holmes Leonard, the Revd John Mann (former Dean of Belfast), Sean J Murphy, Johanna Lowry O'Reilly, Lesley Roberts, Clive Roe, the Revd Dr Helene T. Steed, and Prof. Brian M. Walker all donated copies of their recently published work.

Additional tranches of parish and diocesan records were transferred to the Library from local custody. The principal archival accessions were records from 47 parishes, including a significant quantity of miscellaneous papers from Rathdrum (Glendalough) and diocesan collections from five dioceses - the most extensive being 47 jumbo boxes of diocesan records for the original Down, Dromore and Connor diocesan structure transferred from Church House, Belfast (following its closure in July). There were also transfers of records from four cathedrals (St Patrick's and Christ Church, in Dublin, St Mary's Limerick and Tuam Cathedral) including recently-conserved patents formerly displayed in the area known in Swift's Corner St Patrick's Cathedral; and 17 new accessions of manuscript collections, including three significant collections of sermons of the Revd GHJ Burrows, Canon Virginia Kennerley and the Revd James Robert Sides.

A list of accessions of archives and manuscripts to the Library during 2023 is included as Appendix I (page 117).

- **Ministerial training**

One of the Library's core functions is supporting ministerial training, including part-time training, the Foundation Year programme, the Certificate in Christian Theology and Practice, training for Reader ministry, and those considering ministerial training in the Fit for the Purpose programme. In-person induction of all students took place either for class groups or individually when students visited the Library in their core groups. The new Assistant Librarian has initiated a number of outreach activities devised at encouraging the range of ordinands to use the Library's resources, including a book cupboard located in CITI for easing the exchange of books; a seminar in the Library on reading resources (in conjunction with CITI staff) as well as a series of experimental late night openings.

- **Cataloguing**

Work continued on cataloguing and uploading bibliographical data to the online Library catalogue system, and some 256 new books were processed and added during the year.

Records from 47 individual parishes were processed with summary lists updated and posted on the website. Detailed descriptive summaries and some lists were also provided for the 17 new collections of manuscripts, an episcopal portrait and copies of diocesan and General Synod addresses.

- **Parish register digitization project**

The third phase of the Library's long-term project to digitize the extensive collection of parish registers in its holding was completed during 2023. This encompassed all outstanding Dublin city and county parishes (in addition to those already available and searchable through the state online platform: [irishgenealogy.ie](http://irishgenealogy.ie)). By year end, some 248 registers from 83 parishes (all of these extensive given the size of the Church of Ireland population in and around Dublin) and amounting to 28,134 images had been captured by Dr Michael O'Neill, who is service provider for the project.

- **Church plate**

Progress continued to be made with the church plate inventory. Additional transfers of plate were received from local custody in Cloughjordan (Killaloe).

Items were loaned to the Waterford Cathedral Group (Waterford) and to the Revd Garth Bunting, Rural Dean of St Mary's, in Dublin, for the reopening of St George and St Thomas (Dublin) for public worship.

- **Gloine**

The Library processed some 15 images from the bank of digital archives of stained glass, in accordance with the new protocols devised to protect the RCB's copyright interests.

- **Conservation**

The Library's Conservation Fund was utilised to repair and conserve a baptismal register for the historic parish of Taughmaconnell (Clonfert) and the earliest combined register and the earliest vestry minute book for Kilcornan (Limerick) with the work completed by paper conservation expert Liz D'Arcy. Additionally, Ms D'Arcy also conserved the three items formerly on display in the Swift Corner in St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin (the costs provided by the Cathedral) prior to their transfer to the Library.

The Library's hardcopies of the 2022 and 2023 editions of the *Church Review* (Dublin and Glendalough diocesan magazine), the *Church of Ireland Gazette* and *Search: A Church of Ireland Journal* were also completed.

- **Community engagement**

- With Church of Ireland Publishing, the Library hosted the launch of *The Architectural History of the Church of Ireland* by Dr Michael O'Neill at two separate launch events, in the Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin, when the book was formerly launched by Dr Sandra O'Connell (Director of Architecture and Communications at The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland) with a formal response by the Archbishop of Dublin; and in the Armagh Robinson Library by Mrs Primrose Wilson (President of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society) with a formal welcome by the Dean of Armagh and Keeper of the Library. Both events were well attended. Additionally a series of online presentations about aspects of the Church's architectural heritage, drawing on text and images from the book, were produced by Dr O'Neill in conjunction with the launches.
- With the RCB Campus Review Group and colleagues in CITI, to develop a detailed brief for a suitable Library building and how this might fit into the overall plans for the campus. Site visits had been made to the Woodlock Hall and Cregan Libraries at DCU, Lambeth Palace Library in London, the Irish Military Archives, Rathmines and the General Registrar's storage facility in Roscommon.
- With the historian Dr Ian d'Alton in preparation for his work evaluating Rosamond Stephen and the upload of 'The Record' as a digital resource to the website. Dr d'Alton was interviewed about the 'Record', the life of Rosamond Stephen and the role of RCB Library in preserving her materials, on BBC Radio Ulster's Sunday Sequence radio programme in September 2023.
- With the Dean of Ossory and staff of St Canice's Cathedral and relevant service providers to progress the long-term objective exhibiting the Red Book of Ossory in local custody in Kilkenny.
- With the team of Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury, which aims to recreate, virtually, the collections of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) destroyed on 30 June 1922. The Library continues as a participating institution in this initiative.

The Library and Archives Committee acknowledged the oversight and guidance provided by Pauline High, Head of Property and Trusts during 2023 during the absence of the Librarian and Archivist, and also the helpful contributions made by Oscar Bryan (who briefly served as administrator); Stuart Wilson (who stepped in from Church House) and Mary Furlong (former Library administrator) each of whom provided staff cover. The Committee has been pleased to welcome Andrea Bridge, Helen Crawford Walsh, Elizabeth Hassell and Ella Squire to their new respective roles on the Library staff, and for their professionalism and commitment to its work.

Tribute was paid to former Assistant Librarian, Bryan Whelan (who has moved to a senior librarian role in Dublin Public Libraries) and former Assistant Archivist, Aisling Irwin (who has moved to Australia as archivist at the History Museum of New South Wales).

The Committee noted with regret the passing of the stained glass expert Dr David Lawrence, whose legacy for the Church of Ireland and generations of researchers to come was his work on <[www.gloine.ie](http://www.gloine.ie)>, the database of stained glass throughout the Church. This significant project which involved photographing and researching every window began in 1991 and was completed in 2017 and continues to make a significant contribution to knowledge for a worldwide research audience.

## DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

### • **Trustee role of the Representative Church Body**

The RCB was incorporated by Charter to hold property and funds in trust for the Church. As a permanent trustee body it administers a large number of trusts donated or bequeathed for specific Church purposes, parishes and dioceses. The RCB, on behalf of the Church of Ireland, wishes to express its gratitude to all those who have made a donation or bequest in this way and are thus supporting the Church in the fulfilment of its work on an ongoing basis.

There is considerable advantage in donating or bequeathing in trust to a permanent trustee body such as the RCB rather than to local trustees, as there is no need to appoint new trustees from time to time.

Donations and bequests can be in the form of money, stocks and shares, securities, chattels, houses or lands or the whole or part of the residue of an estate. They can be left to the RCB in trust:

- for the general purposes of the Church of Ireland; or
- for any particular diocese or parish; or
- for any particular Church purpose.

The RCB applies funds arising from a specific donation or bequest strictly in accordance with the purposes declared in the trust instrument or Will. However, the Church of Ireland is in need of unfettered funds to help finance its ongoing responsibilities – training ordinands, providing retirement benefits for clergy and their spouses and maintaining ministry. An unfettered donation or bequest can be given or left to the RCB in trust “for such charitable purposes in connection with the Church of Ireland as the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland may from time to time in its absolute discretion approve”, giving the Church the flexibility to finance its most pressing needs from time to time. (Please see suggested *Form of Bequest* below.)

### • **Tax relief on charitable donations**

#### ***Northern Ireland***

The Gift Aid scheme gives tax relief on charitable donations and is available to all taxpayers resident in Northern Ireland. Tax can be reclaimed on donations of any amount, provided the amount reclaimed does not exceed the total amount of tax paid that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) will reclaim on donations made by the donor in the relevant tax year. Information on how to avail of Gift Aid is available from Church House Dublin.

The total value of donations collected under Gift Aid on behalf of parishes in 2023 was £4,650,824 to which the income tax recovered by the RCB added £1,162,707 to give a total of £5,813,531 compared with £5,830,276 in 2022. Parishes are increasingly adopting electronic accounting methods as an aid to SORP compliance and filing their own claims directly with HMRC.

Since 6 April 2013, charities that receive small cash donations of £30 or less are able to apply for a Gift Aid style repayment, without the need to obtain Gift Aid Declarations for these donations, under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS). The RCB assists parishes who wish to make claims through GASDS. From 6 April 2017 the amount of small donations on which the repayment can be claimed is capped at £8,000 per tax year per church. The value collected under GASDS on behalf of parishes in 2023 was £435,887 to which the income tax recovered by the RCB added £108,972 to give a total of £544,859 compared with £367,844 in 2022. Information on how to claim under GASDS is available from Church House Dublin and under ‘Advice for Treasurers’ at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finances](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finances)>.

#### ***Republic of Ireland***

Tax relief for donations to approved bodies under Section 848A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 applies as follows:

- All donations of €250 or more from individuals (PAYE and Self-Assessed) are treated the same, with the tax relief in all cases being repaid to the charity.
- Tax relief is available at a blended rate of 31% in respect of all taxpayers, regardless of their marginal rate.

- An annual limit has been introduced of €1m per individual, being the amount which can be tax relieved under the scheme.

Further information is available from Church House Dublin and under ‘Advice for Treasurers’ at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finances](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finances)>.

- **Form of Bequest**

The following suggested Form of Bequest grants the Representative Body, as Trustee, permission to invest in any investments or securities at its sole discretion. Circumstances may alter from time to time and this Form of Bequest gives the Trustee freedom to act in the best interests of the parochial or other fund concerned.

The Representative Body recommends consulting a Solicitor to ensure that any bequests made by way of Will are valid and satisfy legal requirements.

“I GIVE, DEVISE AND BEQUEATH ..... [*here insert clear particulars of the benefaction ie, a particular sum of money, specific property, a share of the residue etc*] to the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland in trust for ..... [*here insert clear particulars of the object for which the benefaction is to be applied eg, parochial funds of the parish of ..... in the diocese of ..... or, as a perpetual endowment for the stipend of the incumbent of the parish of ..... in the diocese of ..... or, for such charitable purposes in connection with the Church of Ireland as the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland may from time to time in its absolute discretion approve*].

I direct that any funds received by the Representative Body in pursuance of this my Will may be invested in any investments or securities whatsoever in its sole discretion and in all respects as if it were absolutely and beneficially entitled thereto.”

- **Donations, bequests and funds received**

A list of funds received by the RCB in 2023 on behalf of parishes, dioceses and special trusts is included as Appendix H (page 115).

- **Trusts for graves**

The RCB does not accept any trust for the provision, maintenance or improvement of a tomb, vault, grave, tombstone or other memorial to a deceased person unless a specific benefit will accrue to the parish concerned.

## MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

- **Deposit interest (rates)**

The rates of interest allowed or charged by the RCB are linked to the rates ruling from time to time in the money market. The following rates of interest were applied in 2023:

QUARTER ENDED	€		£	
	Dr %	Cr %	Dr %	Cr %
31 March	3.50	0.65	4.00	2.00
30 June	3.50	1.00	5.00	2.75
30 September	3.50	1.50	5.25	3.75
31 December	3.50	2.10	5.25	4.00

These rates only apply to revenue balances to credit of diocesan and other accounts and not to permanent capital other than in cases where, for some reason, there may be a delay in making a long-term investment (eg proceeds of sales of glebes). Interest is calculated on daily balances and time weighted.

• **Inflation statistics (5-year review)**

Year on year (December)	UK (CP Index)	Republic of Ireland (CP Index)
2019	1.3%	1.3%
2020	0.8%	-0.9%
2021	5.4%	5.5%
2022	10.5%	8.2%
2023	4.0%	4.6%

**RESOLUTIONS RECOMMENDED TO THE GENERAL SYNOD**

The Representative Body recommends that the following resolutions be adopted by the General Synod:

**I. Allocations**

That the General Synod hereby authorises the Representative Body to make the following allocations from General Funds in 2024:

	€
A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry	
• Episcopal costs	1,047,776
• Chaplaincy costs	317,328
• Miscellaneous	126,266
B. Pension related costs	-
C. Training of ordinands	1,152,292
D. General Synod activities	1,205,048
E. Miscellaneous	16,461
F. Pioneer Ministry	241,377
	<hr/>
	4,106,548
	<hr/> <hr/>

**II. The Church of Ireland Voluntary Contributions Schemes**

That the General Synod:

- (a) approves the closure of the Church of Ireland Voluntary Contributions Schemes ('the AVC Schemes') to further contributions from members of the Clergy Pensions Fund ('the Fund');
- (b) authorizes the Trustee to transfer all monies held in the AVC Schemes for members of the Fund to the appointed pension providers for the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes;
- (c) authorizes the Trustee and the RCB, following the transfer and re-investment of all monies held in the AVC Schemes in the appointed pension providers, to proceed to wind up the AVC Schemes;
- (d) notes the Bill being brought by the RCB before the General Synod to amend the wording of section 49 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* so that henceforth this section shall refer to the dates of the resolutions of the General Synod to establish, as well as to wind up, the AVC Schemes, for future reference.

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – PAGE 1**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**



**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023**

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**PAGE 2**

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**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER INFORMATION**

**PAGE 3**

**CHAIR**

- Mr H Algeo

**MEMBERS (*ex officio*)**

- The Archbishop of Armagh
- The Archbishop of Dublin
- Canon GC Richards (Allocations Committee)
- Mr L Ruttle\* (Investment Committee)
- Mr JK Roberts (Property Committee)
- Mr M Johnston (Stipends Committee)

**MEMBERS (elected)**

- Rt Rev Dr WP Colton
- Rev Canon H Gilmore
- Very Rev N Crossey†
- Very Rev NJW Sloane
- Mr LJW MacCann (Deputy Chair)
- Mr RS Neill
- Ms Hilary Prentice
- Mr Henry Saville

**BANKERS**

- Bank of Ireland  
College Green, Dublin 2
- Bank of Ireland  
Talbot Street, Dublin 1

**CUSTODIANS**

- Northern Trust  
Canary Wharf, London E14 5NT

**AUDITORS**

- PricewaterhouseCoopers  
One Spencer Dock, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1

**OFFICERS**

- Chief Officer and Secretary
- Head of Finance
- Head of Synod Services and Communications
- Head of Investments
- Head of Property and Trusts
- Senior Solicitor
- Mr D Ritchie
- Ms K Williams
- Mrs JM Maxwell
- Mr R Asher
- Ms P High
- Mr M McWha

**OFFICE:** Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

The Representative Church Body is Registered Charity Number 20003623.  
CHY (Revenue) Number: 2900.

\* in place of Mr K Bowers

† in place of Ven T Scott

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**PAGE 4**

The Representative Body of the Church of Ireland is an incorporated trust established by royal charter to hold property and financial assets on behalf of the Church.

General Funds are used to support the general mission of the Church, with parish, diocesan and other funds held for the benefit of the particular Church entity which is the beneficial owner. The outcomes for the year ended 31 December 2023 for General Funds and for other trust funds are set out in the financial statements. General Funds total funds employed increased by €15.04m to €245.63m. Investment markets saw strong recovery in 2023, with both equity and bond markets performing well and with a cooling off in global inflationary pressures along with higher than expected rate cuts.

For 2023 the long-term sustainable target return was 3.5% on invested fund assets, with the target withdrawal or spend set at 3.5% or €6.83m (based on the five-year average invested fund asset value) to meet cost of operations and allocations in 2023 of €6.83m (2022: €6.43m). The actual withdrawal required to support cost of operations, allocations and special cost of living grants to retired clergy with benefits in the Clergy Pensions Fund net of other income was less than targeted at €6.27m, recording a surplus of €0.56m. The RCB seeks to continue to manage its withdrawal from General Funds prudently over the short and medium term to preserve capital for the present and future Church. Funds held for the benefit of individual Church of Ireland trusts increased in value by €25.04m to €386.89m. Markets saw a strong recovery in 2023 as noted above. The fund is biased towards dividend paying stocks. Net receipts and withdrawals from these funds amounted to net receipts of €1.92m (2022: net receipts €13.79m). Distribution of income is made biannually from these funds and together with the refund of Gift Aid reclaimed for NI parishes amounted to €13.43m. The 2023 distribution payment to unit holders saw an increase of 0.5 cent in ROI to 12.5 cent per unit and an increase of 0.5 pence in NI to 11.8 pence per unit.

***Statement of Trustee's Responsibilities***

The Representative Body, as Trustee, is responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with the accounting policies of the Representative Body. In preparing the financial statements the Representative Body is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- disclose and explain material differences from applicable Accounting Standards;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will continue in business.

The Representative Body, as Trustee, confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the organisation. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

*LJW MacCann*  
Deputy Chair, Executive Committee  
12 March 2024



## ***Independent auditors' report to the Executive Committee of the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland***

### **Report on the audit of the financial statements**

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#### **Opinion**

In our opinion, Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland's financial statements:

- have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland").

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Financial Statements, which comprise:

- the balance sheet as at 31 December 2023;
- the statement of financial activities for the year then ended;
- the statement of cash flow for the year then ended;
- the accounting policies; and
- the notes to the financial statements.

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#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)"). Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### *Independence*

We remained independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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#### **Emphasis of matter -Basis of preparation**

In forming our opinion on the financial statements, which is not modified, we draw attention to the fact that the accounting policies used and disclosures made are not intended to, and do not, comply with the requirements of Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

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#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Executive Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.



Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Executive Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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### **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Executive Committee are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

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### **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

#### *Responsibilities of the Executive Committee for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Statement of Executive Committee responsibilities set out on page 4, the Executive Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Executive Committee are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Executive Committee<sup>1</sup> are responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Executive Committee either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at: [http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description\\_of\\_auditors\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_audit.pdf](http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf).

This description forms part of our auditors' report.



*Use of this report*

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Executive Committee and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the entity, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'PricewaterhouseCoopers'.

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants  
Place  
19 March 2024

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**PAGE 8**

The significant accounting policies adopted by the Representative Church Body (RCB) are as follows:

**(i) General Information**

The RCB was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1870 under the provisions of the Irish Church Act, 1869. Its legal structure is that of charitable trustee or trust corporation with perpetual succession. The RCB undertakes the following activities:

- The administration of trusts together with the provision of investment and treasury management services. A charge is recovered from the beneficial owners of the investments under the RCB's management in respect of the costs incurred by the RCB in providing the investment and treasury management services.
- The provision of other management services including payroll services provided for the dioceses, property and legal services to parishes, dioceses and the wider Church, and the provision of support to the core work of the Church generally. The costs incurred by the RCB in providing these services are recovered from the investment income earned on investments managed by the RCB on behalf of the General Synod.

**(ii) Basis of Presentation**

The financial information in relation to the activities of the RCB and the assets under its management is presented in columnar format in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) on page 11 and the Balance Sheet on page 12.

• **RCB activities**

The SoFA represents the costs which are incurred directly by the RCB in providing investment, administrative, legal, property and other services to the dioceses and parishes of the Church of Ireland. A charge in respect of the costs of investment and treasury management services is recovered from the beneficial owners of the investments. Other costs are recovered from the investment income earned on investments managed by the RCB on behalf of the General Synod.

The column headed 'RCB Activities' on the Balance Sheet represents the assets and liabilities of the RCB. Church and other related property assets are held by the RCB as trustee on behalf of the wider Church, but the RCB is not the beneficial owner. Such assets are not reflected on the Balance Sheet.

• **General Funds**

The column headed 'General Funds' in the SoFA represents the investment income earned from investments which are under the management of the RCB but are held for the benefit of the wider Church of Ireland. The costs incurred by the RCB in the provision of investment and other services are recovered from the General Funds investment income earned. Allocations represent amounts expended on wider Church activities as detailed in Note 6.

The column headed 'General Funds' in the Balance Sheet discloses the assets which are under the management of the RCB, but which are held for the benefit of the wider Church of Ireland.

• **Parish, diocesan and other trust funds**

The column headed 'Parish, diocesan and other trust funds' in the SoFA shows the investment and deposit income earned from investments which are under the management of the RCB but which are beneficially owned by the dioceses, parishes and specific trusts. It also shows income tax reclaimed on behalf of parishes in Northern Ireland under the Gift Aid scheme. A charge to the beneficial owners is made in respect of investment and management services provided by the RCB.

The column under this heading in the Balance Sheet discloses, for information purposes, the assets which are under the management of the RCB, but which are beneficially owned by the dioceses, parishes and specific trusts.

**(iii) Basis of Preparation**

In the preparation of financial statements, the accounting policies adopted are based on the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”). Not all aspects of these generally accepted accounting standards have been applied to the financial statements. Certain disclosures required by the following sections in FRS 102 have not been made in these financial statements. These include:

- Section 3 - Statement of Comprehensive Income and Income statement
- Section 4 - Statement of Financial Position
- Section 28 - Employee Benefits
- Section 33 - Related Party Disclosures

There are no key accounting judgements and sources of estimation uncertainty affecting these financial statements.

The format and certain wording of the financial statements have been presented so that, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, they reflect most appropriately the nature of the RCB’s activities as a not-for-profit organisation.

**(iv) Valuation of investments** – The RCB has classified investments as financial assets at fair value.**Initial measurement**

Purchases and sales of financial assets (including investments, currency forwards and government bond futures) are accounted for at trade date for financial statement purposes. Realised gains and losses on disposals of financial assets are calculated based on the difference between the average cost of the assets sold and the sale proceeds at the date of sale. Transaction costs for financial assets are recognised directly and included in the cost of the investment. Transaction costs associated with the disposal of a financial asset are offset against the sales proceeds received.

**Subsequent measurement**

After initial measurement the RCB measures financial assets at fair value, including financial instruments. Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm’s length transaction. On the last business day of the year when markets are open for business, the fair value of financial assets is based on their official closing prices on a recognised exchange. Both realised and unrealised gains and losses on arm’s length transactions are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 11.

In the case of financial assets not traded on an exchange, fair value is based on a value determined by the investment managers. These valuations are subject to review by the RCB to ensure the valuations used are appropriate.

- (v) **Securities lending** – The RCB participates in a securities lending programme operated by the RCB’s custodian, Northern Trust. The securities are loaned to external counterparties for a set period of time and in return the RCB recognises as income the fee received for the loaned securities. Under the terms of the securities lending agreement the RCB retains all the risks and rewards of ownership of the loaned securities.
- (vi) **Financial instruments** – Financial instruments are used as part of the RCB’s portfolio risk management strategy and as part of the portfolio investment return strategy.

Financial instruments are stated at market value at year end.

The valuation movement of contract positions is recognised in unrealised gains and losses on the Statement of Financial Activities.

- (vii) **Income recognition** – Income includes interest and dividends receivable during the financial year and, in the case of General Fund assets, reflects bought and sold interest on bond transactions in the accounting period and fees received from the securities lending programme. Other income recognised includes tax refunds on gift aid, grants and subvention from other Church funds and are accounted for as and when received and receivable.



**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**PAGE 10**

- (viii) **Foreign exchange translation** – The Functional and Presentation currency of the RCB is euro. This is considered to be the currency of the primary economic environment.

Assets and liabilities in currencies other than the functional currency of the RCB are translated into euro at the exchange rates ruling at the balance sheet date. Transactions in currencies other than the functional currency of the RCB are translated into euro at the rates ruling at the transaction date. Gains and losses on foreign exchange transactions are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 11. Sterling is the most significant currency other than euro for transactional and balance sheet purposes, and at the year end the rate was €1 = £0.8669 (2022 €1 = £0.8853).

- (ix) **Taxation** – The RCB has been granted charitable taxation status by the Revenue Commissioners and by HM Revenue and Customs in the tax jurisdictions of Ireland and the United Kingdom respectively. It is recognised as a charity under section 207 of the Taxes Consolidation Acts, 1997, with the registration number CHY2900, and under Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Tax Act 1988, under registration number XN45816.

Neither the RCB nor any other entity for which results are shown is generally chargeable to Irish and UK taxation on its income or capital gains. Withholding tax refunds received are recognised at the point when they are recovered.

- (x) **Loans** – Loans in the General Funds Balance Sheet are stated at book cost at the balance sheet date.
- (xi) **Financial Risk** – The RCB manages a variety of risks, including market price, interest rate, foreign currency and liquidity, through the maintenance of a widely diversified portfolio of actively traded financial assets. Note 11 to the financial statements sets out the exposure and the detail of treatment adopted.
- (xii) **Tangible fixed assets and depreciation** – Land is stated at cost. Other fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and are depreciated over the period of their expected useful economic lives. Depreciation is calculated using the following annual rates: Premises: 2% to 10% (providing the useful life is less than 50 years); Furniture and fittings: 8% to 10%; Office equipment: General 20%, System software 10%, Other software 20%.

Depreciation is not provided on any property where the estimated useful life is more than 50 years.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 the RCB added properties to its Balance Sheet, which although owned, had not previously been included in the financial statements. These properties were valued at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and these valuations will be considered the properties deemed cost for future accounting periods.

Church buildings and silverware are not considered to be beneficially owned by either the RCB or General Funds, and hence are not included as either Tangible Fixed Assets or as Heritage Assets.

- (xiii) **Allocations** – Allocations are recognised in the General Funds column in the year in which they are expended.

Included in Reserves is an amount provided for allocations in 2022.

- (xiv) **Going concern**

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which is considered appropriate by the Trustee.

- (xv) **Cost of operations**

The cost of generating funds comprises the payroll costs of investment management, legal and accounting services, including those made available to the wider Church and associated allocated overheads.

The cost of charitable activities comprises the payroll and associated allocated overheads charged to trust and property management, communications, education and the RCB Library.

The cost of governance activities relates to the payroll and associated allocated overhead costs incurred in supporting General Synod, central committee expenses and episcopal electoral expenses.

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**

	Year ended 31st December 2023			Year ended 31st December 2022			
	Notes	RCB activities €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000	RCB activities €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000
<b>Incoming resources</b>							
Income from investments		-	5,107	10,255	-	3,954	9,648
Income from property and loans		-	218	-	-	59	-
Deposit Interest		-	161	2,495	-	43	289
Tax refund Gift Aid		-	-	1,467	-	-	1,400
Grants and other income		-	403	-	-	583	-
Profit on the sale of Fixed Asset		-	-	-	-	184	-
Subvention from other Church funds		-	150	-	-	267	-
		-	6,039	14,217	-	5,090	11,337
<b>Resources expended</b>							
<b>Cost of operations</b>							
Cost of generating funds	5	1,867	-	-	1,616	-	-
Cost of charitable activities	5	1,168	-	-	1,347	-	-
Cost of governance activities	5	565	-	-	521	-	-
Other operating costs	5	519	-	-	383	-	-
RCB costs recovered	5	(4,119)	3,336	783	(3,867)	3,106	761
		-	2,703	13,434	-	1,984	10,576
<b>Net incoming resources before allocations and distributions</b>							
		-	2,703	13,434	-	1,984	10,576
<b>Allocations, distributions and other charges</b>							
- Allocation expended in year	6a,6b	-	3,860	-	-	3,437	-
- Special cost of living grant to retired Clergy	6c	-	-	-	-	949	-
- Distributions		-	-	13,434	-	-	10,576
		-	3,860	13,434	-	4,386	10,576
<b>Decrease in resources before recognised gains and losses</b>							
	4	-	(1,157)	-	-	(2,402)	-
<b>Recognised gains and (losses)</b>							
Gains/(Losses) unrealised on revaluation	4,7	-	12,758	21,436	-	(43,972)	(38,045)
Gains realised on invested assets	4,7	-	3,385	390	-	28,266	488
Currency movements	4,7	-	408	1,649	-	(314)	(4,368)
Other recognised (losses)/gains	4,11	-	(355)	-	-	340	-
		-	15,039	23,475	-	(18,082)	(41,925)
<b>Net gains/(losses) in funds</b>							
Total funds brought forward		-	230,586	361,499	-	248,668	389,629
Net receipts/(withdrawals)	1,7(c)	-	-	1,918	-	-	13,795
		-	245,625	386,892	-	230,586	361,499
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>							
		-	245,625	386,892	-	230,586	361,499

Signed: *LJW MacCann*  
*GC Richards*  
Date: *12 March 2024*

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**BALANCE SHEET**

**PAGE 12**

	As at 31st December 2023			As at 31st December 2022			
	Notes	RCB activities €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000	RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	1	6,548	-	-	6,602	-	-
INVESTMENTS							
Loans		-	1,354	-	-	1,498	-
Invested fund assets	2,3	-	233,427	349,343	-	219,488	322,870
		<u>6,548</u>	<u>234,781</u>	<u>349,343</u>	<u>6,602</u>	<u>220,986</u>	<u>322,870</u>
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors		2,419	367	-	3,349	305	-
Cash on short term deposit	10	-	3,067	37,549	-	1,507	38,629
		<u>2,419</u>	<u>3,434</u>	<u>37,549</u>	<u>3,349</u>	<u>1,812</u>	<u>38,629</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES							
Creditors		(1,557)	-	-	(2,163)	-	-
		<u>(1,557)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,163)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		862	3,434	37,549	1,186	1,812	38,629
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		7,410	238,215	386,892	7,788	222,798	361,499
BALANCE WITH GENERAL FUNDS		(7,410)	7,410	-	(7,788)	7,788	-
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>245,625</u>	<u>386,892</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>230,586</u>	<u>361,499</u>
FUNDS EMPLOYED	4,7(c)	-	245,625	386,892	-	230,586	361,499

Signed: *LJW MacCann*  
*GC Richards*  
Date: *12 March 2024*

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

	Notes	Year ended 31st December 2023			Year ended 31st December 2022		
		RCB activities €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000	RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000
NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE ALLOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS	8	-	3,288	13,434	-	1,566	10,576
ALLOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS							
Allocations expended and distributions		-	(3,860)	(13,434)	-	(3,437)	(10,576)
Special cost of living grant to retired clergy		-	-	-	-	(949)	-
		-	(572)	-	-	(2,820)	-
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS							
Purchase of investments		-	(121,843)	(5,346)	-	(83,861)	(12,284)
Sale of investments including currency movements		-	116,522	1,847	-	74,632	1,857
Sale of properties		-	120	-	-	259	-
Gains and losses including currency movements		-	3,348	2,174	-	28,371	(3,573)
Other fund charges		-	400	-	-	(517)	-
Advances of glebe, miscellaneous and car loans		-	-	-	-	-	-
Repayment of glebe, miscellaneous and car loans		-	144	-	-	250	-
Purchase of fixed assets	1	-	(209)	-	-	(147)	-
NET CASH FLOW FROM CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS		-	(1,518)	(1,325)	-	18,987	(14,000)
FINANCING							
Net cash inflow for specific trusts		-	-	253	-	-	17,544
NET CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING		-	-	253	-	-	17,544
(DECREASE)/INCREASE IN CASH	9	-	(2,090)	(1,072)	-	16,167	3,544

Signed: *LJW MacCann*  
*GC Richards*  
Date: *12 March 2024*

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

1 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Premises €'000	Furniture and fittings €'000	Office equipment €'000	Total €'000
<u>Cost</u>				
At 1st January 2023	8,466	693	2,566	11,725
Additions	-	48	161	209
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Currency adjustment	57	-	3	60
At 31st December 2023	<u>8,523</u>	<u>741</u>	<u>2,730</u>	<u>11,994</u>
<u>Accumulated depreciation</u>				
At 1st January 2023	2,390	559	2,174	5,123
Charge for year	160	18	134	312
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Currency adjustment	8	-	3	11
At 31st December 2023	<u>2,558</u>	<u>577</u>	<u>2,311</u>	<u>5,446</u>
<u>Net book value</u>				
At 31st December 2022	<u>6,076</u>	<u>134</u>	<u>392</u>	<u>6,602</u>
At 31st December 2023	<u>5,965</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>419</u>	<u>6,548</u>

2 (a) FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

General Funds use derivatives as part of its portfolio risk management strategy and as part of the portfolio investment return strategy. The use of financial instruments includes currency forwards and government bond futures which are used in the Alliance Bernstein fixed income fund.

The government bond futures at 31 December 2023 are offset by interest rate derivative swaps. The valuation movement of the currency forwards at 31 December 2023 is (€0.08m) (2022: - €0.16m), with a movement of (€-.01m) on the credit default swaps. Realised and unrealised gains/(losses) on derivatives are included in Note 4.

(b) INVESTMENT AT FAIR VALUE

Best practice requires the classification of fair value measurements using a fair value hierarchy that reflects the significance of inputs used in making the measurements.

The fair value hierarchy in use in the entity has the following levels:

Level 1 - Values based on quoted prices in an active market.

Level 2 - Values based on inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable (i.e. developed using market data).

Level 3 - Inputs for the value of the asset or liability are not based on observable market data.

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

2 (b) INVESTMENT AT FAIR VALUE (CONTINUED)

The following is an analysis of the RCB's financial assets measured at fair value as at 31 December 2023.

	2023			Total
	Level 1 €'000	Level 2 €'000	Level 3 €'000	2023 €'000
Financial assets at fair value				
Bonds	22,281	45,732	-	68,013
Equity	126,230	-	-	126,230
Externally Managed Funds	-	4,835	-	4,835
Alternatives	-	-	14,742	14,742
Cash	19,607	-	-	19,607
	<u>168,118</u>	<u>50,567</u>	<u>14,742</u>	<u>233,427</u>

	2022			Total
	Level 1 €'000	Level 2 €'000	Level 3 €'000	2022 €'000
Financial assets at fair value				
Bonds	6,580	51,192	-	57,772
Equity	102,149	-	-	102,149
Externally Managed Funds	-	11,273	10,920	22,193
Alternatives	-	-	14,117	14,117
Cash	23,257	-	-	23,257
	<u>131,986</u>	<u>62,465</u>	<u>25,037</u>	<u>219,488</u>

The RCB invests the majority of its assets in investments that are traded in an active market and can be readily disposed of. The underlying investments of Level 3 Externally Managed Funds are mainly made up of quoted investments and these funds comprise RCB holdings in pooled investment vehicles, managed by RCB directly.

The hierarchy of the underlying investments in the Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds are available in the ROI Unit Trust and NI Unit Trust Financial Statements.

2 (c) SECURITIES LENDING

The invested assets of General Funds include securities on loan at year end with a market value of €12.8m (2022: €14.6m). The loaned securities continue to be carried as investment assets in General Fund investments in the Balance Sheet. The lending agreement requires collateral to be provided by the borrowers of the securities. General Funds hold non cash collateral of €13.6m (2022: €15.4m) in respect of these securities. This collateral is not recorded as an asset with a matching liability in the Balance Sheet. The income received due to securities lending activities is included in income from investments in the SoFA and totals €36k for the year (2022: €35k).

3 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
RB General Unit Trusts	349,136	322,670
Cash	207	199
	<u>349,343</u>	<u>322,869</u>

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

4 FUNDS EMPLOYED

	Balance at 1.1.23 €'000	Decrease in resources before gains and losses €'000	Currency translation movements €'000	Pension & reserve movements €'000	Recognised gains/ (losses) €'000	Profit on investment sales €'000	Fund Fees €'000	Revaluation movements €'000	Balance at 31.12.23 €'000
Capital invested	220,955	(1,157)	326	(195)	504	3,385	(632)	12,758	235,944
Property Reserve	3,835	-	56	-	-	-	-	-	3,891
Invested assets	224,790	(1,157)	382	(195)	504	3,385	(632)	12,758	239,835
Net capital invested	224,790	(1,157)	382	(195)	504	3,385	(632)	12,758	239,835
<b>Designated reserves</b>									
Allocations reserve for following year (Note 6)	4,041	-	21	195	-	-	-	-	4,257
Staff pensions reserve	98	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	99
Sundry designated reserves	1,657	-	5	-	(228)	-	-	-	1,434
	230,586	(1,157)	408	-	277	3,385	(632)	12,758	245,625

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

5 COST OF OPERATIONS	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
Cost of generating funds		
Payroll and related costs	1,589	1,470
Less - payroll & other costs recharged	(250)	(326)
	1,339	1,144
External Investment managers and other costs	79	91
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	286	215
Depreciation	163	166
	1,867	1,616
Cost of charitable activities		
Payroll and related costs	785	762
Less - payroll costs recharged	(257)	(246)
	528	516
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	174	131
Depreciation	102	104
RCB Library	267	254
Church Wide Mental Health Project	97	207
Church Wide grants	-	96
Pioneering Ministry	-	39
	1,168	1,347
Cost of governance activities		
Payroll and related costs	510	481
Less - payroll costs recharged	(214)	(205)
	296	276
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	78	60
Depreciation	46	47
Audit fees	88	79
Central committee & Episcopal Electoral expenses	57	59
Episcopal electors expenses	-	-
	565	521
Other operating costs		
Professional fees	457	321
Payroll payments to retired staff	62	62
	519	383
Total cost of operations	4,119	3,867

RCB cost of operations arising are recovered from General Funds and Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds where appropriate.

The activities falling under each function heading are set out in Accounting Policies (xv), on page 11 of the financial statements.



**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

6 ALLOCATIONS

	2024 €'000	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
(a) Reserve for following year			
Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry	1,492	1,348	1,238
Retired clergy and surviving spouses	-	100	103
Training of ordinands	1,302	1,251	1,239
General Synod activities	1,205	1,161	1,079
Miscellaneous financing	17	16	16
Pioneering Ministry	241	192	-
Reserve for following year (see Note 4)	<u>4,257</u>	<u>4,068</u>	<u>3,675</u>
		2023 €'000	2022 €'000
(b) Expended in year			
Allocation Expended in Year		4,068	3,675
Less - allocations (unexpended)		(208)	(238)
		<u>3,860</u>	<u>3,437</u>

The reserve for 2024 Allocations included in designated reserves in Note 4, is the gross amount committed by General Funds to be spent on wider Church activities in 2024.

(c) Special cost of living grant to retired Clergy

In the prior year the Representative Church Body approved the payment of special cost of living grants to assist retired clergy who are in receipt of a pension provision from the Clergy Pensions Fund. The special cost of living grants to be paid total €0.95m, with €0.12m paid in 2022 and €0.83m provided in 2022 to be paid in 2023.

7 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS

	Balance at 1.1.23 €'000	Currency translation movements €'000	Capital changes/ movements €'000	Profit/ (loss) on sales €'000	Revaluation movements €'000	Balance at 31.12.23 €'000
(a) INVESTED CAPITAL						
Parish trusts and glebe sales	183,016	917	363	356	11,383	196,035
Diocesan stipend and general funds	37,697	283	(95)	17	2,287	40,189
Diocesan miscellaneous trusts	14,615	77	147	-	966	15,805
Diocesan episcopal funds	9,499	32	(174)	-	662	10,019
Less: diocesan car loans	(1)	-	1	-	-	-
	<u>244,826</u>	<u>1,309</u>	<u>242</u>	<u>373</u>	<u>15,298</u>	<u>262,048</u>
Sundry trusts	74,546	253	(354)	17	4,894	79,356
General Synod funds	13,859	50	(14)	-	956	14,851
Trusts for retired clergy and spouses	5,484	37	118	-	288	5,927
	<u>338,715</u>	<u>1,649</u>	<u>(8)</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>21,436</u>	<u>362,182</u>

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

7 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS (CONTINUED)

(b) PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER FUNDS RESERVES

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
<b>Designated</b>		
Diocesan stipend & general funds	6,763	7,217
Parish endowments	394	163
Miscellaneous diocesan trusts	862	841
General Synod trusts	265	508
Other trust funds	12,368	10,829
Clergy pensions & related funds	715	677
Trust creditors	1,437	1,204
	<u>22,804</u>	<u>21,439</u>
<b>Undesignated</b>		
Auxiliary and Sundry Projects Funds	1,906	1,345
	<u>1,906</u>	<u>1,345</u>
<b>Summary - reserves</b>		
Designated	22,804	21,439
Undesignated	1,906	1,345
	<u>24,710</u>	<u>22,784</u>

(c) SUMMARY - PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
Capital funds invested	362,182	338,715
Designated and undesignated reserves	24,710	22,784
	<u>386,892</u>	<u>361,499</u>
Net (withdrawals)/receipts		
Capital (withdrawals)/receipts (7b)	(8)	10,643
Movement in reserves (7b)	1,926	3,152
	<u>1,918</u>	<u>13,795</u>

**THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

8 CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

The Cash Flow Statement has been prepared in line with the measurement principles of Financial Reporting Standard No 1.

Reconciliation of surplus of incoming resources before allocations and distributions to net cash inflow:

	Notes	2023			2022		
		RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000	RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000
Net incoming resources before allocations and distributions		-	2,703	13,434	-	1,984	10,576
Other recognised losses		(856)	856	-	16	(16)	-
Change in other debtors		930	(62)	-	(472)	(71)	-
Change in creditors		(606)	-	-	18	-	-
Change in financial instruments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net amortisation of fixed assets	1	323	-	-	291	-	-
Special pension fees		-	-	-	-	-	-
Profit on sale of properties		-	-	-	-	(184)	-
Transfer		209	(209)	-	147	(147)	-
<b>Net cash inflow</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>3,288</b>	<b>13,434</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>10,576</b>

9 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CASH DURING THE YEAR

	Notes	2023			2022		
		RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000	RCB €'000	General Funds €'000	Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds €'000
Net cash (outflow)/inflow		-	(2,132)	(1,325)	-	16,298	4,134
Effect of foreign exchange rate change:		-	42	253	-	(128)	(590)
<b>(Decrease)/increase in cash</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>(2,090)</b>	<b>(1,072)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,170</b>	<b>3,544</b>
Balance at 1 January		-	24,764	38,828	-	8,594	35,284
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,674</b>	<b>37,756</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,764</b>	<b>38,828</b>

10 ANALYSIS OF CASH BALANCES

Cash on short term deposit		-	3,067	37,549	-	1,506	38,629
Cash at bank		-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash held by investment managers		-	19,607	207	-	23,258	199
<b></b>		<b>-</b>	<b>22,674</b>	<b>37,756</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,764</b>	<b>38,828</b>

11 FINANCIAL RISK

The main risks to the RCB relating to its holding of investments and other financial instruments are market price, foreign currency, interest rate, liquidity and credit risk.

(a) Market Price Risk

Market risk arises mainly from uncertainty about future prices of investments and other financial instruments held. It represents the potential loss the RCB might suffer through holding market positions in the face of price movements. The Investment Committee considers the asset allocation of the portfolio in order to minimise the risk associated with particular countries or industry sectors whilst continuing to follow the RCB's investment objective.

(b) Foreign currency risk

A portion of the financial assets/net assets of the RCB is denominated in currencies other than euro with the effect that the Balance Sheet and total return can be affected by currency movements.

(c) Interest Rate Risk

The RCB has interest bearing assets but does not have interest bearing liabilities.

The interest rate profile of the Trust's interest bearing financial assets fall within a range of 0% to 12.002% at 31 December 2023.

(d) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities.

The RCB invests the majority of its assets in investments that are traded in an active market which can be readily realised.

(e) Credit Risk

The RCB may be exposed to a credit risk in relation to parties with whom it trades and will bear the risk of settlement default. The RCB minimises concentrations of credit risk by undertaking transactions with a number of brokers and counterparties on recognised and reputable exchanges.

12 POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There are no post balance sheet events to note.

13 COMMITMENT

The Representative Body has entered into an agreement with the Clergy Pensions Fund ("the Fund") to provide a loan facility of €20m to support the solvency of the Fund. The commitment is a loan facility secured on specific General Funds invested assets. The commitment would be available to the Fund under certain circumstances and is available to the Fund until 31 December 2028.

14 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

At the balance sheet date, a legal action was ongoing between certain individuals and a Church of Ireland Diocese in Northern Ireland, regarding historic abuse allegations. Although the RCB is not a named defendant, it has committed to assisting the Diocese financially in relation to the matter. While the RCB envisages that it will incur some future costs in assisting the Diocese, it is too early to provide a reliable estimate of the extent or timing of such costs. Accordingly, no provision has been included in the financial statements in relation to this matter.

15 The financial statements have been approved on 12th March 2024.

## APPENDIX A

### RB CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

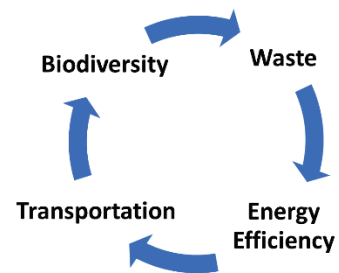
**Introduction:** The Representative Body of the Church of Ireland (the ‘RB’) is the principal trustee of the Church of Ireland. The RB provides investment, property & trusts, financial, governance and archival services for the dioceses and parishes of the church.

The purpose of this policy, that applies to the RB, is to:

- (i) raise awareness so that we give consideration to the impact of the activities of the RB on the environment,
- (ii) to detail specific areas of focus, and
- (iii) to seek to reduce any negative impact of these activities on the environment.

**Strategic target areas:** In considering the activities of the RB, it is proposed to focus on the following four areas which represent the areas through which it is expected that the RB can make the most impact in terms of improved environmental sustainability.

- **Energy usage**, with a focus on reducing usage in light and heat, through insulation and LED usage which will conserve resources, and encouraging the use of sustainable energy.
- **Transportation**, with a focus on reducing distances travelled and encouraging more energy efficient forms of transport.
- **Waste**, with a focus on efficient production such that waste is minimised and where waste occurs to encourage ecological forms of disposal.
- **Biodiversity**, with a focus on preserving both the variety and numbers of flora and fauna.



**Climate Change Initiatives:** The RB will promote sound environmental policies and practices within the organisation. It will support initiatives in the form of guidance for parishes and dioceses which will be published as Parish Resources on the Church of Ireland website. The committees of the RB will seek to encourage a biodiverse and low energy environment through the grants which it issues to parishes and dioceses. The RB will publicise initiatives as a form of ensuring accountability and to encourage parishes and dioceses to consider their environmental impact and to develop their own initiatives to sustain biodiversity and efficient use of resources.

In summary, the RB will seek to provide:

- Leadership**, in the form of seeking to be environmentally responsible and sharing examples of best practice.
- Guidance**, in the form of providing practical advice for parishes.
- Grants**, to support the implementation of energy efficiency and biodiversity.

Approved by the RB Executive Committee on: 24 January 2023

Approved by the Representative Body on: 14 March 2023

**APPENDIX B**

**Extract from the accounts of  
THE CHURCH OF IRELAND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
For the year ended 30 June 2023**

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Income</b>		
Grant from the RB	845,000	845,000
Lecturers	13,455	9,802
Accommodation fees M Th	62,780	65,070
Non-stipendiary ministry training	1,000	1,600
CME	21,271	13,775
Reflective Learning CCTP	40,312	43,555
Reflective Learning OLM	25,523	-
Receipts from guests and Conferences	206,049	131,657
Legacy	61,970	-
	<u>1,277,360</u>	<u>1,110,459</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Academic expenses	507,987	440,660
Administration expenses	116,642	111,291
Operating expenses	320,095	295,006
Establishment expenses	332,429	231,032
	<u>1,277,153</u>	<u>1,077,989</u>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	207	32,470
Balance at beginning of the year	32,470	71,636
Funding adjustment in respect of previous year surplus	(32,470)	(71,636)
<b>Balance at the end of the year</b>	<u>207</u>	<u>32,470</u>

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those dealt with above.

**Extract from the accounts of  
THE CHURCH OF IRELAND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE**

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**BALANCE SHEET  
As at 30 June 2023**

	2023	2022
	€	€
<b>Current assets</b>		
Sundry debtors	91,683	130,269
Bank deposit accounts	694	694
Bank current accounts	42,979	39,476
Cash on hand	24	4
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	135,380	170,443
<b>Creditors - amounts falling due within one year</b>	(133,911)	(135,735)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net current assets</b>	1,469	34,708
Total assets less current liabilities	1,469	34,708
<b>Creditors - amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	(694)	(694)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net assets</b>	775	34,014
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Capital and trust funds</b>		
Accumulated surplus	207	32,470
Ferrar Memorial Fund for Liturgical Library	137	81
Gregg Memorial Fund for College Library	431	1,463
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	775	34,104
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**APPENDIX C**

**GENERAL UNIT TRUSTS**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND  
EXTRACTS FROM INVESTMENT MANAGER'S REPORTS**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Page
RB General Unit Trust (Republic of Ireland)	65
RB General Unit Trust (Northern Ireland)	69



**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**  
**INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**FUND OBJECTIVE**

To provide above average and growing income along with long term capital growth managed as a euro fund.

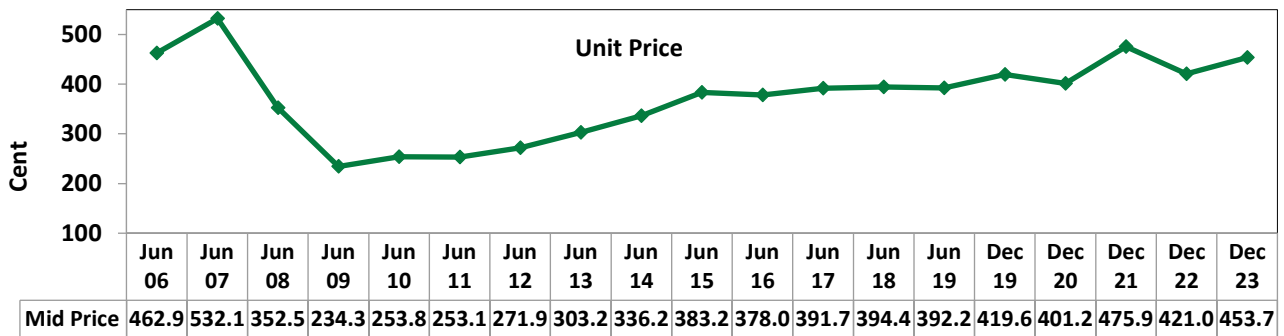
**PERFORMANCE**

Annualised total returns (capital plus income) %			
Fund	1 year	3 years	5 years
<b>RB General Unit Trust (RI)</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>RCB Benchmark*</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>RB General Unit Trust (RI) Capital</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>ROI Inflation (CPI)</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>

\* Benchmark from 1 January 2022: Equities 70%, Bonds 30% (40% Stoxx Europe 600, 30% MSCI World High Dvd Yield € net, 30% ML Euro broad market).

In 2023, the Fund had a total return (capital and income) of 11.7% ahead of benchmark at 10.4%. Outperformance on the Fixed Income side and a higher weighting to European Equities helped as did allocations to more cyclical names. The Investment Committee, as part of its oversight and supervisory duties, monitors the various Fund managers’ performance against the fund’s objectives and Benchmarks and has no significant concerns at the current time.

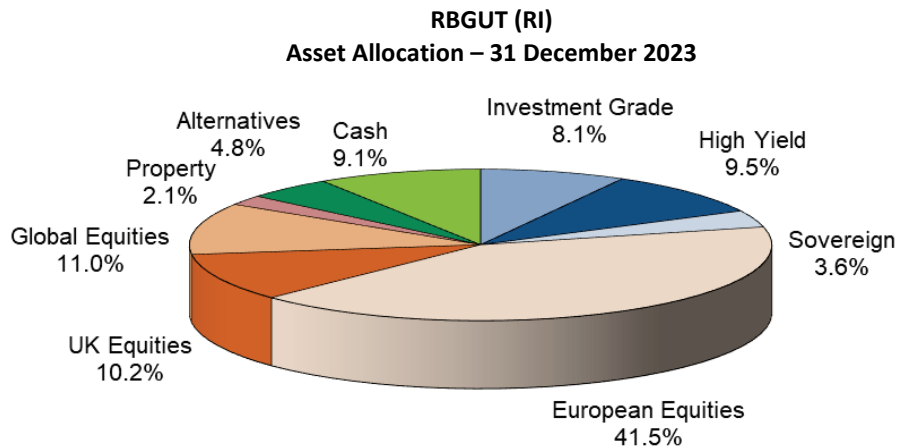
The historic price of a unit is detailed in the below chart:



**TRUST ASSET COMPOSITION**

The market value of the investments, including the value of the capital deposit account was €272.7m.

The investment profile in terms of distribution of the assets (by value) at 31 December 2023 is displayed in the following chart:



**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**  
**INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**INCOME DISTRIBUTION TO UNIT HOLDERS**

The June distribution was maintained at the 2022 level of 7.3 cent with a small increase to the December distribution to 5.2 cent (from 4.7 cent per unit in 2022), resulting in a total distribution for the year of 12.5 cent per unit.

The Trust has a dividend reserve policy that targets a level of 2% of Fund value. The Dividend Equalisation Reserve (DER) will not be allowed to exceed 4% of Fund value and at least 80% of net income in any individual year will be distributed to unit holders. A healthy reserve aids the management of a stable and sustainable distribution going forward.

Based on the value of a unit at 31 December 2023 of €4.53, and a full year distribution of 12.5 cent, the distribution yield was 2.75%. (The comparative figures for 31 December 2022 showed a yield of 2.85% based on a unit value then of €4.21 and a full year distribution of 12.0 cent). During the year there was a transfer of €0.66m to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve resulting in a DER of €6.94m or 2.5% of the net asset value of the fund.

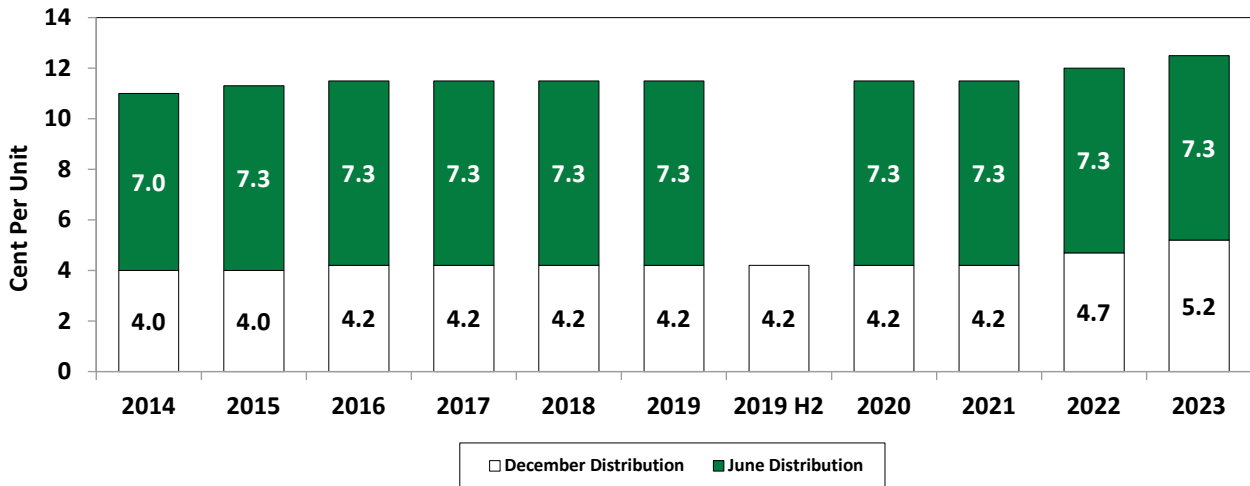
There were net inputs of €2.5m to the Fund for the year to 31 December 2023, reflecting new cash of €4.6m from unitholders less redemptions of €2.1m.

**Environmental and Social Governance (ESG)**

In the reporting period, the Investment Committee monitored and carried out an assessment of exposure to ESG risk. All Fund Managers are compliant with the RCB’s ESG Investment policy and restrictions.

**Income Distributions (2014 – 2023) - Financial Year-End 31 December 2023**

(Financial Year-End June 30<sup>th</sup> up to June 2019, six-month period to end December 2019, full year to 31st December thereafter)



In-house Investment team  
 The Representative Church Body  
 February 2024

**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**

**STATEMENT OF TOTAL RETURN**

	Year ended 31 December 2023 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 €'000
Income	8,790	9,099
Expenses	(138)	(153)
<b>Net income</b>	<u>8,652</u>	<u>8,946</u>
Distributions	<u>(7,997)</u>	<u>(7,522)</u>
Transfer to dividend equalisation reserve	655	1,338
Transfer to Income Reserve	-	86
<b>Net gains/(losses) on investment activities</b>		
- Net realised (losses)	(2,559)	(11,535)
- Net change in unrealised gains/(losses)/ on investments	22,566	(20,375)
- Net change in currency exchange gains	<u>69</u>	<u>56</u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in net assets from investment activities</b>	20,731	(30,430)
<b>Funds brought forward</b>	256,600	277,466
Funds received	4,554	11,462
Funds withdrawn	(2,448)	(1,898)
<b>Funds carried forward</b>	<u><u>279,437</u></u>	<u><u>256,600</u></u>

*Signed on behalf of the Trustee:* *LJW MacCann*

*HJ Prentice*

*Date:*

*12 March 2024*

**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**

**BALANCE SHEET**

	Year ended 31 December 2023 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 €'000
<b>Investments</b>	<u>254,269</u>	<u>235,910</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	25,530	21,072
Cash at bank	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>25,531</u>	<u>21,073</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	<u>363</u>	<u>383</u>
	383	383
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>25,168</u>	<u>20,690</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<u><u>279,437</u></u>	<u><u>256,600</u></u>
<b>Trust capital fund</b>	<u><u>279,437</u></u>	<u><u>256,600</u></u>

*Signed on behalf of the Trustee:*      *LJW MacCann*

*HJ Prentice*

*Date:*

*12 March 2024*

**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)**  
**INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**FUND OBJECTIVE**

To provide above average and growing income along with long term capital growth managed as a sterling fund.

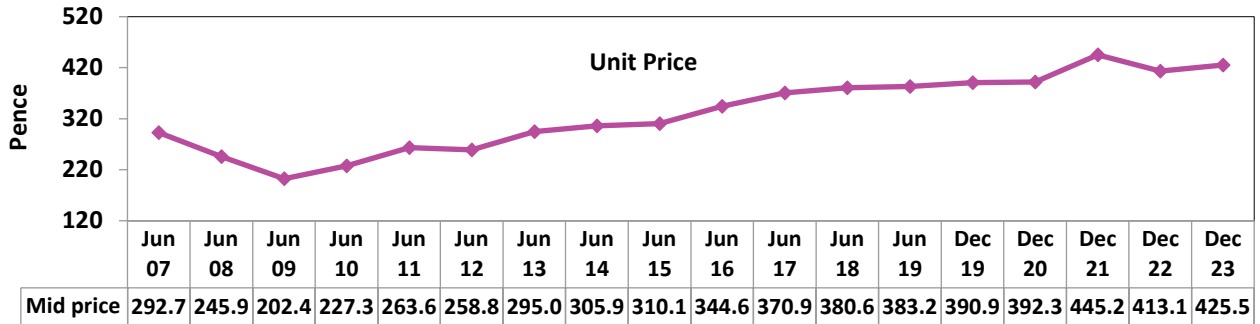
**PERFORMANCE**

Annualised total returns (capital plus income) %			
Fund	1 year	3 years	5 years
<b>RB General Unit Trust (NI)</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>RCB Benchmark*</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>RB General Unit Trust (NI) Capital</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>UK Inflation (CPI)</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>

\* Benchmark from 1 January 2022: Equities 70%, Bonds 30% (40% FTSE All-Share, 30% MSCI World High Dvd Yield £ net, 30% ML Sterling broad market).

In 2023, the Fund had a total return (capital and income) of 7.0% ahead of benchmark at 5.6%. The UK stock market underperformed its European and US peers in 2023 (local currency) and the position in European equities helped. The UK market has a large exposure to Energy which underperformed as energy prices fell but the portfolio has a restriction on Companies involved in the extraction of Fossil Fuels which was a positive in 2023. The Investment Committee, as part of its oversight and supervisory duties, monitors the various Fund managers’ performance against the fund’s objectives and Benchmarks and has no significant concerns at the current time.

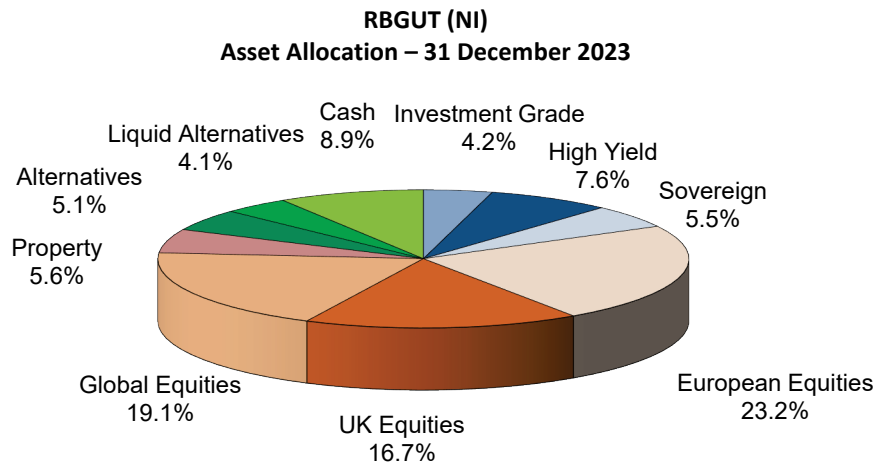
The historic price of a unit is detailed in the below chart.



**TRUST ASSET DISTRIBUTION**

The market value of the investments, including the value of the capital deposit account was £66.3m.

The investment profile in terms of distribution of the assets (by value) at 31 December 2023 is displayed in the following chart:



**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)**  
**INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**INCOME DISTRIBUTION TO UNIT HOLDERS**

The June distribution was maintained at the 2022 level of 6.3 pence with a small increase to the December distribution to 5.5 pence (from 5.0 pence per unit in 2022), resulting in a total distribution for the year of 11.8 pence per unit.

The Trust has a dividend reserve policy that targets a level of 2% of Fund value. The Dividend Equalisation Reserve (DER) will not be allowed to exceed 4% of Fund value and at least 80% of net income in any individual year will be distributed to unit holders. A healthy reserve aids the management of a stable and sustainable distribution going forward.

Based on the value of a unit at 31 December 2023 of £4.25, and a full year distribution of 11.8 pence, the distribution yield was 2.78%. (The comparative figures for 31 December 2022 showed a yield of 2.74% based on a unit value then of £4.13 and a full year distribution of 11.3 pence). During the year there was a transfer of £0.42m to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve resulting in a DER of £1.82m or 2.7% of the net asset value of the fund.

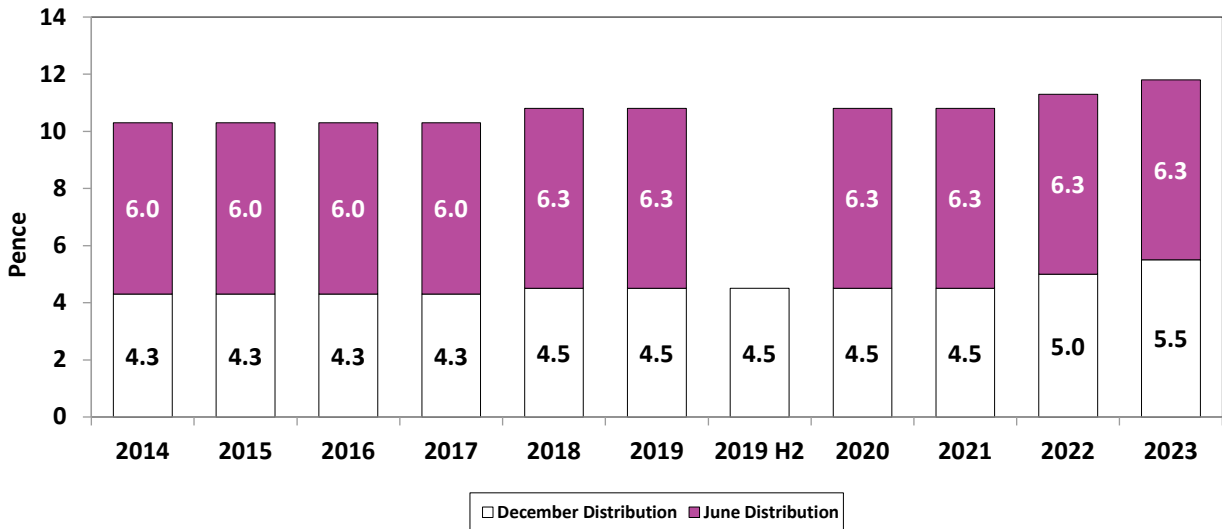
There were net inputs of £0.48m to the Fund for the year to 31 December 2023, reflecting new cash of £0.64m from unitholders less redemptions of £0.16m.

**Environmental and Social Governance (ESG)**

In the reporting period, the Investment Committee monitored and carried out an assessment of exposure to ESG risk. All Fund Managers are compliant with the RCB’s ESG Investment policy and restrictions.

**Income Distributions (2014 – 2023) - Financial Year-End 31 December 2023**

(Financial Year-End June 30<sup>th</sup> up to June 2019, six-month period to end December 2019, full year to 31st December thereafter)



In-house Investment team  
 The Representative Church Body  
 February 2024

**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

**STATEMENT OF TOTAL RETURN**

	Year ended 31 December 2023 £'000	Year Ended 31 December 2022 £'000
Income	2,417	2,328
Expenses	<u>(38)</u>	<u>(32)</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	2,379	2,296
Distributions	<u>(1,957)</u>	<u>(1,882)</u>
Transfer to dividend equalisation reserve	422	374
Transfer to income reserve	-	40
<b>Net gains/(losses) on investment activities</b>		
Net realised (losses)	(315)	(30)
Net realised gains/(losses) on currency movements	5	(6)
Net change in unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	<u>2,490</u>	<u>(4,706)</u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in net assets from investment activities</b>	<u>2,602</u>	<u>(4,328)</u>
<b>Funds brought forward</b>	65,226	69,646
Funds received	634	644
Funds withdrawn	<u>(390)</u>	<u>(736)</u>
<b>Funds carried forward</b>	<u><u>68,072</u></u>	<u><u>65,226</u></u>

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: *LJW MacCann*

*HJ Prentice*

Date:

*12 March 2024*

**THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

**BALANCE SHEET**

	Year ended 31 December 2023 £'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 £'000
<b>Investments</b>	<u>62,091</u>	<u>61,204</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	6,101	4,082
Cash at bank	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>6,102</u>	<u>4,083</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors (amounts falling due within 1 year)	<u>121</u>	<u>61</u>
	121	170
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>5,981</u>	<u>4,022</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<u><u>68,072</u></u>	<u><u>65,226</u></u>
<b>Trust capital fund</b>	<u><u>68,072</u></u>	<u><u>65,226</u></u>

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: *LJW MacCann*  
*HJ Prentice*  
 Date: *12 March 2024*



## APPENDIX D

### ESG INVESTMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2024

As the Trustee of the Church of Ireland, The Representative Church Body is tasked with supporting the ministry of the Church for generations to come. This objective is supported through the prudent management of investments. As a religious organisation, stewardship obligations are more than purely for financial benefit and the RCB has a responsibility to invest in a manner consistent with the witness and ethos of the Church of Ireland.

#### Approach to ESG



The Trustee is committed to acting diligently and prudently when seeking to deliver strong net returns on its investments and recognises that ESG risks and opportunities should be considered as part of the investment decision making processes. The RCB invests in a variety of asset classes and geographies, using different strategies, and has appointed external investment managers to manage its investment portfolios. Each investment manager's ESG credentials and their capacity to implement the RCB's responsible investment requirements as outlined in this policy are assessed as part of the due diligence and manager selection processes and integrated into the Investment Management Agreements.

#### How is ESG implemented?

Whilst the RCB encourages its Fund Managers to integrate ESG factors into the investment decision making process it also implements restrictions for investments in certain sectors. The RCB does not invest in any company:

1. involved in the production of controversial weapons or their key components.
2. where a significant source of revenue (in excess of 10%) is derived from the following:
  - a) the production of conventional weapons (including key parts and services)
  - b) the extraction of Fossil fuels - thermal coal, tar sands and oil and natural gas (as defined by exposure to oil & gas reserves)
  - c) the manufacture of tobacco products

Climate Change and environmental stability are recognised by the RCB as a distinct and critical responsible investment issue. The RCB supports the transition to a carbon neutral economy and has taken significant steps to reduce the climate change impact of its investment portfolios.

The Investment Committee monitors ESG issues on an on-going basis and conducts a detailed ESG review of its investments annually to ensure that the investments held for all funds remain consistent with the RCB's ESG policy and that the investment managers continue to be sensitive to the Church's expectations on environmental, social and governance issues in their investment decision-making process.

*From time-to-time investments may be made in pooled Funds to which ESG criteria may not be applied. The Investment Committee monitors exposure of these Funds to excluded sectors as per the RCB's ESG Investment Policy and shall consider divestment where any material breaches are identified.*

September 2023

## APPENDIX E

### THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION SCHEMES (NI AND RI) – REPORTS OF THE SCHEME TRUSTEES

#### **The Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, Northern Ireland (“the Scheme”)**

##### ***Background***

The Scheme commenced on 1 June 2013 and is a Defined Contribution Scheme. The individual member’s benefits are determined by reference to the contributions paid into the Scheme by and in respect of that member and based on the investment return on those contributions.

##### ***Management of the Scheme***

Trustee Solutions Limited (TSL) is the professional independent trustee of the Scheme appointed by the Representative Church Body (RCB) to carry out the purposes of the trust and represent the best interests of the beneficiaries. TSL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Pinsent Masons LLP, an international law firm.

The member’s rights and obligations under the scheme are managed by the Trustee in accordance with a Definitive Deed and Rules dated 1 October 2015. The Scheme is a registered pension scheme for tax purposes under Part 4 of the Finance Act 2004.

##### ***Administration***

Administration services are provided by Scottish Widows who invest the Scheme contributions in accordance with the investment options selected by the member. Members of the Scheme receive annual benefit statements showing the value of their investment funds, together with an illustration of their benefits at normal retirement age. Members can also check how their funds are performing by logging into the Scottish Widows member website.

##### ***Investments***

Mercer Limited is appointed by the Trustee as consultant and to manage the Scheme investments. Mercer provides quarterly investment reports to the Trustee reviewing how the investments have performed over the previous quarter and since inception. Over the long term the investment funds available to members have performed at least in line with the appropriate benchmarks.

The Trustee believes that environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors (such as climate change) are important when investing Scheme assets. The Trustee considers how ESG, climate change and stewardship are integrated within Mercer’s investment processes and those of the underlying managers in the monitoring process.

##### ***Governance***

As part of the ongoing monitoring, auditing and assessment of Scottish Widows services Mercer provide quarterly operational governance reports to the Trustee. Scottish Widows products and services are monitored by Mercer each quarter against the required market-leading position. No issues have arisen during the ongoing monitoring and assessment of Scottish Widows services during the year.

##### ***Value for Members***

The Trustee obtains an annual “Value for Members” assessment of the Scheme. The most recent review (dated October 2023) concluded that the scheme represented “reasonable” overall value for members when compared against master trust arrangements. The review found that the costs and charges borne by the members are higher than those in master trust arrangements resulting in “poor” value for members under this heading. However, by taking account of overall investment performance and wider scheme governance, the Scheme achieved a “reasonable” overall rating. The Trustee and the RCB are actively investigating what actions can be taken to improve value for members.

Details of all charges and transaction costs within the Scheme are included in the Trustee Chair’s annual statement (dated 22 November) which is available on the RCB website.

Trustee Solutions Limited  
March 2024

**The Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, Republic of Ireland (“the Scheme”)**

The Scheme is Defined Contribution in nature and commenced on 1 June 2013.

Irish Pensions Trust Limited (“IPT”) is the professional trustee of the Scheme.

The primary role of IPT is to ensure that the Scheme operates efficiently, the trust is executed correctly, and, at all times, act in the interests of the beneficiaries.

The Registered Administrator and Investment Manager of the Scheme is Zurich Life Assurance plc. Mercer (Ireland) Limited is the consultant and investment advisor. Mercer provides quarterly investment reports to the Trustee reviewing how the investments have performed over the previous quarter and since inception.

The Trustee believes that environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors are important when investing Scheme assets. The Trustee considers how ESG, climate change and stewardship are integrated within Mercer’s investment processes and those of the underlying managers in the monitoring process.

PricewaterhouseCoopers audit the financial statements.

The Revenue Approval Number is SF – 3946 and the Pensions Board reference number is PB – 269291

The new EU Directive on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision (the IORP II Directive) became law in April 2021. IORP II is intended to improve the management of pension schemes by implementing stricter rules around governance and communication. The Pensions Act requires trustees to prepare an Annual Compliance Statement (“ACS”) by 31 January each year. This serves as a declaration by trustees that they have fulfilled their duties and obligations in relation to the operation of the pension scheme in the prior year. The ACS for the Scheme was completed in January and confirmed that all requirements listed on the ACS have been fulfilled.

At the end of the last reporting period (31 May 2023) the Scheme had 174 active members and 42 deferred members. The value of the assets at that date was € 14.63 (€13.78m at 31 May 2022) and the Scheme was compliant with all Revenue and Pensions Act (as amended) requirements.

Irish Pensions Trust Limited, as trustee of the Scheme  
March 2024

**APPENDIX F**

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND  
CLERGY PENSIONS TRUSTEE DAC**

**REPORT ON THE CLERGY PENSIONS FUND  
FOR THE  
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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## THE TRUSTEE AND ITS ADVISORS

<b>Trustee</b>	The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Designated Activity Company
<b>Registered Office</b>	Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 Tel 01-4978422 Email <pensiontrustee@rcbcoi.org> Web <www.ireland.anglican.org/clergypensions>  Company Registered in Ireland No 492302  The Representative Church Body is the sole member of the Company.
<b>Trustee Directors</b>	<i>Nominated by the RB Executive Committee</i> Ven Barry Forde Mr Alan Hood Ms Hilary Prentice  <i>Nominated by the Church of Ireland Pensions Board</i> Mr Robert Neill Mr Adrian Robinson (Chair)
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer and Secretary, Representative Church Body
<b>Fund Management and Advisory</b>	The Representative Church Body, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6  Lane Clark Peacock Ireland Ltd, Office 2, Grand Canal Wharf, South Dock Road, Dublin 4, D04 H583
<b>Investment Managers</b>	The Representative Church Body ( <i>address as above</i> ) Irish Life Investment Managers, Beresford Court, Dublin 1
<b>Investment Custodians</b>	RCB – Northern Trust, Canary Wharf, London E14 5NT ILIM – Citibank, 1 North Wall Quay, Dublin 1
<b>Scheme Actuary</b>	Mr Liam Quigley, Mercer, Charlotte House, Charlemont Street, Dublin 2
<b>Consulting Actuaries</b>	Mercer Actuarial Services, Charlotte House, Charlemont Street, Dublin 2
<b>Auditors</b>	PricewaterhouseCoopers, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, Spencer Dock, Dublin 1
<b>Solicitor</b>	Mr Mark McWha, Senior Solicitor, Representative Church Body
<b>Bankers</b>	Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2 Bank of Ireland, Talbot Street, Dublin 1
<b>Sponsor</b>	The Representative Church Body, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6
<b>Registered Administrator</b>	The Representative Church Body, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6
<b>Risk Management Key Function Holder</b>	Mercer Ireland Ltd, Charlotte House, Charlemont Street, Dublin 2, D02 NV26
<b>Internal Audit Key Function Holder</b>	Mazars, Block 3 Harcourt Centre, Harcourt Road, Dublin 2, D02 A339
<b>Enquiries</b>	The Company Secretary, Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

The Clergy Pensions Fund is Pensions Authority Scheme no PB1667.

## INTRODUCTION

The Trustee presents its annual report on the operation of the Clergy Pensions Fund for the year ended 31 December 2023. The report covers the main areas of Fund activity including financial statements, actuarial and investment management, and also looks at developments during the year. The content of this report conforms to the Occupational Pensions Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, 2006 prescribed by the Minister for Social Protection under the Pensions Act 1990.

## OPERATIONAL REPORT 2023

### Financial position of the Fund

Year on year there was an increase in the Fund assets of €14.99m with a closing value of €206.82m, having met benefit payments of €6.91m together with administrative and other costs of €0.28m.

Contributions to the Fund in the year were €2.74m, being the total value of diocesan pension levies and a contribution from the RCB. Investment return, including income and realised and unrealised investment gains, totalled €19.45m net of investment management expenses. The Fund is managed with the objective of meeting the cost of future liabilities from a combination of contributions, income and growth in investment value.

The return on the Fund's assets in the year was 9.7% against a benchmark return of 11.1%. The benchmark is currently under review.

The development of the Fund is monitored by the Actuary and a full Actuarial Valuation is carried out at intervals of not more than three years and the final results presented to the Trustee. The most recent triennial valuation was as at 30 September 2021. This was the third full valuation since a Funding Proposal was agreed with the Pensions Authority in 2013, in response to the result of the 2012 triennial valuation which had shown that the Fund did not satisfy the Minimum Funding Standard under Section 44 of the Pensions Act at that date. The overall objective of the Funding Proposal was to restore the solvency of the Fund by 31 December 2023 through the implementation of a series of funding and cost saving initiatives.

Interest rates increased during 2023, building on the increases of 2022, and leading to a further reduction in the discounted value of the future liabilities of the Fund. The liabilities of the Fund are represented by the capitalised value of the benefits payable to members in the future. Future liabilities are calculated by reference to the yield available on investment grade bonds of a similar duration to the liabilities of the Fund. As yields rose during the year, this reduced the cost of purchasing such bonds, and thus reduced the actuarially calculated liability.

In the 2021 triennial valuation the Actuary confirmed that the financial position of the Fund had improved since the previous valuation and that the Scheme satisfied the Funding Standard and Funding Standard Reserve at the valuation date, 30 September 2021.

The Actuary is also required to undertake an annual assessment of the Fund. The Actuary in his annual assessment as at 31 December 2023 confirmed that he was reasonably satisfied that the Scheme would have satisfied the Funding Standard and the Funding Standard Reserve at 31 December 2023. The Actuary has confirmed that the Funding Proposal, the objective of which was to put the Scheme in a position to satisfy the Funding Standard and Funding Standard Reserve by 31 December 2023, has now concluded.

Following detailed discussions and taking into account advice received from the Actuary, it was agreed during 2023 to propose discretionary increases to pensions in payment and increases to Pensionable Stipend from 1 January 2024. These increases were conditional on the Clergy Pensions Fund solvency levy being continued at the reduced rate of 3% of MAS for the next three years, to be reviewed thereafter. The proposals were duly approved to take effect on 1 January 2024. Further details are set out overleaf.

Copies of the Actuarial Funding Certificate and Funding Standard Reserve Certificate as submitted to the Pensions Authority following the most recent triennial valuation are included as Annex 2 to this report (page 101).

A copy of the Actuary's Statement as at 31 December 2023 is included as Annex 3 (page 104).

During 2022, the RCB (as Sponsor) agreed to provide the Fund with a contingent secured loan for €20m to enable the Trustee to pursue a growth strategy to maximise future benefits and the ability of the scheme to provide pension increases.

### **Administrative duties**

The Trustee is pleased to report that the Fund has been administered in accordance with regulatory requirements during the year. Various duties in relation to the operation of the Fund were carried out during 2023 by the RCB Pension Administration Department, the Church of Ireland Pensions Board and the RB Investment Committee. The Trustee wishes to thank each of these for their assistance and support in its management of the Fund.

### **Membership**

Details on the membership of the Fund are reported by the Church of Ireland Pensions Board in Annex 1 to this report (see page 98). The Fund was closed to new members and to future accruals of pensionable service on 31 May 2013.

### **Pensions in payment**

In accordance with the Rules of the scheme, annual discretionary increases to pensions in payment are permitted, such as the Trustee on the advice of the Actuary and with the approval of the RCB may determine.

The General Synod in 2023 passed a Bill amending Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* removing the ceiling figure on annual increases to pensions and child dependency allowances under the Clergy Pensions Fund, and granting the Trustee discretion to implement any increase on and from a date other than 1 January of the year following approval of any increase.

It was agreed during 2023 that the following rates of discretionary increase be applied with effect from 1 January 2024:

Pensions payable in Sterling	24.7140% less any percentage increases required by law applied since January 2010
Pensions payable in Euro	12.1575%

### **Pensionable Stipend**

Pensionable Stipend is used to calculate the value of pension benefits payable. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, levels of Pensionable Stipend for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are fixed annually by the Standing Committee of General Synod on the recommendation of the Representative Church Body (RCB) and the Trustee.

It was agreed by the Standing Committee in September 2023, on the recommendation of the RCB and the Trustee, that Pensionable Stipend levels with effect from 1 January 2024 should be increased to £31,800 (2023: £25,498) per annum in Northern Ireland and €40,622 (2023: €36,219) per annum in the Republic of Ireland.

The increases were granted on condition that the Clergy Pensions Fund continue to receive a solvency levy, to be paid by each diocese, at a rate of 3% of Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024, 2025 and 2026. The Standing Committee in 2023 set the rate of levy at 3% for 2024. The RCB has agreed that the recommended rate of levy for 2025 and 2026 will be 3% of Minimum Approved Stipend, subject to annual approval as required under Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.

### **Statutory increases in UK pensions for service post April 1997**

Under UK pensions legislation statutory increases must be applied to a pension which relates to service completed in that jurisdiction for the period (i) 6 April 1997 to 5 April 2005 or normal retirement age, if earlier, by the annualised rate of inflation up to a maximum of 5% and (ii) 6 April 2005 to date of retirement, whether that be on or before normal retirement age, by the annualised rate of inflation up to a maximum of 2.5%.

As the discretionary increase of 24.714% (less any percentage increases required by law applied since January 2010) is greater than both UK annualised rate of inflation and the maximum increases required by law this is the increase that was applied on 1 January 2024.

There is no similar pensions legislation in the Republic of Ireland.

### **Deferred pensions**

Deferred pensions are revalued in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions.



### **Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) Schemes**

A report on the AVC Fund for 2023 is contained in the report from the Church of Ireland Pensions Board, set out in Annex 1 to this report (see page 99).

In 1985, the General Synod approved the establishment of a scheme of retirement benefits supplementary to the Clergy Pensions Fund ('the Fund'). The new scheme was entitled 'The Church of Ireland Voluntary Contributions Schemes' (hereinafter referred to as "the AVC Schemes"). The AVC Schemes enabled a member of the Fund to make additional contributions towards that member's pension benefits. As at 31 December 2023, there were nine members of the Fund with contributions in the AVC Schemes.

When, with effect from 31 May 2013, the Fund was closed to new entrants or for future accrual of service by existing members, and the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes were established, the Trustee was appointed trustee of the AVC Schemes in succession to the RCB, which became the sponsor of the AVC Schemes.

Following receipt of advice on the need for changes to the administration and management of the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes, the Trustee and the RCB have determined that it is no longer in the interests of members of the Fund to administer the AVC Schemes as stand-alone schemes, separate from the Fund and the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

The Trustee and the RCB shall seek consent from the General Synod to close the AVC Schemes to further contributions from members of the Fund, to transfer and reinvest all monies held in the AVC Schemes for those members of the Fund with contributions in the AVC Schemes and, following the transfer and reinvestment of all monies held in the AVC Schemes, to proceed to wind up the AVC Schemes.

The following Motion shall be proposed by the RCB on behalf of the Trustee at the General Synod.

That the General Synod:

- (a) approves the closure of the Church of Ireland Voluntary Contributions Schemes ('the AVC Schemes') to further contributions from members of the Clergy Pensions Fund ('the Fund');
- (b) authorizes the Trustee to transfer all monies held in the AVC Schemes for members of the Fund to the appointed pension providers for the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes;
- (c) authorizes the Trustee and the RCB, following the transfer and re-investment of all monies held in the AVC Schemes in the appointed pension providers, to proceed to wind up the AVC Schemes;
- (d) notes the Bill being brought by the RCB before the General Synod to amend the wording of section 49 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* so that henceforth this section shall refer to the dates of the resolutions of the General Synod to establish, as well as to wind up, the AVC Schemes, for future reference.

### **CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE FUND**

The Clergy Pensions Fund is a defined benefit scheme and is established under Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* as amended from time to time by the General Synod.

The Fund has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners as a retirement benefits scheme under Part 30, Chapter I of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997, and is treated as an 'exempt approved scheme' for the purposes of that Act. In addition, the Fund has been approved by the Board of the Inland Revenue of the United Kingdom as a retirement benefits scheme for the purposes of Chapter I, Part XIV, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and is treated as an 'exempt approved scheme' for the purposes of Section 592 of that Act in relation to its provision of pension benefits to those members of the clergy who are living in Northern Ireland.

#### **The Trustee**

The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Designated Activity Company is the sole Trustee of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund and is responsible for the stewardship of the Fund assets in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* (the Trust Deed and Rules of the Fund).

The powers and duties of the Trustee are set out in section 12(1) of Chapter XIV. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIV certain duties have been delegated by the Trustee to the Representative Church Body, the Church of Ireland Pensions Board and the RB Investment Committee. The Statement of the Trustee's Responsibilities in relation to the financial statements is set out on page 87.

The Trustee Directors are appointed by the Representative Church Body, in accordance with the Articles of the company, on the nomination of the Church of Ireland Pensions Board and the Executive Committee of the Representative Church Body.

The Trustee Directors and the persons charged with the administration of the scheme have access to guidelines, guidance notes and codes of practice issued by the Pensions Authority in accordance with section 10 of the Pensions Act.

The Trustee Directors have completed appropriate training for their duties and responsibilities. Costs in respect of Trustee Director training during the year were charged to the Fund.

### **Management and administration of the Fund**

The Representative Church Body was appointed by the Trustee as the Registered Administrator for the Fund. The duties of a registered administrator include preparing the Trustee Annual Report and Accounts, which should include at least the specific information set out in the regulations to the Pensions Act, and providing annual benefit statements to members. In addition to this, the RCB provides administration relating to investments, benefits and accounting controls.

The Church of Ireland Pensions Board also carries out certain duties relating to the administration of the Fund as delegated to the Board by the Trustee in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*. A report from the Board is included in Annex 1 to this report (page 97).

Actuarial advice is provided by Mercer Actuarial Services, Dublin.

The RB Investment Committee, in conjunction with the RCB in-house investment team, take overall responsibility for investment management in furtherance of the investment objectives and strategy for the Fund, using Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM) for the passive management of a proportion of the Fund (69% at year end 2023 compared to 55% at the end of 2022). Investment management is undertaken by investment managers in accordance with a formal fund management agreement. During 2023 the Trustee entered into an agreement with Lane Clark Peacock for the provision of investment advisory services to the Clergy Pensions Fund. The costs in relation to administration, administrative actuarial advice and investment management are charged to the Fund.

The Trustee has appointed Mercer as Risk Management Key Function Holder, and Mazars as Internal Audit Key Function Holder.

During the year ended 31 December 2023 Northern Trust was the custodian of most of the funds managed by the RCB for the Fund, and Citibank was the custodian of the unit-linked funds held by Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM) for the Fund. In addition to the records maintained by the custodians, ILIM maintains its own records of securities, and these securities are held beneficially in the name of Irish Life Assurance plc on behalf of the Trustee of the Fund.

### **Statement of Risk**

Under law, the Trustee is required to describe the condition of the Fund and the risks associated with the Fund, and disclose these to members.

The Trustee is satisfied that it is taking all reasonable steps, including the appointment of experienced professional advisors and administrators, to protect the members of the Fund from the effects of these risks. However, it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, and it is necessary to take some investment risk and other risks in order to manage the affordability of the plan benefits and the capacity of the Sponsor and the Church to meet this commitment.

The full risk statement, which was last updated in 2015 and is reviewed annually, can be found in Annex 4 to this report (page 105).

## **Investment policy**

The overall investment objective of the Trustee is to ensure that the benefits of the Scheme continue to be affordable and that ultimately the level of benefits set out in the Trust Deed and Rules can be paid.

The overall investment strategy aims to maximise the investment return, net of fees, while managing risk by maintaining a maximum ratio of Growth to De-risked Assets in the investment portfolio. De-risked Assets are holdings in liability matching asset classes and generally comprise fixed income sovereign bonds, high grade corporate fixed interest bonds and cash. Growth Assets are represented by all other asset classes.

In the short term a key objective was to ensure that the Scheme would exit the Funding Proposal by 31 December 2023. Over the long term, a core objective is to ensure that the Scheme continues to meet the Funding Standard requirements on an ongoing basis.

The Trustee reviews investment objectives to ensure that they remain appropriate to the profile of the Fund. The Trustee has established a CPF Investment Strategy Workgroup with representation from the Trustee, the RB Executive Committee and the RB Investment Committee. The purpose of the Workgroup is to develop recommendations on investment objectives and investment strategy for consideration by the Trustee.

The investment policy for the management of the assets of the Fund is set out in a Statement of Investment Policy Principles (SIPP) which is reviewed annually. The current SIPP was agreed in 2022 and can be found at Annex 5 (page 106). A review of investment objectives and strategy is currently underway in consultation with the Sponsor and the RB Investment Committee, with the advice of the Actuary.

A proportion of the equity and fixed interest elements of the Clergy Pensions Fund is managed by Irish Life Investment Managers on an indexed (passive) basis replicating the performance of particular indices. The balance of the Fund is managed by the RCB's in-house investment team in accordance with the investment strategy adopted by the Trustee. Certain equities are excluded in accordance with the RCB's Environmental, Social and Governance Policy.

## **Internal Dispute Resolution**

Under Irish pensions legislation all pension schemes are required to have an Internal Dispute Resolution (IDR) Procedure. Disputes arising in connection with the administration of a pension scheme may not be brought to the Pensions Ombudsman unless they have, in the first instance, been processed through that scheme's IDR Procedure.

The trustees of every occupational pension scheme are required to establish internal procedures for resolution of disputes and to set out certain steps which must be included in those procedures. The Trustee has put in place such an IDR Procedure, which was last updated in 2022 and is reviewed annually. The Procedure is available at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/clergypensions](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/clergypensions)> or from the Pensions Administration Manager.

## **Member information**

An Explanatory Booklet, designed to give a broad outline of the Fund and the benefits provided, is available to any member on request from the Pensions Administration Manager.

Benefit Statements as at 31 May are issued annually to all Fund members.

## **Further information**

Queries about the Fund generally, or about individual members' entitlements should be directed to The Pensions Administration Manager, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 (email <[pensions@rcbcoi.org](mailto:pensions@rcbcoi.org)>, tel +353-(0)1-4125630).

Copies of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, which constitutes the Trust Deed and Rules, can be obtained at <[www.ireland.anglican.org/clergypensions](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/clergypensions)> or from the Pensions Administration Manager.

## **Financial statements**

The financial statements of the Clergy Pensions Fund are set out in the following pages.

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – PAGE 1**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023**

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**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**TRUSTEE AND ADVISORS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

**PAGE 3**

**Trustee**

The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC  
Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6

**Actuaries**

Mercer Actuarial Services  
Charlotte House  
Charlemont Street  
Dublin 2

**Auditors**

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors  
One Spencer Dock  
North Wall Quay  
Dublin 1

**Investment Managers**

The Representative Church Body  
Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6

Irish Life Investment Managers  
Beresford Court  
Dublin 1

**Sponsor**

The Representative Church Body  
Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6

**Solicitors**

Mr Mark McWha  
Senior Solicitor  
The Representative Church Body

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**STATEMENT OF THE TRUSTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

**PAGE 4**

The financial statements are the responsibility of the Trustee. Irish pensions legislation requires the Trustee to make available for each scheme year the annual report of the scheme, including audited financial statements and the report of the auditor. The financial statements are required to show a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, of the financial transactions for the scheme year and the assets and liabilities (other than liabilities to pay benefits in the future) at the end of the scheme year and include a statement whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Financial Reports of Pension Schemes (revised December 2014) (SORP), subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

Accordingly, the Trustee must ensure that in the preparation of the scheme financial statements:

- suitable accounting policies are selected and then applied consistently;
- reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates are made; and
- the SORP is followed, or particulars of any material departures are disclosed and explained.

The Trustee confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Trustee is required by law to have appropriate procedures in place throughout the year under review, to ensure that:

- contributions payable are received by the Trustee in accordance with the timetable set out in section 58A of the Act where applicable to the contributions and otherwise within 30 days of the end of the scheme year; and
- contributions payable are paid in accordance with the rules of the Fund.

During the year such procedures were always applied on a timely basis and contributions have been paid in accordance with the rules.

The Trustee is responsible for ensuring that proper membership and financial records are kept on a timely basis sufficient to enable an Annual Report to be prepared for the scheme containing the information specified in Regulation 7 of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2006. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the pension scheme and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities, including the maintenance of an appropriate system of internal control.



## ***Independent auditors' report to the trustee of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pension Fund***

### **Report on the audit of the financial statements**

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#### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the Church of Ireland Clergy Pension Fund Financial Statements financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the scheme during the year ended 31 December 2023 and of the amount and disposition of the assets and liabilities (other than liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future) at that date; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Irish law).

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the statement of net assets as at 31 December 2023 ;
- the fund account for the year then ended;
- the accounting policies; and
- the notes to the financial statements.

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#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)") and applicable law.

Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### *Independence*

We remained independent of the scheme in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the scheme's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the scheme's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.






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**Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The trustee is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

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**Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**
*Responsibilities of the trustee for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the statement of trustee's responsibilities set out on page 4, the trustee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

The trustee is also responsible for such internal control as the trustee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. The trustee is also responsible for ensuring that contributions are made to the scheme in accordance with the scheme's rules.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustee is responsible for assessing the scheme's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustee either intend to wind up the scheme or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

*Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority website at: [https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description\\_of\\_auditors\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_audit.pdf](https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf).

This description forms part of our auditors' report.

*Use of this report*

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the trustee as a body in accordance with section 56 of the Pensions Act 1990, as amended and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.



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## **Other required reporting**

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### **Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, 2006**

In our opinion:

- The financial statements include the information specified in Schedule A to the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, 2006 which is applicable and material to the scheme.
- the contributions payable to the scheme during the year ended 31 December 2023 have been received by the trustee within thirty days of the end of the scheme year; and
- such contributions have been paid in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'PricewaterhouseCoopers'.

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm  
Dublin  
19 March 2024

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**PAGE 8**

The significant accounting policies adopted by the Trustee are as follows:

(i) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland (accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council of the UK), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations (2006), and the guidelines set out in the Statement of Recommended Practice, Financial Reports of Pensions Schemes (Revised December 2014).

(ii) Investments

A proportion of the invested assets is managed by Irish Life Investment Managers and is held in unitised funds. This fund tracks a range of published equity and bond indices. The value of the units at the year end reflects the relative performance of these indices and the value of the relevant underlying stocks. The balance of funds are managed by the Representative Church Body. The split of the invested assets is shown in Note 6 to these accounts.

(iii) Investment Income

The invested assets managed by Irish Life Investment Managers are held in unitised funds. The income is attributed to the funds as it arises and is not separately reported. Income from directly held assets under Representative Church Body management is paid to the Fund and accounted for in the period.

(iv) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which is considered appropriate by the Trustee.

(v) Financial Risk

The Trustee is responsible for managing financial risk arising in connection with the invested assets of the Fund. This responsibility is discharged through the diversification of the investment portfolio across sectors and geographies and focus on established stocks quoted on published exchanges.

(vi) Foreign Currencies

Balances and transactions denominated in foreign currencies have been translated into euro at the rate of exchange ruling at the year end (2023 €1 = £0.8669; 2022 €1 = £0.8853).

(vii) Benefits

The pension benefits are secured by contributions to a separately administered defined benefits scheme in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* as amended from time to time by the General Synod. Benefits are accounted for in the year in which they fall due. Liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future are not accrued.

(viii) Contributions

Contributions represent a levy on dioceses in accordance with section 36 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.

The levy was imposed from 1 June 2013 and represented 13% of Minimum Approved Stipend.

(ix) Transfers to and from other Schemes

Transfer values represent the capital sums either receivable in respect of members from other pension schemes of previous employers, or payable to the pension schemes of new employers for members who have left the Scheme. They are accounted for on a cash basis or, where the Trustee has agreed to accept the liability in advance of receipt of funds, on an accruals basis from the date of the agreement.

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FUND ACCOUNT**

**PAGE 9**

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2023 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 €'000
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER RECEIPTS</b>			
Contributions	3	2,738	2,478
		<u>2,738</u>	<u>2,478</u>
<b>BENEFITS AND OTHER PAYMENTS</b>			
Benefits paid	4	6,914	6,938
Administrative expenses	6	276	284
		<u>7,190</u>	<u>7,222</u>
NET WITHDRAWALS		(4,452)	(4,744)
<b>RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS</b>			
Investment Income	5	1,947	1,111
Realised and unrealised investment (losses)/gains		17,562	(16,329)
Currency (loss)/gain		26	(121)
Investment management and professional expenses		(89)	(77)
NET RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS		<u>19,446</u>	<u>(15,416)</u>
NET (DECREASE)/INCREASE IN FUND IN THE YEAR		14,994	(20,160)
BALANCE 1 JANUARY		191,823	211,983
BALANCE 31 DECEMBER		<u>206,817</u>	<u>191,823</u>

*Signed on behalf of the Trustee:*     *A Robinson*  
   *RS Neill*  
*Date:*   *12 March 2024*

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS**

**PAGE 10**

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2023 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 €'000
INVESTMENT ASSETS	7	206,096	191,198
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors		721	625
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		721	625
NET ASSETS	11	206,817	191,823

*Signed on behalf of the Trustee:*     *A Robinson*  
   *RS Neill*  
*Date:*   *12 March 2024*

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****PAGE 11****1 FUND STATUS**

The Clergy Pensions Fund, which is a defined benefit scheme, is established under Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* as amended from time to time by the General Synod. The Fund has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners as a retirement benefits scheme under Part 30, Chapter I of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997, and is treated as an 'exempt approved scheme' for the purposes of that Act. In addition, the Fund has been approved by the Board of the Inland Revenue of the United Kingdom as a retirement benefits scheme for the purposes of Chapter I, Part XIV, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and is treated as an 'exempt approved scheme' for the purposes of Section 592 of that Act in relation to its provision of pension benefits to those members of the clergy who are living in Northern Ireland.

The Fund closed to new entrants and to future accruals as at 31 May 2013. A Funding Proposal to bring the Fund back to full solvency was submitted to and accepted by the Pensions Authority in 2013. The Funding Proposal included revenue to be raised through the introduction of a levy of 13% of Minimum Approved Stipend, to be collected through the dioceses.

The Funding Proposal concluded on 31 December 2023 and the levy reduces to 3% from 1 January 2024.

**2 FORMAT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements summarise the transactions and net assets of the Fund. They do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits expected to become payable in the future. The actuarial position of the overall scheme, which takes account of such obligations, is dealt within the appendix titled "The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC – report on the Clergy Pensions Fund" in annual Book of Reports presented to the General Synod, along with the actuarial funding certificate and the actuary's annual certificate.

**3 SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS**

	2023	2022
	€'000	€'000
Diocesan levies	2,636	2,378
Representative Church Body	100	99
Sundry	2	1
Total	<u>2,738</u>	<u>2,478</u>

The value of Northern Ireland contributions in sterling is £1.22m (2022: £1.13m) and was translated to euro at the year end rate of 0.8669 (2022: 0.8853).

The value of Republic of Ireland contributions is €1.23m (2022: €1.1m).

**4 BENEFITS PAID**

	2023	2022
	€'000	€'000
Pensions to retired bishops and clergy	4,704	4,643
Pensions to surviving spouses and orphans	1,774	1,837
Commutation of pensions	261	458
Death Benefits	175	-
Total	<u>6,914</u>	<u>6,938</u>

The cost of Northern Ireland benefits in sterling is £3.4m (2022: £3.4m). This cost excludes administration charges.

The cost of Republic of Ireland benefits in euro is €2.98m (2022: €3.13m). This cost excludes administration charges.

**5 ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT INCOME**

	2023	2022
	€'000	€'000
Investment income	615	875
Interest	1,331	235
Miscellaneous trust income	1	1
Securities Lending	-	-
Total	<u>1,947</u>	<u>1,111</u>

The investment income above relates to the income paid to the Clergy Pensions Fund by investments managed by the Representative Church Body (RCB). The balance of the funds is held in a unitised fund passively managed by Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM). The income on these funds is reinvested in the fund and is not separately reported.

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

**PAGE 12**

**6 ADMINISTRATIVE AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT EXPENSES**

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
RCB Recharges	140	133
Actuarial Costs	69	116
Investment Advisor	25	-
Risk Management	17	19
Internal Insurance	14	7
Trustee Insurance	10	9
Sundry	1	-
Total	<u>276</u>	<u>284</u>

Investment management fees are borne by the Fund.

**7 INVESTED ASSETS**

	2023		2022	
	Market Value €'000	% of Fund	Market Value €'000	% of Fund
<b>ILIM managed</b>				
<b>Equities</b>				
UK	45,106	21.9%	40,534	21.2%
Europe ex UK	50,481	24.5%	38,640	20.2%
<b>Bonds</b>				
European 5-10yr	11,552	5.6%	13,634	7.1%
European > 10yr	8,549	4.1%		
UK	27,278	13.2%	12,392	6.5%
	<u>142,966</u>	<u>69.3%</u>	<u>105,200</u>	<u>55.0%</u>
<b>RCB in-house managed</b>				
Property	4,576	2.2%	5,430	2.8%
Bonds and Bond Substitutes	4,436	2.2%	10,860	5.7%
Other	13,354	6.5%	14,442	7.6%
Cash on deposit	40,764	19.8%	55,266	28.9%
	<u>63,130</u>	<u>30.7%</u>	<u>85,998</u>	<u>45.0%</u>
	<u>206,096</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>191,198</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

Cash on deposit included in the above schedule pertains to un-invested cash held by Representative Church Body for future investments. This is separate from Cash due from the Representative Church Body on the Statement of Net Assets.

**8 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

As stated in the accounting policies on pages 8 and 9 of the Financial Statements, liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future have not been taken into account. On that basis, in the opinion of the Trustee the scheme had no contingent liabilities at 31 December 2023.

**9 CONTINGENT ASSET**

In 2022, the Representative Body provided a contingent asset for up to €20m to support the solvency of the Clergy Pensions Fund ("the Fund"). The contingent asset would be available to the Fund under certain circumstances, and will allow the Trustee of the Fund to maximise the return on invested assets for the Fund into the future. The Clergy Pensions Fund exited the funding proposal on 31 December 2023. The contingent asset is available to the Fund until 31 December 2028.

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**

PAGE 13

**10 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

(a) The Trustee of the Fund is as set out on page 3 of the Financial Statements.

The Trustee does not receive and is not due any remuneration from the Fund in connection with its responsibilities as Trustee.

(b) The Representative Church Body acts as the Sponsor and Registered Administrator for the Clergy Pensions Fund.

The Registered Administrator of the scheme is remunerated on a fee basis.

**11 NET ASSETS**

	2023	2022
	€'000	€'000
<b>REPUBLIC OF IRELAND</b>		
Contributions	1,278	1,151
Net benefits and other payments	(3,243)	(3,411)
Net transfer between sub divisions		(1,592)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net withdrawals	(1,965)	(3,852)
Net returns on investments	9,190	(7,682)
Balance 1 January	93,620	105,154
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance 31 December	100,845	93,620
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND</b>		
Contributions	1,460	1,327
Net benefits and other payments	(3,947)	(3,811)
Net transfer between sub divisions	-	1,592
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net withdrawals	(2,487)	(892)
Net returns on investments	10,256	(7,734)
Balance 1 January	98,203	106,829
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance 31 December	105,972	98,203
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>CONSOLIDATED FUND</b>		
Contributions	2,738	2,478
Net benefits and other payments	(7,190)	(7,222)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net withdrawals	(4,452)	(4,744)
Net returns on investments	19,446	(15,416)
Balance 1 January	191,823	211,983
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance 31 December	206,817	191,823
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**12 POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS**

The Trustee and the Sponsor of the Standard Life AVC schemes have determined that it will seek the approval of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in May 2024 to wind up the schemes and transfer members benefits into the Church of Ireland Clergy DC Pension Scheme – RI Section and the Church of Ireland Clergy DC Pension Scheme – NI Section.

No other significant events affecting the Financial Statements have occurred since the Balance Sheet date.

**13 APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements were approved by the Trustee on 12 March 2024.



ANNEX 1

**REPORT OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND PENSIONS BOARD  
TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS TRUSTEE DAC**

***Members/Meetings of the Board***

There were five meetings of the Board in 2023.

***Elected by the House of Bishops***

The Rt Rev AJ Forster (1)

***Elected by the General Synod***

Rev Canon John Auchmuty (4)

Mr Michael Johnston (5)

Mr Robbie Syme (elected 14 March 2023) (3)

***Elected by the Representative Church Body***

Rev Canon Henry Gilmore (5)

Mrs Judith Peters (5)

Mrs Heather Pope (4)

**Chairperson** – Mrs Judith Peters

**Vice-Chairperson** – Rev Canon John Auchmuty

**Honorary Secretary** – Mrs Heather Pope

**Pensions Administration Manager** – Ms Julie Bond

***Grants Committee***

Mrs Judith Peters  
Rev Canon John Auchmuty  
Mrs Heather Pope

**Office:** Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6

Tel no (+3531) 4978422  
Fax no (+3531) 4978821  
Email <pensions@rcbcoi.org>

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Under section 22(3) of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* the Trustee has delegated to the Church of Ireland Pensions Board (“the Board”) certain of the duties as set out in section 22(1) of the said Chapter including those relating to membership, contributions and benefits. This report summarises statistical data in relation to those matters.

The Report of the Church of Ireland Pensions Board on other funds administered by it, as delegated by the Representative Church Body (RCB), is found in Appendix G to the Report of the RCB (*Church of Ireland General Synod Reports 2024*, page 110).

**2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD**

The Board consists of seven members who are elected triennially in accordance with Section 25 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution*.

**3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FUND**

The table below shows the movement during the year across the various membership categories. The accompanying graph shows the age profile of the active members.

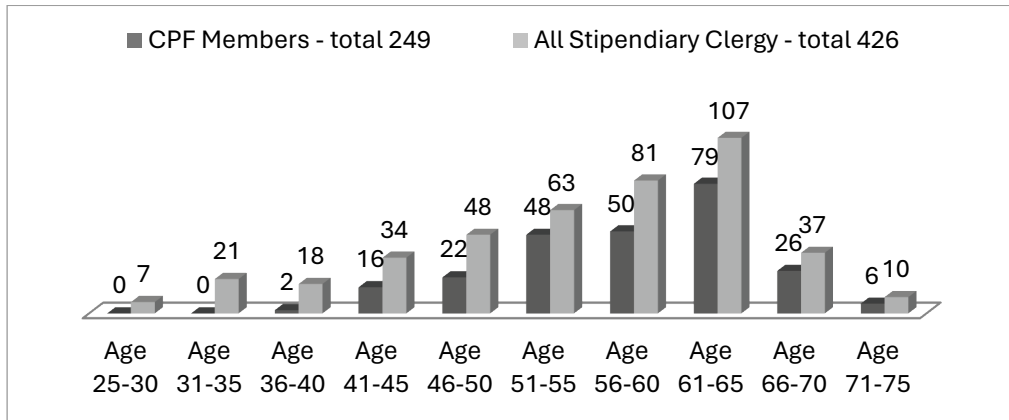
	Active members	Deferred members	Pensioners	Spouses on pension
At 1 January 2023	268	111	307	161
Leavers with deferred benefits	(9)	9	-	-
Leavers taking benefits elsewhere	-		-	-
Deaths before retirement	-		-	-
New pension arising from PAO	-	(1)	1	-
Retirements on pension	(11)	(9)	20	-
Returned to active service	-	-	-	
Deaths on pension	-	-	(13)	(12)
New spouses' pensions	-	-	-	5
Adjustments*	1	-	-	-
At 31 December 2023	249	110	315	154

\*One member was found to be excluded from previous reconciliations due to an incorrect status on the database.

In addition there were 8 child dependency allowances in payment at 31 December 2023 (7 at 31 December 2022).

There are two clergy who commenced in the stipendiary ministry before 31 May 2013 who elected to leave the Fund and make independent pension arrangements. Both sought and were granted exemption.

*Age distribution of stipendiary clergy*



**4. RETIREMENT AGE**

The revised Normal Retirement Age (NRA) from 1 June 2013 (for contributing members of the Fund as at 31 May 2013) is set out the table below:

Date of birth	Normal Retirement Age	Number of members in each retirement age category at 31 December 2023
31 May 1949 and before	65	0
1 June 1949 to 31 May 1954	66	8
1 June 1954 to 31 May 1959	67	44
1 June 1959 and after	68	197

Members who joined/re-joined the Fund on or after 1 January 2009 have an NRA of not less than 67.

Under statutory pension regulations Deferred Members will retain the NRA applicable at their date of leaving the service of the Church of Ireland.

## 5. PENSIONS IN PAYMENT

The annualised pensions etc in payment at 1 January 2024 are:

	€		£
Clergy	2,440,869	and	2,656,209
Surviving spouses and orphans	841,047	and	1,002,509
	<u>3,281,916</u>	and	<u>3,658,718</u>

The total annualised pensions in payment translated to euro at the year-end exchange rate of 0.8669 are €7,502,377.

## 6. CONTRIBUTIONS

A contribution from central funds amounting to €100,179 was made during the year in accordance with Section 37 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.

## 7. LUMP SUM BENEFITS

Under the provisions of the Fund a cash lump sum is payable in a number of eventualities. During 2023, lump sums totalling €68,223 and £319,132 became payable in respect of 10 members as follows:

Died before NRA with deferred benefits (1); paid on retirement (5); deferred pension (4).

## 8. EXTERNAL CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

The Board has compiled a guide towards external sources of information to assist chaplains who support retired clergy and surviving spouses. A copy of the guide is available on request from the Pensions Administration Manager (email <pensions@rcbcoi.org>).

## 9. ADDITIONAL PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS (APCs)

With the closure of the Clergy Pensions Fund to future accruals on 31 May 2013, the additional service which members were purchasing to give them up to a maximum of 40 years' service at normal retirement age was recalculated to reflect the service purchased to 31 May 2013.

There remain 51 members in active service who purchased additional service to 31 May 2013.

## 10. ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVCS)

Members of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund are permitted to make Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) which are invested with the Standard Life Assurance Company to provide additional benefits within the overall limits allowed by the Revenue authorities.

AVCs are unaffected by the closure of the Clergy Pensions Fund to future accruals. Funds held in Standard Life at 31 December 2023 amounted to €0.21m.

Copies of the Regulations and explanatory memorandum in relation to AVCs may be obtained on request from the Pensions Administration Manager.

**(i) Active Membership of the AVC Fund as at 31 December 2023**

	Membership 31/12/22	New Contributors	Fund Transfers	To Deferred	Retired	Membership 31/12/23
RI	4	0	0	1	0	3
NI	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	5	0	0	1	0	4
Previous Year	6	0	0	0	1	5

Standard Life is the provider of the AVC facility. Contributions may be invested with them in a range of Funds as provided by the Tower Pension Series for those contributors who reside in the Republic of Ireland or the Castle Pension Series for those contributors who reside in Northern Ireland. In addition to the active members of the fund above there are five members with deferred benefits.

**(ii) AVC Fund Statement of Contributions**

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
Contributions received	7	8
Less paid on retirement or death	-	(6)
Less transfers to Clergy DC Scheme	-	-
Realised Gain on retirement and transfers to the Clergy DC Scheme	-	6
	<u>7</u>	<u>(8)</u>
Balance 1 January	200	193
Currency Translation Adjustment	(0)	(1)
Balance 31 December	<u>207</u>	<u>200</u>

**NOTES**

1. A resolution adopted by the General Synod on 12 May 2012 transferred the role of trustee from the Representative Body to the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC.
2. Under the Scheme members are permitted to make voluntary contributions which are invested with the Standard Life Assurance Company to provide additional benefits within the overall limits allowed by the Revenue authorities. The balance at the yearend represents the net accumulation of members' contributions which have been transferred to the Standard Life Assurance Company by the Trustee. The value of the investments underlying these contributions is not reflected in the statement.
3. An accountants' report has not been provided for these financial statements, as the balance of €207,356 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.
4. Sterling balances and transactions have been translated to euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2023 €1 = £0.8669 (2022 €1 = £0.8853).

ANNEX 2

ACTUARIAL FUNDING CERTIFICATE



An tÚdarás Pinsean  
The Pensions Authority

SCHEDULE BD

Article 4

ACTUARIAL FUNDING CERTIFICATE

*THIS CERTIFICATE HAS BEEN PREPARED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 42(1) OF THE PENSIONS ACT 1990 (the ACT) FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PENSIONS AUTHORITY BY THE TRUSTEES OF THE SCHEME*

**SCHEME NAME:** The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund

**SCHEME COMMENCEMENT DATE:** 01/01/1976

**SCHEME REFERENCE NO.:** PB1667

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 30/09/2021

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF PREVIOUS CERTIFICATE (IF ANY):** 30/09/2018

On the basis of information supplied to me, having complied with any guidance prescribed under section 42(4)(b) of the Act and, subject thereto, having regard to such financial and other assumptions as I consider to be appropriate, I am of the opinion that at the effective date of this certificate:-

(1) the resources of the scheme, which are calculated for the purposes of section 44(1) of the Act to be €203,422,000.00, would have been sufficient if the scheme had been wound up at that date to provide for the liabilities of the scheme determined in accordance with section 44(1) of the Act which, including the estimated expenses of administering the winding up of the scheme, amount to €157,791,000.00, and

(2) €0.00 of the resources of the scheme referred to in paragraph (1) comprise contingent assets, in accordance with and within the meaning of the guidance issued by the Authority and prescribed under section 47 of the Act.

I, therefore, certify that as at the effective date of this certificate the scheme satisfies the funding standard provided for in section 44(1) of the Act.

I further certify that I am qualified for appointment as actuary to the scheme for the purposes of section 51 of the Act.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 08/04/2022

**Name:** Mr Liam Quigley **Qualification:** FSAI

**Name of Actuary's Employer/Firm:** Mercer (Ireland) Limited **Scheme Actuary Certificate No.:** P044

**Submission Details**

**Submission Number:** SR2893047 **Submitted Electronically on:** 08/04/2022

**Submitted by:** Liam Quigley

**FUNDING STANDARD RESERVE CERTIFICATE**



An tÚdarás Pinsean  
The Pensions Authority

**SCHEDULE BE**

Article 4

**FUNDING STANDARD RESERVE CERTIFICATE**

*THIS CERTIFICATE HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO SECTION 42(1A) OF THE PENSIONS ACT 1990 (the ACT) FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PENSIONS AUTHORITY BY THE TRUSTEES OF THE SCHEME*

**SCHEME NAME:** The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund

**SCHEME COMMENCEMENT DATE:** 01/01/1976

**SCHEME REFERENCE NO.:** PB1667

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 30/09/2021

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF PREVIOUS CERTIFICATE (IF ANY):** 30/09/2018

On the basis of information supplied to me, having complied with any guidance prescribed under section 42(4)(b) of the Act and, subject thereto, having regard to such financial and other assumptions as I consider to be appropriate, I am of the opinion that at the effective date of this certificate:-

(1) the funding standard liabilities (as defined in the Act) of the scheme amount to €157,791,000.00,

(2) the resources of the scheme (other than resources which relate to contributions or a transfer of rights to the extent that the benefits provided are directly related to the value of those contributions or amount transferred (DC resources)), calculated for the purposes of section 44(1) of the Act amount to €203,422,000.00,

(3) €67,129,000.00, of the amount referred to in paragraph (2) (subject to a maximum of an amount equal to the funding standard liabilities) is invested in securities issued under section 54(1) of the Finance Act 1970 (and known as bonds), securities issued under the laws of a Member State (other than the State) that correspond to securities issued under section 54(1) of the Finance Act 1970, cash deposits with one or more credit institutions and such other assets (if any) as are prescribed under section 44(2)(a)(iv) of the Act,

(4) the amount provided for in section 44(2)(a) of the Act (Applicable Percentage x ((1) minus (3))) is €9,066,000.00,

(5) the amount provided for in section 44(2)(b) of the Act, being the amount by which the funding standard liabilities of the scheme would increase if the interest rate or interest rates assumed for the purposes of determining the funding standard liabilities were one half of one per cent less than the interest rate or interest rates (as appropriate) assumed for the purposes of determining the funding standard liabilities less the amount by which the resources of the scheme (other than DC resources) would increase as a result of the same change in interest rate or interest rates is €6,921,000.00,


(6) the aggregate of (4) and (5) above amounts to €15,987,000.00, and

(7) the additional resources (as defined in the Act) of the scheme amount to €45,631,000.00, of which, in accordance with and within the meaning of the guidance issued by the Authority and prescribed under section 47 of the Act, €0.00 comprises contingent assets and €0.00 of such contingent assets comprise an unsecured undertaking.

I therefore certify that as at the effective date of the funding standard reserve certificate, the scheme does hold sufficient additional resources to satisfy the funding standard reserve as provided in section 44(2) of the Act.

The Representative Church Body – Report 2024

I further certify that I am qualified for appointment as actuary to the scheme for the purposes of section 51 of the Act.

**Signature:**  **Date:** 08/04/2022

**Name:** Mr Liam Quigley **Qualification:** FSAI

**Name of Actuary's Employer/Firm:** Mercer (Ireland) Limited **Scheme Actuary Certificate No.:** P044

**Submission Details**

**Submission Number:** SR2893048 **Submitted Electronically on:** 08/04/2022

**Submitted by:** Liam Quigley

ANNEX 3

ACTUARY'S STATEMENT



welcome to brighter

# Church of Ireland Pension Fund Annual Statement

Year ended 31 December 2023

Pensions Authority reference number: PB1667

## Actuary's Statement

The last Actuarial Funding Certificate was prepared with an effective date of 30 September 2021. This certificate confirmed that the Plan satisfied the Funding Standard set out in Section 44 of the Pensions Act, 1990 at that effective date. The last Funding Standard Reserve Certificate, prepared on the same effective date, confirmed that the Plan held sufficient additional assets to satisfy the Funding Standard Reserve also set out in Section 44 of the Pensions Act, 1990 at that effective date.

I have undertaken a review of the financial condition of the Scheme as at 31 December 2023. Based on that review, I am reasonably satisfied that the Scheme would have satisfied the Funding Standard and the Funding Standard Reserve at that effective date.

The Scheme had been operating under a Funding Proposal the objective of which was to put the Scheme in a position to satisfy the Funding Standard and Funding Standard Reserve by 31 December 2023. This Funding Proposal has now concluded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam Quigley', positioned above a horizontal line.

**Liam Quigley**

Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland

Certificate number: P044

Date: 6 March 2024



#### ANNEX 4

### STATEMENT OF RISK IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND (THE “FUND”)

Under law, the Trustee is required to describe the condition of the Fund and the risks associated with the Fund, and disclose these to members.

The Fund operates on a ‘defined benefit’ basis and has been closed to future service accrual and to new members with effect from 31 May, 2013. The Fund is subject to a Funding Proposal agreed with the Pensions Authority with the intention of returning it to solvency by 2023. The risks in such an arrangement are generally classified as financial or operational. In any defined benefit arrangement, the main risk is that there will be a shortfall in the assets (for whatever reason) and the employer/sponsor will not be willing or able to pay the necessary contributions to make up the shortfall. If that occurs, members may not receive their anticipated benefit entitlements. Some of the reasons why a shortfall could occur are as follows (this list may not be exhaustive):

- The assets of the pension fund may grow more slowly than expected, or even fall in value, depending on the performance of underlying markets and the securities chosen. Where the scheme is subject to a Funding Proposal and, being closed to future service accrual, has an ageing profile, the requirement to invest in assets to match the future liability leads to a reduction in the opportunity to invest in growth assets.
- Similarly, the liabilities may grow faster than expected due to higher salary or pension increases, or due to unfavourable movements in interest rates, or due to mortality and other elements of the fund’s experience varying from the assumptions made.
- The administration of the fund may fail to meet acceptable standards. The fund could fall out of statutory compliance, the fund could fall victim to fraud or negligence, or the benefits communicated to members could differ from the liabilities valued by the Actuary.

In these circumstances, there may be insufficient assets available to pay benefits, leading to a requirement to change the benefit structure or to seek higher contributions. The employer/sponsor may decide not to pay these increased contributions.

Another risk is that the employer/sponsor may for some reason decide to cease its liability to contribute to the pension fund. In this event, the fund may be wound up and accrued entitlements would be discharged from the available assets (which may or may not be sufficient to discharge member benefit expectations, as outlined above). In accordance with Section 20 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* it would require a decision to be taken at the General Synod for the Fund to be wound up.

Various actions have been taken by the Trustee to mitigate the risks. The investment strategy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is consistent with the needs of the Fund as well as meeting the requirements arising under the Funding Proposal. Professional investment managers have been appointed to manage the Clergy Pensions Fund assets, which are invested in a range of diversified assets. There is regular monitoring of how these investments are performing. An actuarial valuation of the Fund is carried out at least every three years to assess the financial condition of the Fund and determine the rate of contributions required to meet the future liabilities of the Fund. In addition, an annual review of the solvency position of the Fund is carried out on the assumption that it is wound up at that time.

The Trustee is satisfied that it is taking all reasonable steps, including the appointment of experienced professional advisors and administrators, to protect the members of the Fund from the effects of these risks. However, it is not possible to guard against every eventuality, and it is necessary to take some investment risk and other risks in order to manage the affordability of the Plan benefits and the capacity of the employer/sponsor to meet this commitment.

Last updated September 2015  
Reviewed October 2022

## ANNEX 5

### CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND (“the Scheme”)

#### STATEMENT OF INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

##### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Statement of Investment Policy Principles (‘SIPP’) is to outline the policies and guidelines that have been determined by the Trustees to govern the management of the Scheme’s assets. It provides an overview of the Trustees’ investment objectives, investment policies, risk measurement and their risk management processes.

This document has been provided to the RB Investment Committee as the Scheme’s Investment Advisor and has been used to develop detailed guidelines for the investment of the Scheme’s assets by the selected investment managers, which are separately documented.

##### **Investment Objectives**

The overall investment objective of the Trustees is to ensure that the benefits of the Scheme continue to be affordable and that ultimately the level of benefits set out in the Trust Deed and Rules can be paid.

The overall investment strategy aims to maximise the investment return, net of fees, while managing risk by maintaining a maximum ratio of Growth to De-risked Assets in the investment portfolio. De-risked Assets are holdings in liability matching asset classes and generally comprise fixed income sovereign bonds, high grade corporate fixed interest bonds and cash. Growth Assets are represented by all other asset classes.

In the short term a key objective is to ensure that the Scheme exits the current Funding Proposal by 31 December 2023. Over the long-term, a core objective is to ensure that the Scheme continues to meet the Funding Standard and Funding Standard Reserve requirements on an ongoing basis. A triennial actuarial valuation is completed by the Scheme’s actuary to assess the Scheme performance against the Funding Standard and the Funding Standard Reserve. The latest triennial valuation was completed as at 30 September 2021.

The investment strategy for the Scheme results from a review undertaken during 2021 carried out with the assistance of the Scheme’s actuary and using membership and actuarial estimates as at 31 December 2020. A summary of this review is detailed below.

##### **Summary of Investment Review 2021**

Long term projections indicate that a net total return on the fund’s assets of c1.5% per annum should be sufficient to meet the long term pension liabilities of the Scheme over its remaining life/term. Such a target rate of return would be consistent with a 40:60 split of the Fund’s assets (40% Growth versus 60% De-risked Assets). However, these projections also indicate that while such a rate of return would be adequate over the life of the scheme taken as a whole, it may not be sufficient to meet the discrete annual Funding Standard Reserve requirements at all times throughout the life of the Scheme, in particular where it is assumed that increases to pensions in payment are awarded in line with inflation post 2023.

Following discussion with the Sponsor the Trustees have determined that, for the current period until 31 December 2023, the target rate of total return to the fund, net of fees, should be 2.6 % per annum, consistent with a 60:40 split of the assets between Growth and De-risked Assets. In determining this, the Trustees have taken into consideration a range of factors including the Sponsor providing the Scheme with a Contingent Asset in the form of security over assets with a market value of €20m.

##### **Formulating Investment Policy**

The Trustees have responsibility for setting and monitoring the investment strategy of the Scheme.

##### *Investment Advisor*

The Trustees have appointed the RB Investment Committee as the Scheme’s Investment Advisor. The Investment Advisor is responsible for appointing suitable investment managers, managing the asset allocation within pre-agreed limits and for recommending any direct investment to the Trustees. The Trustees recognise the need to work with the Investment Advisor in formulating the investment policy. The Investment Advisor is available to meet with the Trustees and to attend any Trustee meeting at the request of the Trustees so as to consider the investment performance and to advise of any changes to the investment objectives.

*Environmental, Social and Governance Considerations*

The Trustees currently adopt the RCB Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policy and the RCB Climate Change policy. The Investment Advisor will consider ESG and climate change as part of any investment decision and will report on ESG considerations annually to the Trustees.

*Sponsor*

In setting the investment policy, the Trustees recognise that the Sponsor’s continued financial support of the Scheme is of utmost importance in serving the best interests of members. Therefore the principles outlined in this Statement are not shaped by the objectives of the Trustees in isolation, but also in collaboration with the Sponsor. This SIPP was presented to the Sponsor and noted at its meeting on 5 April 2022.

**Risk Measurement**

The ideal risk management strategy for any pension scheme would be to match fund assets and pension liabilities in duration, currency and volatility. However, this hedged strategy would be expected to deliver low long term returns and thus require high contributions. The Scheme therefore needs to hold asset classes with higher expected returns in order to keep funding costs at an acceptable level over the life of the Scheme. Growth Assets will involve higher risk and volatility, particularly over the short term and it is therefore important to conduct regular investment risk assessments.

The key investment risk is that the Scheme’s funding level may deteriorate as a result of the investment strategy which would in turn increase the costs of funding and may threaten the viability of possible future discretionary pension increases or even the future sustainability of the Scheme.

The Trustees have therefore considered the following as part of their investment risk analysis:

- **Scenario analysis:** The Trustees have considered projected outcomes for a number of different investment strategies.
- **Hedge ratios:** Hedge ratios assess the extent to which the liability matching portfolio behaves in line with the liabilities. The funding level and duration of the liabilities and the extent and duration of bond investment are key components to this calculation. It is important to consider hedge ratios on both short term (Funding Standard) and long term measures of the liability. Given the current interest rate environment, a key Trustee concern is maintaining/improving the Scheme’s Funding Standard position.
- **Duration of the liabilities:** Duration is an assessment of sensitivity to changes in interest rates, and this can vary significantly depending on the liability valuation measure under consideration.
- **Currency:** The currency denomination of the liability has been considered by the Trustees in determining the currency split of the investment portfolio.
- **Contribution impact:** The Trustees and the Sponsor have considered differing contribution rates which would be required for a range of **pension** outcomes.
- **Qualitative risk assessment:** The Trustees have consulted with the Investment Advisor and the Sponsor as part of the investment strategy review process and in relation to the selection of fund managers and direct investments.

The Trustees regularly review the investment strategy and the risks including considering ESG compliance.

**Investment Policy and Asset Allocation**

The Trustees, with the assistance of their advisers, have devised and adopted an asset allocation framework which takes into consideration:

- The required level of return consistent with the tolerance for risk
- The requirement to satisfy the Funding Standard and associated risk reserve requirements on an ongoing basis
- A de-risking objective over the long term as the funding level improves and as the Scheme matures.

***Current strategic asset allocation for the Scheme:***

Asset class	Short term Allocation range (%)	Medium term target Allocation (%)	Long term target Allocation (%)

<b>Matching/De-risked assets</b>			
Cash	2.5 – 30.0	2.5 – 30.0	2.5 – 72.5
Bonds	10.00 – 37.5	10.0- 37.5	2.5 - 72.5
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>75.0</b>
<b>Risk assets</b>			
Equities	22.5 – 60.0	22.5 – 60.0	12.5 - 25
Private equities/alternatives	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 5.0
Hedge funds	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 5.0
Credit (high yield) bonds	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 5.0
Property	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 5.0
Gold/Mining stocks	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 10.0	0.0 – 5.0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows the short, medium and long term allocations and the ranges within which the Trustees believe that the investment objectives can be achieved. The long term allocation describes the split that the Trustees aim to move toward, over the long term, as the Scheme matures and as Scheme finances and investment conditions permit.

#### ***Currency allocation***

The Scheme’s liabilities are denominated in both Sterling and Euro as the Scheme members are based in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The assets are managed on a basis that recognises the underlying currency denomination and split of the Scheme’s liabilities.

Exposure to assets denominated in currencies other than Sterling and Euro, as part of investment decisions and individual stock selection by the Investment Managers, is subject to defined limits set by the Trustees.

#### **Rebalancing and De-risking**

The Trustees recognize that even though the Scheme’s investments are subject to short-term volatility, it is critical that a long-term investment focus be maintained. The Trustees intend to avoid ad-hoc revisions to their philosophy and policies in reaction to either speculation or short-term market fluctuations.

Rebalancing is considered as part of the annual investment review by the Trustees.

The strategic asset allocation is likely to evolve over the long term to reflect a reduced growth portfolio and an increased sovereign bond allocation.

#### **Risk Management**

The Trustees ensure that they understand the performance, risk and other characteristics of all asset classes and funds that the Scheme invests in. Investment guidelines and targets are agreed with external managers to ensure that the assets:

- Are invested in a manner designed to ensure the security, quality and liquidity of the assets as a whole is appropriate having regard to the nature and duration of the expected liabilities of the Scheme.
- Are predominantly invested in regulated markets.
- Are properly diversified in such a way as to avoid excessive reliance on any particular asset, issuer or group of undertakings and so as to avoid accumulations of risk in the portfolio as a whole.
- Include use of derivative instruments only in so far as they contribute to a reduction in investment risks or facilitate efficient portfolio management.

Performance is reviewed by the Trustees at regular intervals based on reports independently collected and calculated by the Investment Advisor. The Fund’s performance is also reviewed by the Trustees relative to the long-term required return and benchmark.

The Trustees also receive from the Investment Advisor an assessment of performance, together with an analysis of the factors affecting performance, relative to the Fund's benchmark.

### ***Risk controls***

The Trustees use a number of measures to control and reduce the risks associated with making investments including the following:

- **Diversification:** The Trustees aim to invest in a range of asset classes in order to achieve the required real long-term return while limiting the volatility of returns. Where practical, investments are spread geographically, across industry sectors and individual stocks.
- **Manager restrictions:** The Trustees have an Investment Management Agreement (IMA) in place with external investment managers. Each IMA contains restrictions which limit the risk from each individual stock or security held and which prohibit unsuitable investment activity. Compliance with the IMA is monitored.
- **Risk versus the liabilities:** The Trustees have adopted an investment strategy that they believe is capable of achieving the long term target return while being mindful of the Minimum Funding Standard requirements. However, future returns are uncertain, and the long-term risk is that the value of the assets may not increase sufficiently over time to allow the Trustees to provide all of the intended benefits. The Trustees review this risk by monitoring the performance of the assets and the liabilities in the Triennial Actuarial Valuations, funding updates and Interim Valuations from time to time.
- **Custody:** The Trustees ensure the separation of responsibility for the safe-keeping or custody of the Fund's financial assets from its investment managers and the protection of the financial rights attaching to those assets by the employment of an independent global custodian.

The Trustees measure and monitor risk in the portfolio on a regular basis. Investments are regularly considered as part of Trustee meetings. In addition, the Trustees formally review the Scheme's investment strategy in conjunction with actuarial valuations of the Scheme or following any significant change to the Scheme.

The Trustees ensure that the investment of the Scheme's assets adheres to the requirements of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2006.

### **Review**

The assumptions underlying the risk assessment had an effective date of 31 December 2020. Actual experience will differ from the assumptions (perhaps significantly) and consequently, the Trustees will regularly review the investment strategy.

The success of the current strategy will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, with a formal investment strategy review being carried out every 3 years or following any significant change in the circumstances of the Scheme.

**Effective Date of this Statement:** 17 October 2022

**APPENDIX G**

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND PENSIONS BOARD**

**Funds administered by the Board as delegated by the Representative Church Body**

**THE SUPPLEMENTAL FUND**

**1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

The Supplemental Fund is held by the Representative Church Body (RCB) for the provision of assistance to retired clergy of the Church of Ireland and to surviving spouses, orphans and other dependants of clergy of the Church of Ireland and is administered by the Church of Ireland Pensions Board.

The income is derived from the investments representing the capital of the various Funds comprising the Supplemental Fund and grants allocated to it by the General Synod.

Last year the following assistance was provided by means of *ex gratia* payments:

**(i) Minimum Income of Surviving Spouses and Orphans**

Grants to ensure each has a minimum income from all sources in the year commencing 1 January 2023 of not less than:

	Resident in the:	
	United Kingdom	Republic of Ireland
Surviving spouse under 80	£15,933	€19,782
Surviving spouse 80 or over	£16,538	€20,534

On 31 December 2023, pensions were in course of payment to 154 surviving spouses (excluding widows of voluntary members) of clergy of the Church of Ireland. One surviving spouse required a grant during the year to bring their total income up to the relevant figure in the table.

During 2023, the surviving spouse who was in receipt of a grant from the Supplemental Fund also received:

- (a) a grant twice yearly towards basic housing costs of £1,650 from the Housing Fund;
- (b) a grant of £400 from monies allocated from the Priorities Fund.

As a result of these grants, the actual minimum income of this surviving spouse during 2023 exceeded the figures in the Table by £3,700.

**(ii) Removal Grants**

A grant to a surviving spouse towards the cost of removal, if their spouse was in the service of the Church of Ireland at the time of death, up to a sum of £2,526 if he or she died while holding office in Northern Ireland, or €4,634 if he or she died while holding office in the Republic of Ireland.

Should death occur less than two months after date of retirement and before vacation of the glebehouse a similar grant will be paid.

**(iii) Immediate Grants to Surviving Spouses**

On the death of clergy in the service of the Church of Ireland who are survived by a spouse, an immediate grant of £5,684 if they died while holding office in Northern Ireland or €6,951 if they died while holding office in the Republic of Ireland shall be paid.

On the death of clergy in retirement from the service of the Church of Ireland who are survived by a spouse, an immediate grant of £1,895 if they resided in the United Kingdom or €2,317 if they resided in the Republic of Ireland shall be paid.

**(iv) Other Grants**

Certain other grants which, in the opinion of the Board and in the particular circumstances of each case, merited special consideration.

In addition to the grants allocated under the above headings retired clergy, surviving spouses and dependants in need, received help from other sources. The Board would like to record its thanks to the Priorities Fund, the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, the Friends of the Clergy Corporation and the other charities and funds which provided this help.

**2. GRANTS 2024**

Due the unexpended surplus for 2023 and expected dividend income for 2024 it is not necessary to request for an allocation from General Synod to the Fund for 2024.

The unexpended surplus for 2023 and dividend income for 2024 will enable the Board to continue the schemes of *ex gratia* payments to the surviving spouses who were in receipt of such payments as at 1 January 2024 as follows:

**(i) Minimum Income of Surviving Spouses and Orphans**

	Resident in the:	
	United Kingdom	Republic of Ireland
Surviving spouse under 80	£17,192	€20,989
Surviving spouse 80 or over	£17,845	€21,787

It is estimated that the cost of this scheme will be £3,588.

**(ii) Removal Grants**

Northern Ireland	£2,627
Republic of Ireland	€4,847

**(iii) Immediate Grants to Surviving Spouses**

In service:

Northern Ireland	£5,912
Republic of Ireland	€7,271

In retirement:

Northern Ireland	£1,971
Republic of Ireland	€2,424

**3. RULES**

Copies of the rules are available on application to the Pensions Administration Manager.

**4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The Financial Statements of the Supplemental Fund are set out in the following pages.

**THE SUPPLEMENTAL FUND**

**31 December 2023**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
<b>INCOME</b>		
Investment Income	50	48
Income from Trusts and Donations	2	2
	<u>52</u>	<u>50</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Augmentation – Surviving Spouses and Orphans	4	5
Grants to Surviving Spouses	14	16
Expenses	3	3
	<u>21</u>	<u>24</u>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	31	26
Balance 1 January	1,843	2,048
New Investments	-	-
Revaluation movement	109	(228)
Currency translation adjustment	2	(3)
Balance 31 December	<u>1,985</u>	<u>1,843</u>
<b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>		
Investments	1,830	1,722
Cash held with the RCB	155	121
	<u>1,985</u>	<u>1,843</u>

**ANALYSIS OF FUND ASSETS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
Investments at Valuation		
RB General Unit Trusts	1,830	1,722
	<u>1,830</u>	<u>1,722</u>

**Notes**

- The Supplemental Fund is vested in The Representative Church Body, as Trustee, for the provision of assistance to retired clergy of the Church of Ireland and to spouses, orphans and dependants of clergy of the Church of Ireland.  
The Fund is established under Chapter XV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* and administered by the Church of Ireland Pensions Board.
- Accounting Policies are the same as those adopted for the Clergy Pensions Fund.
- An accountants' report has not been provided for these financial statements, as the balance of €1,985,000 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.



## **OTHER FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY THE BOARD**

### **1. Church of Ireland Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society**

Grants are paid on the recommendation of the Board. The total grants paid in 2023 was €6,000 and £11,500.

### **2. Housing Assistance Fund**

The Housing Fund has been created by the Representative Church Body mainly from the income of certain endowments and bequests received by it from generous benefactors and where the terms of trust permit.

The Fund is being administered under a Scheme prepared by the Board and approved by the Representative Church Body. Grants amounting to €51,829 plus £68,183 were allocated in 2023. Many expressions of thanks and appreciation have been received from the recipients.

The Board is most grateful for these donations and hopes that this Fund, which has already been of considerable help to retired clergy and surviving spouses with financial outlay arising from the provision and/or upkeep of housing accommodation, will be given further support by donations or bequests.

### **3. Priorities Fund – additional income for the most elderly and needy**

A further grant was allocated by the Standing Committee from the Priorities Fund in 2023 to provide additional income for the most elderly and needy surviving spouses of clergy. This enabled the Board to give an additional grant of £400 to each surviving spouse irrespective of age who needed a grant from the Supplemental Fund to ensure a minimum income under the scheme in operation for that purpose. One surviving spouse benefited from the allocation.

The Board has applied to the Priorities Fund Committee for a grant for 2024.

### **4. Mrs E Taylor Endowment**

The Representative Body requested the Board to administer the Endowment “to provide additional benefits over and above the normal pensions for retired clergymen of the Church of Ireland who should be residing in the 26 counties of Southern Ireland”.

The Board has decided that the income from the Endowment should be allocated in the first instance for the benefit of those retired clergy in the Republic of Ireland who require nursing/home care either for themselves or their spouses including health and paramedical expenses.

During 2023, grants totalling €23,275 were paid to five retired clergy.

### **5. Rev Precentor RH Robinson Bequest**

The income of this bequest, currently circa €10 per annum, is being allowed to accumulate to provide a reasonable grant level.

### **6. Rev GJ Wilson Bequest**

The income of this bequest is available for the benefit of retired clergymen of the dioceses of Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare. The Board allocates the income having sought recommendations from the Archbishop of Dublin and the Bishop of Meath and Kildare.

In 2023, the total of grants paid was €1,803.

### **7. Discretionary Fund – Retired Clergy/Surviving Spouses**

This Fund is available to provide (i) discretionary grants unrelated to Housing, to surviving spouses of clergy to be administered in a similar manner to that of the Housing Fund and (ii) greater support for retired clergy resident in Northern Ireland or outside Ireland.

Income from bequests allocated to the Fund by the Representative Body, enabled the Board to make grants totalling €27,817 and £16,100 to seven surviving spouses and grants totalling £11,703 to six retired members of the clergy.

The Board would welcome donations and bequests in order to provide a permanent income for this Fund.

**8. Cork, Cloyne and Ross Clergy Widows, Widowers, Orphans and Retired Clergy Trust Fund**

This fund is available to pay annuities out of the income of the Trust Fund to Widows, Widowers, or Children of deceased Clergy of the Church of Ireland, as had been beneficed or licensed in the United Dioceses of Cork Cloyne and Ross, and also to necessitous retired clergy resident in the Dioceses, as may hereafter be nominated by the Committee. Income from the Fund enabled annuities of €30,387 to be paid during 2023.

APPENDIX H

FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY IN 2023  
TO BE HELD IN TRUST FOR PARISHES, DIOCESES ETC

	£	€	
Glebe Profit Sale		700,000.00	New
Marion Gunn Bequest		5,000.00	New
Cynthia Good Bequest		4,000.00	Reinvestment
The Mothers Union Centenary Fund Trust		6,800.00	Additional
Durrow Glebe Account		4,000.00	Reinvestment
Parochial Funds (Estate of Joseph Case)		5,000.00	New
Teach an tSolais Investment		54,000.00	New
Homan Potterton Bequest		3,750.00	New
Dora Reynete Trust		8,000.00	Additional
The Barton Parish Poor Fund		25,000.00	New
Protestant Aid		500,000.00	Additional
The Des Murray Bequest		250,000.00	New
Hugh Gore Institute		200,000.00	Additional
Sundry Bequests		1,467.42	Additional
Sale of Kilkeedy Church 20%		2,781.21	New
In Memory of Richard Jackson		5,000.00	New
In Memory of William T Hanbidge		5,000.00	New
In Memory of Edward Wilson		253.95	New
In Memory of Alex Willoughby		6,856.84	New
Social Club and Miss Wiloughby		2,247.83	New
Parish Miscellaneous Bequests and Donations		4,213.93	New
Co Monaghan Church of Ireland's Children Society		13,500.00	Additional
D&G DBE Rural Distribution		6,991.50	Additional
D&G DBE Urban Distribution		3,760.74	Additional
Homan Potterton Meath Childcare Society		37,500.00	New
Meath CoI Childcare Society Surplus Funds		13,200.00	New
Lillian Crowe Bequest	24,979.98		Additional
Cathedral General Funds June 2023		100,000.00	New
Garden of Remembrance		4,000.00	Additional
Parochial Funds ( Estate of Sam Jones)		2,000.00	New
Parochial Funds	75,000.00		Additional
Bishop Stearnes Charities	500.00		Additional
In Memory of George V. Maloney		2,500.00	New
Cathedral Fund		250,000.00	New
Eithne Pope Bequest		1,666.66	Additional
Co Monaghan Church of Ireland Childrens Society		49,009.00	Additional
Sale of St Nicholas Church 80%		121,068.36	New
Sale of St Nicholas Church 20%		30,317.09	New
Parochial Funds		20,000.00	New
Mrs ME Ewart Bequest	96,713.01		Reinvestment
Parish Funds		50,000.00	Additional
Mr Ernest Long Donation	1,000.00		New
Mrs Maisie Flemming Bequest	5,000.00		New
Miss Helena Graham Bequest	1,000.00		New
GPS - Sale of 106 Lisburn Road	311,834.58		New
Valle-Pope & Edward White Mem Bequest		1,840.00	Additional
Ven WP Webb Bequest		7,244.00	Reinvestment
John Christopher Bell Bequest		5,000.00	New
Rosemary Ellen Lee Trust		100,945.80	Additional
Irish Clergy Sons Education Society		173,526.66	Additional
St Anns Trust		500,000.00	New
Schoolhouse Trust Fund		220,000.00	New
Sale of Glebelands		321,081.14	New
Parish Centre Fundraising		134,000.00	New

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	£	€
Rev. John Noel Battye Bequest		45,913.68 New
Sale of Deanery - GPS		100,000.00 New
Fabric Fund		10,000.00 New
Johnston/Moore Bequest		200.00 Additional
Parish Funds 2019		50,000.00 Additional
D&G DBE - Arklow		230,000.00 Additional
Betty Foster Church Upkeep Bequest	500.00	New
Betty Foster Cemetery Upkeep Bequest	500.00	New
William James Hilliard Foster Bequest - Cemetery Upkeep	1,000.00	New
William James Hilliard Foster Bequest - Parish Hall Upkeep	1,000.00	New
Parish Miscellaneous Donations	25,790.00	Additional
	<u>£544,817.57</u>	<u>€4,398,635.81</u>

## APPENDIX I

### ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY LIBRARY, 2023

The inclusion of material in this list does not necessarily imply that it is available to researchers. Parish registers (of baptism, marriage and burial) are not subject to any access restrictions, but vestry minutes and other categories of records are subject to 40-year closure, while materials containing personal or sensitive information are normally closed for 100 years.

#### 1. ARCHIVES

##### (i) Parish Records

All parish records are from the relevant local custody, unless otherwise indicated.

##### **Ballybay Group (Clogher)**

Papers relating to local parish history including the repairing of the church organ and Thomas H. Parke to whom the organ is dedicated, 1986-1990; the rededication ceremony and welcoming of the Methodist congregation whose church in Ballybay closed in 1990, 1985-1990.

Aughnamullen: Miscellaneous loose papers, 1989, undated.

Castleblayney/Mucknoe: Miscellaneous loose papers including a list of clergy, 1416-1893, 1986 and undated; Correspondence rel. to the ethos of Castleblayney Central National School, 1946-2023

Clontibret: Papers relating to local parish history including a handwritten history of the church building which may be useful for parish history research, 1988, undated.

Tullycorbet: Correspondence relating to the sexton's house, 1919; and the gifting of the Tullycorbet parish bell to Gillygooley Presbyterian Church, 1989.

From Canon HW Stewart, former rector

##### **Blackrock All Saints (Dublin)**

Vestry minute books, 1870-2004

##### **Castlebar (Killala)**

Register of marriages, 2015-2016

##### **Castlemacadam (Glendalough)**

Graveyard plan with family name plot details for Holy Trinity churchyard, 1979. Parochial statistic returns, 1935-1944 inclusive, and the act of institution for the Revd WHI de Massy, rector, 18 November 1949.

##### **Clonegal (Ferns)**

Various returns including a list of pew allocations, donations of gifts to the church; and decorations and furnishings, 1883, with later returns concerning parochial records and plate, 1910; 1934

##### **Dundalk (Armagh)**

Photograph at the installation of the Revd W.B. Stack rector of Dundalk (Armagh) (1934-39) being a large clerical group including various identified dignitaries and the Most Revd Charles D'Arcy, Archbishop of Armagh, who instituted him, outside the church. Photograph by Dufferin Bros. Dundalk. 1934

From a collection of the late Alec Hall (1897-1987) rector's churchwarden in 1934, transferred by his son Malcolm Hall, Ashford, Co. Wicklow

##### **Killala Union (Killala)**

Cong with Ross: Register of burials, 1864-2015

Easkey: Vestry minute book, 1935-2003

##### **Killanne-Killegney Union (Ferns)**

Killanne: Vestry minute book, 1899-1955; Preachers' book, 1962-1991

Killegney: Vestry minute book, 1955-1997

Old Ross with Adamstown (Ferns): Combined register containing copy baptisms, 1802-1915, marriages and burials 1801-1841, as well as baptisms, 1802-1870 and marriages, 1802-1845 for Adamstown or Templesheelin.

Templeshambo: Vestry minute book, 1958-1989

**Kilnaughtin**

Vestry minute books, 1878-1982 and of Kilnaughtin and Listowel Union 1959-2005; account books, 1870-1982; Preachers' books, 1875-2010; Register of confirmations, 1928-1943; Register of vestrymen, 1901-1958

**Listowel (Ardfert)**

Combined register of baptisms, 1835-1912, and marriages and burials, 1836-1912; Vestry Minute Book, 1835-1912 and Register of vestrymen, 1845-1950.

**Malahide, Portmarnock & St Doulagh's (Dublin)**

Vestry minute books, 2018-2022

**Narraghmore (Glendalough)**

Vestry minute book, 2001-2012 and Preachers' book, 1957-2000

**North Strand & St Barnabas (Dublin)**

Loose bound book containing black and white Photographs of the interior of the church before alterations, 1910  
From Thomas Wall, Dublin

**Rathdrum Union (Glendalough)**

Rathdrum: Extensive collection of miscellaneous loose papers and correspondence, 1802-2014; Maps and plans relating to Rathdrum National School, including proposed alterations and improvements of school entrance, c. 1885; a new boiler house for church, 1940, and sketch of the church interior, 1972, with additional photographs of the rectory, content, church interior, and one drawing with the church in the background undated.

Derralossory: Architectural drawings including plan of the church before tower was built, 1820; with a sketch plan including tower; drawing for new tower and gallery for Derralossory church: north elevation and ground plan, and plan of proposed organ; Miscellaneous administrative papers relating to Derralossory and Laragh National Schools, 1894-1984, and to the sale of Derralossory schoolhouse, 1983-1987; and other parish miscellaneous loose papers, 1779-1978

**Rathfarnham (Dublin)**

Scrapbook and miscellaneous loose papers concerning the bicentenary celebrations, and other general historical material, 1884-1995

**Rathkeale Union (Ardfert)**

Rathkeale: Combined register of baptisms, marriages and burials, 1781-1803; Register of marriages, 1962-2004; Register of vestrymen, 1781-1821.

Abbeyfeale: Register of baptisms, 1880-1909; register of marriages, 1845-1910; Register of vestrymen, 1870-1911

Askeaton: Register of marriages, 1962-2004; Preachers' book, 1958-2021

Brosna: Register of baptisms, 1877-1897; Register of vestrymen, 1870-1927

Duagh: Register of church members, 1870 and of vestrymen, 1870

Kilcornan: Register of marriages, 1962-2009

Killehenry (Ballybunnion): Register of marriages, 1860-1925; Preachers' book, 1919-1975

Liselton: Registers of marriages, 1840-1952

Rattoo: Register of marriages, 1884-1902; Register of burials, 1870-1949

**Roscommon (Elphin)**

Roscommon: Combined register of baptisms and burials, 1882-2009; Register of marriages, 1969-2007; Preacher's Book, 1944-1987, Cemetery Committee Minute Book, 1912-1951; Account Book 1921-1990; Orders of Services (including funeral services 2007-2020), 2007-2020

Castleblakeney: Register of baptisms, 1906-1918; Register of marriages, 1860-1919; Register of burials, 1902-1925

Oran (Ballymoe): Register of marriages 1957 (one entry only)

**Roscrea (Killaloe)**

Bourney: Register of baptisms, 1877-1992; Registers of marriages, 1845-2006; Register of burials, 1877-1896; Registers of vestrymen, 1894-2009.

Corbally: Register of baptisms, 1834-1997; Register of marriages, 1921-2006; Register of burials, 1875-1998.; Register of vestrymen, 1870-2006; Account books, 1893-2927; Preachers' books, 1891-1953; Sunday School registers, 1842; 1914; Temperance Society Register of members, 1874-1892; Mothers' Union register and loose papers, 1836-1940; Miscellaneous loose papers,

**St Ann (Dublin)**

Two volumes of choir attendance books, 1974-1981  
From Church House, Dublin

**St Werburgh (Dublin)**

Legal papers, including counsel's opinion, copies leases and other documents, concerning the St Werburgh's parish estate, being property in the city of Dublin held under various ancient grants for charitable purposes and their status following the Irish Church Act, 1851-1947  
Purchased at auction, South Dublin Auctions

**Tuam Cathedral Group (Tuam)**

Tuam: Register of marriages, 2015-2016  
Aasleagh: Register of baptisms, 1875-1998; Register of marriages, 1960-1964; Register of vestrymen, 1952-1983  
Ballinrobe: Register of baptisms, 1912-1983; Register of marriages, 1960-1964; Register of vestrymen, 1952-1983

**Urney with Annageliffe or Cavan (Kilmore)**

Urney: Combined registers for baptisms, marriages and burials, 1804-1871; Registers of baptisms, 1860-2000; Registers of marriages, 1845-2005; Registers of burials, 1874-2000; Vestry minute books, 1869-1954; Register of vestrymen, 1870-1893; Sunday School roll books, 1937-1963; Miscellaneous loose papers, 1898-1981; undated.  
Denn: Register of baptisms, 1879-2001; Register of marriages, 1845-2007; Register of vestrymen, 1870-1996  
Derryheen: Register of baptisms, 1879-2000; Registers of marriages, 1846-2006; Register of vestrymen, 1861-2017.

**(ii) Cathedral Records**

**Christ Church Cathedral Dublin**

Rough chapter and board minute book, 1982-1990; Choristers' List, being a list of choristers with dates of admission to the choir, 1878-1911; Scrapbook of press-cuttings and other memorabilia marking the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cathedral, 1938-1939; *Measured Drawings of the Building Prior to Restoration Submitted in Competition for the Fitzgerald Prize Medal* (RIAI) by William Butler ARIAI. Printed [two copies], 1874; Visitors' book, 2003-2004. *Mischna; Sive, Totius Hebraeorum Juris: Rituum, Antiquitatum, ac Legum Oralium Systema* vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Gerardus & Jacobus Borstius, 1698).

**From Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin**

**Limerick Cathedral**

Service sheets and orders of service, including for services held online during the Covid-19 pandemic, from St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick 2022-23  
From the Very Revd Niall Sloane, Dean of Limerick

**St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin**

Three patents (formerly on display in the area of the Cathedral known as "Swift's Corner") being an order and statutes relating to matters of discipline for the Vicar's Choral, c. 1692-1695; the letters patent appointing Jonathan Swift as Dean, 1713; the Ancient Freedom of Dublin as bestowed upon Dean Jonathan Swift, by Dublin Corporation, 1715.  
Music List Registers, being 44 bound volumes containing the weekly printed music lists with some service sheets and other memorabilia attached, 1865-1947.  
Complete digital set of architectural files including drawings and supporting documents either originally created (or assembled in support of work) by Mr J Beauchamp, cathedral architect, 2003-2022.  
From St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

**Tuam Cathedral**

Minute book of the Chapter of St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, 1945-2000  
From Tuam Cathedral Group

**(iii) Diocesan Records**

**Down, Dromore & Connor**

Extensive collection in 47 jumbo boxes of diocesan records for the original Down, Dromore & Connor diocesan structure, including records of the diocesan council, synod, ancillary committees, account books, confirmation records and marriage notice books, 1870-1960. Additionally the records of the Antrim and Down Protestant Orphan Society including reports and minutes, 1867-1991.  
From Church of Ireland House, Belfast

**Killala & Achonry**

Letter to Frederick Stock Esq, Killala, diocesan registrar, asking questions on churches, glebe houses and appointments of clergy for a return of diocesan benefices, 10 December 1829

From at the Rectory, Cong, Co. Mayo and conveyed by Brigid Clesham

**2. MANUSCRIPTS**

**Bartlett, Revd Canon Dr J.R. (died 2022)**

Extensive collection of research notes, draft writings, details of archaeological excavations and mapping projects for the Palestine Exploration Fund, maps, lectures, notebooks, slides and other miscellaneous materials of the late Revd Canon Dr J.R. Bartlett.

From his widow, Olivia Bartlett, Dalkey Co. Dublin

**Bishop Hodson's School**

Printed *Scheme for the Management of Bishop Hodson's Grammar School with Byelaws*, c. 1891

From local parish custody in Roscommon (Elphin)

**Burrows, George Henry Jerram (1910-2003) Headmaster, Cork Grammar School, 1947-71**

Complete set of sermons of the Revd G.H.J. Burrows, 1933-1990, mostly handwritten in exercise books, organised by the liturgical calendar, 1933-1990.

From the Sides family, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford

**Church's Ministry of Healing**

Three minute books, 1932-2009

From the Ministry of Healing, Dublin

**Edwards, Henry St George (1824-1882)**

Correspondence including drafts of outgoing letters and responses to the Church Temporalities Commission together with Computation Claim forms and other documentation relating to the annuity of £1,220 granted to Edwards as incumbent of Rockcorry (Clogher) under the Irish Church Act. The material reveals the interplay between a parish cleric with both the Commissioners and the RCB, with additionally in this case the provincial diocesan authorities in Armagh to secure compensation.

From Andy Edwards, descendant, Middlesbrough, N. Yorkshire

**Fishamble Street Mission, Dublin (Temperance Movement)**

Annual reports, receipts, printed cards and miscellaneous correspondence, 1913-1924

From Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

**Hone, Evie (1894-1955), stained glass artist**

Handwritten letter from Evie Hone, to Miss [Marjorie] Seaver [later Hone] enclosing her detailed handwritten description of the symbolism in the rose window in St John's Malone, Belfast (depicting the Alpha and Omega, with six surrounding designs) and making comparisons between specific symbols as depicted on a tomb in St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, 23 July [1948?]. The file includes a photographic depiction and later detail from Marjorie Hone dated June 2008 enabling Evie Hone's description of the window to be accurately read) and a provenance letter fleshing out the context and familial connections. [1948, 2008]

From Peter Seaver, Kilkenny

**Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland**

Colour and large-scale survey map, by Nicholas M. Fitzgerald CE [Chartered Engineer], Cork, of the Rogerson Cork Estate, in the village of Bandon, Co. Cork, based on the 6" Ordnance Survey, 1834.

From William Prentice, solicitor, Dublin

**Lambeth Conference, 1988**

Collection of press cuttings, press releases and related papers concerning the ordination of women, as compiled from a journalistic perspective by Joe Carroll, former Religious Correspondent, *The Irish Times*.

From Joe Carroll, Dublin



### **Lectures on Church of Ireland Identity For Clergy Training**

Series of typewritten lectures by James Hartin (1930-96) Sub-Warden of the Divinity Hostel, 1963-1980 (later Principal of the Church of Ireland Theological College, 1980-1989) as prepared for a week of renewal in Newcastle parish (Down) and later for the Dublin & Glendalough Conference for Parochial Clergy, including ‘The Church of Ireland’; ‘Some Aspects of Life in the Church of Ireland’; ‘The Relevance of Christianity in Ireland Today’; ‘The Bible in Church’; ‘Tradition in Contemporary Irish Christian Witness’ and ‘The Family of God’, all compiled for 1971 or 1981.

From the Revd Suzanne Harris, Castlemacadam

### **Kennerly, Canon Virginia (‘Ginnie’) Kennerley**

Complete set of sermons written throughout her clerical career, as auxiliary minister in Bray (Dublin) 1988-93; and additionally Lecturer in Pastoral Theology at CITC, 1988-93; rector of Narraghmore (with Timolin, Castledermot and Kinneagh) (Glendalough) and since her retirement in 2005. Collection arranged and listed by the subject herself during the Covid-19 pandemic.

From Canon Ginnie Kennerley, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

### **Maconchy, Anna Letitia (nee King) (1798-1839)**

Copy of the diary by Letitia Maconchy wife of the Revd William Maconchy (1796-1879) vicar of Coolock 1828-1879. The volume was transcribed after her death by her husband having been written during four years prior to her death for their son John King Maconchy, dated ‘Coolock Vestry 1840’, 1834-1838.

From Karen Ruddock, through Coolock parish, Dublin

### **Mollan Family**

Leather-bound illuminated volume presented to the Revd Francis Bettersworth Mollan (1856-1932) by the parishioners of Birchington-on-Sea following his retirement from the curacy of All Saints Church, Kent, England, June 1903, with ‘A Mollan Book, Some Family Archives relating to the descendants of the Reverend Robert Mollan (1826-1836) and Frances Augusta Mollan (née Moriarty)’, being archival material, collated and edited by Robert Charles Mollan, the great-grandson of Revd Robert Mollan, 2022.

From, Dr Charles Mollan, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

### **Perrin Family**

Miscellaneous papers of Louis Perrin MP (1782-1864) and his sons, James and Mark 1835; 1854-1858

From Senator Victor Boyhan, Seanad Éireann, Dublin

### **Sides, James Robert (1937-2009)**

Complete set of sermons, 1999-2005, with additional notebooks and writings

From the Sides family, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford

### **Templecarn Parish Marriage Licences (Clogher)**

Marriage licences concerning parishioners of Templecarn parish (Clogher) signed by the bishop.

From local custody in Rathdrum Union of parishes (Glendalough)

### **Theological College (formerly Divinity Hostel)**

Miscellaneous correspondence and related papers about the evolutionary nature of theological training in the Divinity Hostel later Theological College, including the changing B.Th curriculum in Dublin University; the fund for prizes and exhibitions, and staff meetings, 1964; 1984-2008

From the Theological Institute

## **3. OTHER**

### **Representative Church Body**

Portrait in oils of the Rt Revd William John McCappin, Bishop of Connor, 1981-87, by David Long.

Transferred from Church of Ireland House, Belfast

### **Copies of Diocesan and General Synod Speeches by Bishops and Archbishops**

Print-out copies of speeches delivered by bishops and archbishops at diocesan synods and General Synods for the period 1919-23, and 1929, as published in *The Irish Times* and arranged chronologically.

From Prof. Brian M. Walker, Belfast

# **STANDING COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS LAID BEFORE**

**THE GENERAL SYNOD AT ITS**

**ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SESSION 2024**

**THE GENERAL SYNOD  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF IRELAND**

**HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**



Rev Canon Gillian Wharton, The Rectory, Cross Avenue, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Mr Ken Gibson, 11 Magheralave Court, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT28 3BY

Ms Hazel Corrigan, Liscolman House, Tullow, Co Carlow

Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston, St Mark's Rectory, Portadown Road, Armagh, BT61 9EE

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY** - Mrs Janet Maxwell

**SYNOD OFFICER** - Dr Nicole Gallagher

**SYNOD OFFICER (Maternity Cover)** – Ms Sukhneet Dhir

**SYNOD ADMINISTRATOR** – Ms Aisling Sheridan

**COMPLIANCE AND COMMITTEE SUPPORT** – Mr Stuart Wilson

**OFFICE**

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**1. SUMMARY**

Some significant matters dealt with by the Standing Committee in the past year were:

**2. NAMES AND ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS**

During the period June 2023–March 2024 (inclusive), 5 meetings were held. The number of meetings attended by each member is placed before his/her name.

At the March meeting of Standing Committee in 2024 the Primate thanked all members who had served on Standing Committee during the triennium. He paid particular tribute to Mr Wilfred Baker and Mrs Joan Bruton who have given extended periods of service to Standing Committee over several decades. Mr Wilfred Baker has served on many prominent committees but most recently has acted as chair of the Budget Sub-Committee which is central to the ongoing work of the Standing Committee he also previously served as one of the ACC representatives. Mrs Joan Bruton’s contribution to various committees of the Church was also noted for its great depth and for the clearly stated humanity of her approach. Mrs Bruton has also been a forthright champion of those living with disability and ensuring that the Church not only makes provision within its pastoral services but also works hard in the role of public advocacy.

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

**THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS**

**THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

5/5	Rev Canon Gillian Wharton
5/5	Mr Kenneth Gibson
5/5	Ms Hazel Corrigan
5/5	Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

Armagh	2/5	Rev Henry Blair
	5/5	Rev Gary McMurray
	4/5	Mrs Mary Caldwell
	3/5	Mrs Caroline Nesbitt
Clogher	5/5	Rev Canon Ian Berry
	4/5	Rev Mark Gallagher
	5/5	Miss Irene Knox
	4/5	Mr Glenn Moore
Derry & Raphoe	5/5	Rev Canon Henry Gilmore
	3/5	Rev Peter Ferguson
	2/5	Mr John Junkin
	2/5	Mr Robert Ellis
Down & Dromore	3/3	Ven Roderic West*
	5/5	Rev Catherine Simpson

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	2/2	Ven James Cheshire*
	5/5	Mr Andrew Brannigan
	1/5	Mrs Paula McIlwaine
Connor	5/5	Rev James Boyd
	5/5	Ven Barry Forde
	4/5	Mr Roy Totten
	2/5	Dr Andrew Scholes
Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh	3/5	Ven Patrick Bamber
	2/5	Rev Canon Ruth West
	4/5	Mr Edward Lindsay
	3/5	Mr Alan Williamson
Tuam, Killala & Achonry	3/5	Very Rev Lynda Peilow
	4/5	Rev Stephen McWhirter
	4/5	Mrs Ann Nethaway
	0/5	Mr Arthur Foster-Sweeney
Dublin & Glendalough	3/5	Rev Dr William Olhausen
	1/5	Very Rev Stephen Farrell
	4/5	Mr Lyndon MacCann, S.C.
	2/5	Dr Lucy Michael
Meath & Kildare	4/5	Rev Canon Katharine Poulton
		VACANT
	5/5	Mrs Joan Bruton
		VACANT
Cashel, Ferns & Ossory	2/5	Rev Dr Christine O’Dowd-Smyth
	4/5	Rev Canon Nicola Halford
	3/5	Mr Richard Codd
	3/5	Ms Emma Purser
Cork, Cloyne & Ross	5/5	Ven Andrew Orr
	2/5	Rev Canon Paul Arbuthnot
	4/5	Mr Wilfred Baker
	4/5	Ms Hilda Connolly
Limerick & Killaloe	4/5	Rev Canon Jane Galbraith
	5/5	Very Rev Niall Sloane
	3/5	Mr Adrian Hilliard
	3/5	Mr Edward Hardy



**CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

5/5	Very Rev Nigel Dunne	5/5	Very Rev Kenneth Hall
4/5	Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott	5/5	Ven David Huss
4/5	Rev Ruth Elmes	3/5	Rev David White
4/5	Very Rev Shane Forster		

\* The Ven James Cheshire was elected to Standing Committee in December 2023 following the resignation of the Ven Roderic West.

The Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary of the General Synod are entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Standing Committee.

**COMMITTEES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

**FINANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Mr Wilfred Baker  
The Honorary Secretaries

**LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

His Honour Judge Tom Burgess  
His Honour Judge Alastair Devlin  
Mr Lyndon MacCann, SC  
The Hon Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness  
Mr Oswyn Paulin  
The Honorary Secretaries

Mr William Prentice  
His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers (d. Feb 2024)  
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Stephens

**PRIORITIES FUND COMMITTEE**

Mr Glenn Moore  
Mrs Joan Bruton  
Ms Hazel Corrigan  
Rt Rev George Davison  
Rev Peter Ferguson  
Ven Andrew Orr

Very Rev Lynda Peilow  
Mr Roy Totten

**BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE**

Mr Wilfred Baker  
Rev Henry Blair  
Ms Hazel Corrigan  
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston  
Miss Irene Knox

**WORLD DEVELOPMENT- BISHOPS' APPEAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Rev John Ardis  
Rt Rev Dr Ferran Glenfield (Chair)  
Ms Ruth Handy  
Rev Claire Henderson  
Mrs Claire Holmes  
Rev Canon Jonathan Pierce  
Very Rev Niall Sloane  
Mrs Iris Sutor (Hon Sec)

**LAY JUDGES OF THE COURT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

His Honour Judge Tom Burgess

His Honour Judge Alistair Devlin  
Mr Charles Galloway  
Mr Patrick Good KC  
Mr Lyndon MacCann SC  
The Hon Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness  
Mr Ronald Robins  
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Stephens

### 3. APPOINTMENTS/NOMINATIONS

During the period covered by this report, the Standing Committee made the following appointments/nominations:

- The following were nominated by the Standing Committee to the Select Committee on Clergy Tenure: Rev Ruth Elmes, Rev James Boyd, Ms Irene Knox, Ms Joan Bruton (joining Honorary Secretary Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston and episcopal nominee Rt Rev George Davison who were respectively nominated at General Synod 2023 and in March 2024).
- The following were appointed to the Consultative Group on Disability: Ms Gemma Willis, Ms Dorothy Jones, Ms Kirsty McCartney.
- The following were nominated to the AGM of the Secondary Education Committee, with renomination (if appropriate) to take place in March 2024, March 2025: Mr Wilfred Baker, Ms Hazel Corrigan, Ms Elizabeth Hassell, Ms Joyce Ryder, Mr Gavan Woods, Rev Canon Paul Arbuthnot, Ms Susanne Campbell, Mr Ian Coombes.
- Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson was nominated to attend the 2023 General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church.
- Mr Stephen Addis and Most Rev Pat Storey were nominated to attend the 2024 Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- Mr Robbie Syme was appointed to the Church of Ireland Pensions Board.
- Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott was appointed to attend the Kirchentag in June 2023.
- Rev David White was appointed to attend the AGM of CTBI in October 2023.
- Ven Andrew Orr was appointed to attend the Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network in Denmark in 2023.
- The following were appointed to attend the AGM of the Irish Council of Churches in March 2024: The Archbishop of Dublin, The Bishop of Connor, The Dean of Limerick, Canon Dr Kenneth Milne, Dr Catherine Smith, Dr Nicole Gallagher, the General Synod Officer (or substitute), Mr Glenn Moore, a lay person from the Diocese where the AGM is to be held, Ms Cate Turner, Ms June Butler, Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (Hon Secretary of General Synod), Rev Canon Katharine Poulton, Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien, Rev Dennis Christie (The Rector of the Parish (Ahoghill) where the AGM is to be held), Mr David Ritchie, the Chief Officer, Rev Suzanne Cousins, Rev Abigail Sines, Rev Philip McKinley, Rev Maithrie White-Dundas, An Ordinand.
- Rev Canon Stephen Fielding was appointed the Church of Ireland contact person to Porvoo.
- Ms Judith Cairns was appointed to the Disciplinary Panel.
- Ms Claire Callanan was appointed Chair of the Disciplinary Panel.
- The following were appointed members of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue: Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien, Dr Bridget Nichols, Dr Ryan Hawk, Mr Femi Atoyebi.
- Prof Noel Purdy, Ms Sarah Taylor and the Very Rev Niall Sloane were appointed to the Advisory Council of the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU.
- Ms Faith Sithole was appointed a member of the Bishops Appeal Advisory Committee.
- The following were nominated to attend the AGM of the Irish Inter Church Meeting: Very Rev Kenneth Hall, Ven Peter Thompson, Mr Glenn Moore, Ms Gina Coptly, Ms Cate Turner, Mrs June Butler.
- The following were appointed to the Church and Society Commission: Mr Ken Gibson, Archbishop of Dublin, Archbishop of Armagh, Mr Neville Armstrong, Mrs June Butler, Rev

Jane Burns, Ms Zephryn Patton, Rev Andrew Campbell, Mr Michael Trimble, Mr Steven McQuitty KC, Rev Andrew Irwin, Dr Claire Jones, Ms Hannah O’Neill, Dr Harriet Wilkinson, Asst Prof Caroline Elliott Kingston and Mr Keith Gardiner.

- The following were appointed as members of the committee of the Priorities Fund to serve from the first day of the General Synod 2024 to the day before the first day of the General Synod 2027: Ms Hazel Corrigan, Rt Rev George Davison, Rev Peter Ferguson, Ven Andrew Orr, Very Rev Lynda Peilow and Mr Roy Totten.
- Ms Heather James was appointed to the Marriage Council in March 2024.

#### **4. APPENDED MOTIONS**

Motions amending the terminology used in the Bills Procedure and other amendments to two Standing Orders can be found in Appendix A on page 138.

#### **5. ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE, DCU**

The report of the Advisory Council appears as Appendix B on page 141. A report from the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU is also contained in the Board of Education Report.

#### **6. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS**

In June 2023, PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed as auditors of the accounts of the Representative Church Body for the financial year 2023.

#### **7. BILLS PROCESS**

During the triennium, the Standing Committee considered a proposal drawn up by the Honorary Secretaries to amend the terminology used in the bills procedure at General Synod with the aim of making the bills process more accessible to members and to encourage greater participation. The resulting bill will be presented at General Synod 2024 with the related resolution.

#### **8. BOARD FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Standing Committee approved the report of the Board and agreed to recommend a proposal to extend the project for a further three-year period to the Allocations Committee of the Representative Body. The following resolution was agreed:

That Standing Committee approves the report of the Children and Families Ministry Board.

The standing Committee approves the proposal for a further three-year programme to be undertaken by the Board for Ministry with Children and Families and recommends its reappointment for a further term and approves that the financial proposal for 2025 - 2027 should be brought forward to the Allocations Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

That the Standing Committee extends the term of office of the existing members of the Board of Ministry for Children and Families until the day before the meeting of Standing Committee in June 2024, requesting that the nomination of new members will be proposed at the June 2024 meeting of the Standing Committee.

#### **9. CHRISTIAN AID**

The Honorary Secretaries sought expressions of interest from those interested in representing the Church of Ireland on the Board of Christian Aid. This role involves six half day meetings per year with substantial agendas and some preparation time in advance of each meeting. Most meetings are

remote but at least one will require travel and attendance in-person. It has proved difficult to fill the two positions available, but the Honorary Secretaries would welcome contact from those interested.

#### **10. CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION**

In January 2024, the Commission's membership was appointed by Standing Committee to serve until September 2027, including nine new members who engaged in the expression of interest process run by the Honorary Secretaries.

The report of the Church and Society Commission can be found in Appendix F on page 170.

#### **11. CHURCH OF IRELAND CENSUS**

The Church of Ireland Census was taken again in February/March 2024 gathering figures mainly from the Preachers' Book of 2023. The Census was run electronically, so that parishes could upload their figures directly and reports could be generated and returned with less work needed in parishes or dioceses.

The Standing Committee is grateful to Mr Jonathan Hull for his assistance in designing and running the Census reports. As we go to print, there has been a 91% response recorded from parishes, which has been very encouraging. The data from the census is currently being analysed and will be reported back in due course.

#### **12. CLERGY DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) PENSION SCHEMES**

In September 2023, Mr Henry Algeo, Chair of the RB Executive Committee with Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer presented a paper outlining proposed changes to the Clergy Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Schemes.

Standing Committee passed the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body, and in accordance with Section 8 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the Parish / Diocesan Council / Other contribution to the member's pension fund in the Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes (NI and RI) be increased to 13% per annum of the relevant Minimum Approved Stipend of Episcopal Stipend, with effect from 1 January 2024.

#### **13. CLERGY PENSIONS FUND – SOLVENCY LEVY**

In September 2023, Mr Henry Algeo, Chair of the RB Executive Committee with Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer presented a report on proposed changes to the Clergy Pensions Fund – Solvency Levy. It was noted that it was intended that this levy would continue to be reduced to 0% in the longer term. Gratitude was paid to the parishes who paid the levy when it was introduced as well as to those who had their pensions frozen over a period for the part that they have played in getting to a stage where this levy could be reduced and finally removed.

Standing Committee approved the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body and the Trustee, in accordance with Section 36 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the rate of levy to be paid by each diocese towards the cost of securing the solvency of the Clergy Pensions Fund from 1 January 2024 be set at a reduced percentage level of 3% of the Minimum Approved Stipend in force at 1 January 2024.

#### **14. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIOCESAN SYNODS AND COUNCILS**

During the year the Honorary Secretaries received communications from the Diocesan Synods of Dublin & Glendalough, Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe, Cashel, Ferns & Ossory and Down & Dromore Diocesan Council offering different perspectives on the subject of pastoral and liturgical provision for persons of the same sex previously married in State ceremonies. In addition, a letter was received by the Honorary Secretaries from the Archdeacon of Belfast, Ven Barry Forde outlining his views on the broader governance context of such communications within the structures of the Church of Ireland. The text of these communications is contained within Appendix R, which can be found on page 206.

#### **15. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

In January 2024, the Standing Committee considered the 2023 Income and Expenditure report for the Complaints Committee as required under Chapter VIII 23 (e). This report is appended as Appendix H on page 173. The appointment of the Complaint Administrator for the purposes of the relevant part of Chapter VIII was approved for another year.

#### **16. CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISABILITY**

The report of the Consultative Group on Disability can be found as Appendix J on page 176.

#### **17. DIGNITY IN CHURCH LIFE POLICIES**

In June 2023, in accordance with Statute Ch. I of 2015, the Standing Committee approved the amended Clergy Permanent Health Insurance Policy for inclusion in the Dignity in Church Life Charter.

#### **18. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Following the Motion for Diversity and Inclusion which was passed at last year's General Synod communication was made to all Dioceses seeking to gather their responses. To date we have only received replies from Dublin & Glendalough, Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, Connor and Down & Dromore, however it is encouraging that these responses have been positive and welcoming towards such inclusion.

#### **19. EPISCOPAL ELECTORAL REVIEW GROUP**

The Working Group was appointed in November 2022. The Review Group has produced Regulations and a Bill which will be presented at General Synod in May 2024 having been approved by the Standing Committee in March 2024. The Working Group will develop further guidance for Facilitators before completing its work. The full report of the Review Group can be found as Appendix P on page 198.

#### **20. FUTURE OF CURACIES: DEPLOYMENT, PROVISION AND FUNDING**

The report of this group can be found as Appendix I on page 174.

#### **21. GENERAL SYNOD 2025**

Standing Committee has held extensive discussions around the future meeting structure preferred for the annual General Synod meeting and the item has been timetabled again for the June 2024 Standing Committee meeting. As previously agreed, the General Synod of 2025 will be held from 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in the Lawlor's Hotel, Naas, subject to Standing Committee amending this decision. The third day will be a remote session on the evening of Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May with a further session being held on the evening of Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May if required. Members are asked to note that the Hotel has been asked to hold the date of the 8<sup>th</sup> of May in reserve pending the outcome of the discussion in June.

## **22. GENERAL SYNOD/STANDING COMMITTEE FINANCES**

At the September 2023 meeting of the Standing Committee, the Budget Sub-Committee presented its report which was accepted by the Standing Committee and forwarded to the Allocations Committee for consideration.

## **23. GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND**

The balance at 31 December 2023 was €109,379.22 and £796.72. In June 2023, the following resolution was passed for an allocation to be made from the fund to reprint the large-print pew edition of the Church Hymnal:

£45,000 grant to provide for the reprinting of 4000 copies of the large-print pew edition of the Church Hymnal by Oxford University Press.

Owing to the greatly reduced financial strength of the fund, the Central Communications Board requested the Representative Body for assistance and the Fund itself has been closed to further grant applications until it has been restored to a healthier position. Details are included in the reports of the Central Communications Board and the Literature Committee.

## **24. IN-PERSON STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Currently in-person meetings are held to deal with the two heaviest agendas each year in March and September. Remaining meetings are held by Zoom unless a substantive item requires in-person meetings to debate the issue. After considerable discussion of the desirability or otherwise of this pattern, it was agreed to continue but to keep the matter under review in order to ensure that the business of Standing Committee is dealt with in the most effective way possible. The June meeting of Standing Committee will take place in person in 2024.

## **25. JOURNAL OF THE GENERAL SYNOD – DEPUTY EDITOR**

The Very Rev Gregory Dunstan has agreed to act as Deputy Editor of the Journal of the General Synod, working alongside the Editor, Dr Kenneth Milne.

## **26. LARGER FORMAT BOOK OF REPORTS**

Standing Committee agreed to print the Book of Reports in A4 format, with a larger font and, with spiral binding making the book easier to keep open, it is hoped to be more user-friendly.

## **27. LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Primate informed the March 2024 Standing Committee of the death of His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers, who was a long serving member of the Legal Advisory Committee of the Standing Committee. Judge Rodgers had been ill for some years. He had previously served as Chancellor of the Diocese of Connor. The Primate paid tribute to his distinguished contribution to the life of the Church of Ireland.

## **28. LETTER OF RESPONSE FROM KING CHARLES III**

Following General Synod deciding to send a letter of good wishes to King Charles, a reply was received in which he conveyed his thanks to the members of the General Synod for their greetings and send his warmest good wishes to all Synod members.

## **29. MIND MATTERS**

A special presentation of Mind Matters will be made to the General Synod by Most Revd Patricia Storey. The Standing Committee received a report following the Mind Matters Conference. The project has now concluded, with thanks expressed to the generous funding from All Churches Trust. The RB has included a mental health dimension in its strategic plan. This will embrace three strands: further training; support for clergy; seed funding for projects.

## **30. MINIMUM APPROVED STIPENDS**

Under section 51 (1) of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland as revised by Chapter VI of 2011, the Standing Committee is required to consider recommendations from the Representative Church Body as to the rates of Minimum Approved Stipends to take effect from 1 January 2024.

At its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the Standing Committee heard a submission by Mr Michael Johnston, Chairman of the Stipends Committee, which detailed the RCB's recommendations.

The Standing Committee approved the recommendations of the Representative Church Body and approved the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body in accordance with Section 51 (1) of Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the rates of Minimum Approved Stipends shall be as follows with effect from 1 January 2024:

- (a) no stipend shall be less than £36,587 per annum in Northern Ireland or €44,657.50 per annum in the Republic of Ireland in the case of an Incumbent or a member of the clergy appointed as Bishop's Curate under the provisions of Section 42 of Chapter IV or of a Diocesan Curate over the age of 30 years appointed under the provisions of Section 43 of Chapter IV.
- (b) the stipend for a Curate-Assistant shall be in accordance with the following scale:

First Year	75.0%	of minimum stipend for incumbent
Second Year	77.5%	"
Third Year	80.0%	"
Fourth Year	82.5%	"
Fifth	and 85.0%	"
succeeding Years		

## **31. MORAVIAN INTERCHANGEABILITY OF MINISTRY**

In 2023, General Synod rejoiced as it affirmed the interchangeability of ministry agreement presented for approval at General Synod and at the General Synod of the Moravian Church in Britain and Ireland. On 18th March 2024, representatives of the two Churches came together in St Patrick's Church, Ballymena and Gracehill Moravian Church for two shared services with a tree planting ceremony in each location involving the Archbishop of Armagh the Most Rev John McDowell and Bishop Sarah Groves of the Moravian Church, Bishop Michael Burrows and Bishop Joachim Kreusel and children from St Patrick's Church, Ballymena and Grace Hill Moravian Church.

## **32. PENSIONABLE STIPENDS**

Under Section 2 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland as revised by Chapter V of 2011, the Standing Committee is required to consider a recommendation from the Representative Church Body and the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Limited as to the rates of Pensionable Stipend to take effect from 1 January 2024.

At its meeting of 19th September 2023, the Standing Committee heard a presentation by Mr Henry Algeo, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Representative Church Body, which detailed the financial background to the recommendations of the RCB and the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Limited.

The Standing Committee approved the recommendations of the Representative Church Body by adopting the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body and the Trustee, in accordance with Section 1 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, Pensionable Stipend shall be as follows with effect from 1 January 2024, on condition that the Clergy Pensions Fund continue to receive a Clergy Pensions Fund levy of 3% Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024, 2025 and 2026:

- (a) Pensionable Stipend shall be £31,800 per annum in Northern Ireland and €40,622 per annum in the Republic of Ireland in the case of an Incumbent or a member of the clergy appointed as Bishop's Curate under the provisions of Section 42 of Chapter IV or of a Diocesan Curate over the age of 30 years appointed under the provisions of Section 43 of Chapter IV.
- (b) Pensionable Stipend for a Curate-Assistant shall be in accordance with the following scale:

First Year	75.0% of Pensionable Stipend for incumbent
Second Year	77.5% "
Third Year	80.0% "
Fourth Year	82.5% "
Fifth and succeeding Years	85.0% ""

### **33. PIONEER MINISTRY COUNCIL**

The Pioneer Ministry Council will report directly to General Synod in 2024 in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The Pioneer Ministry Council also reports twice annually to the Standing Committee.

### **34. PRIORITIES FUND**

The accounts of the Priorities Fund and the grants, approved by Standing Committee in March 2024, are contained as Appendix K on page 178.

### **35. CHURCH OF IRELAND SAFEGUARDING BOARD**

The Standing Committee agreed the following resolution:

That Standing Committee requests that the Safeguarding Board give due consideration to the issue of gender identity in the revised Child Safeguarding Policy. In particular, providing policy direction for contexts where a biological male wishes to use toilets, accommodation and bathroom facilities designated for use by females (or vice versa).



The Safeguarding Board met in March and reported back to the Standing Committee that a review of the policy had been initiated to take on this work.

The full report of the Safeguarding Board appears as Appendix M on page 187.

**36. STANDING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS – AGE EXCEPTION APPLICATION – DIOCESE OF CASHEL, FERNS & OSSORY (CFO)**

At its March meeting, the Standing Committee agreed the following resolution:

In accordance with the provisions in Part 1, S5 of The Constitution of the Standing Committee of the General Synod, the Diocesan Council of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory requests the Standing Committee to direct substitution of the words ‘forty-five years’, in S5 with the words ‘fifty-five years’ in respect of election of CFO, diocesan representatives to the Standing Committee, there having been fewer than four or fewer beneficed of licensed clergy under the age of forty-five years of age on 1st December 2023.

**37. STANDING COMMITTEE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES FUND ACCOUNTS 2023**

The accounts are contained as Appendix N on page 191.

**38. THIRD LEVEL CHAPLAINCIES**

Standing Committee approved the interim report from the Committee. The report highlighted the excellence of the Third Level Chaplaincy Course run by CITI and recommended a joint funding approach for chaplaincies, with a working group being established to take the work further. The report of the Third Level Chaplaincies Review Group can be found in Appendix L on page 186.

**39. WORKING GROUP CONCERNING A CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE BY THE CHURCH TO HISTORIC INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE**

The report of the Working Group can be found in Appendix O on page 196.

**APPENDIX A**

**MOTIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO GENERAL SYNOD**

**BILLS PROCESS (DEFERRED FROM 2023)**

**Proposer:** The Honorary Secretaries

That the Standing Orders of the General Synod be amended as follows:

1. In Standing Order 18b the words ‘or of any bill’ shall be deleted.
2. In Standing Order 18, after the words ‘provided that the President’ shall be inserted the words ‘ (or person chairing the Synod at that time)’.
3. In Standing Order 20 the word “committee” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Amendment/Detail Stage”.
4. In Standing Order 26 the words “second reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Principle Stage”.
5. In Standing Order 28 the words “first reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the word “introduction” and the words “second reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Principle and Amendment/Detail Stages”.
6. In Standing Order 29 (a) the words “and First Reading” shall be deleted.
7. In Standing Order 29 (a) the words “10 minutes” shall be deleted on both occasions that they appear and be replaced with the words “five minutes”.
8. In Standing Order 29 (a) the words “a first time” shall be deleted.
9. In Standing Order 29 (a) the words “second reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Principle Stage”.
10. In Standing Order 29 (b) the words “second reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Principle Stage”, the words “that the bill be now read a second time” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “ that the bill now be considered in Principle”, the words “being postponed to the committee stage” shall be deleted and replaced with “being postponed to the Amendment/Detail Stage”, and the words “having been read a second time” shall be deleted and replaced with “having been through the Principle Stage”.
11. Furthermore, the words “in Committee of the whole Synod.” Shall be deleted and replaced with the words “at the Amendment/Detail Stage”.
12. In Standing Order 29 (c) the words “consideration in committee” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Amendment/Detail Stage”.

13. Furthermore, the words “The Committee of the whole Synod shall be deleted and be replaced with the words “The Synod” and the words “the bill, with or without amendments, shall be reported to the Synod” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “at the conclusion of this consideration an order shall be made fixing a day for the Final Consideration and Final Decision stages”.
14. Standing Order 29 (d) shall be deleted and replaced with the words: “Final Consideration Stage”
15. At this stage the Synod may consider amendments which arise out of the Amendment/Detail Stage and of which notice has been given at least one day before this stage. Amendments rejected during the Amendment/Detail Stage shall not be in order. Amendments may also be made without notice if in the opinion of the President they involve merely matters of drafting or the correction of grammatical or clerical errors.
16. When the bill has received relevant consideration, an order may be made fixing a day for the Final Decision, provided that such order must permit, unless the Synod otherwise direct, for a at least one clear day being interposed between consideration at the Detail/Amendment Stage and the Final Decision.”
17. In Standing Order 29 (e) the words “Third Reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Final Decision Stage” and that the words “now read a third time” shall be deleted.
18. In Standing Order 30 (a) the words “been read a first time” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “completed the Introduction Stage”.
19. Furthermore, the words “second reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “the Principle Stage” and the words “first reading stage” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Introduction Stage”.
20. In addition, the words “Amendments of which notice has been given at the first reading stage, may be moved at the committee stage’ shall be deleted and replaced with the words “Amendments of which notice has been given at the Introduction stage may be moved at the Amendment/Detail stage”.
21. In Standing Order 30 (c) the words “(ii) that the bill now be read a second time and (iii) that the bill now be read a third time and passed” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “(ii) that the bill now progress through the Principle Stage and (iii) the bill now progress through the Amendment/Detail and Final Decision Stages”.
22. In Standing Order 34 the words “except on Committee” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “during the Amendment/Detail Stage”.
23. In Standing Order 41 (a) the words “or in a Committee of the whole Synod” shall be deleted.
24. In Standing Order 44 (a) the words “or to a Committee of the whole Synod” shall be deleted.

In Standing Order 55 the words “in Committee, and then awaiting its third reading” shall be deleted and replaced with the words “at the Amendment/Detail Stage and then awaiting the Final Consideration and Decision Stages.

**MOTION TO CHANGE THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD, TO PREVENT A CLASH OF DEADLINES WITH HOLY WEEK**

**Proposer:** The Honorary Secretaries

*That standing Order 22 should be amended to read as follows:*

*‘22. Notice of motion for leave to bring in bills for specified purposes may be sent to the honorary secretaries of the Synod with the proposed bill at any time not less than one week before the day appointed for the opening of the session of the Synod, and shall appear on the Agenda for the first day of such session; **provided that any bill** which is lodged with the honorary secretaries not less than six weeks before the first day of the session **(excluding the period from Sunday next before Easter (Palm Sunday) to Easter Day inclusive)** shall be printed and sent to the members with the summonses.’*

**MOTION TO CHANGE THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD TO AMEND TIMINGS FOR REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE AND THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY**

**Proposer:** The Honorary Secretaries

*That Standing Order 57 should be amended to replace the words ‘not less than two hours’ with the words ‘not less than one and a half hours’.*

## APPENDIX B

### THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE, DCU INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

#### ADVISORY COUNCIL

#### REPORT TO THE GENERAL SYNOD 2024

#### MEMBERS

Members are shown with attendance figures for the two meetings held during 2023.

2	Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh	School patron (Chair)
2	Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin	School patron
1	Rev Canon Gillian Wharton	Honorary Secretary and member of the General Synod Board of Education (RI)
0	Very Rev Niall Sloane*	Member of Board of Management of a Church of Ireland national school and of the General Synod Board of Education (RI)
2	Ms Joyce Perdue	National school principal
2	Ms Carolyn Good	National school principal from a small rural school
0	Ms Sarah Taylor†	Member of the RCB with financial or auditing expertise
2	Rev Canon Prof Leslie Francis	External academic expert
0	Prof Noel Purdy‡	External academic expert from the island of Ireland

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Rev Canon Prof Anne Lodge	Director, Church of Ireland Centre
Mr David Ritchie	Chief Officer, RCB and Secretary General
Ms Elaine Whitehouse	Secretary to the Advisory Council

#### INTRODUCTION

The Church of Ireland Centre ('the Centre') was established in 2016 within the Institute of Education at Dublin City University (DCU) to ensure that the distinctive identity and values of teacher education in the Church of Ireland / Reformed Christian traditions were maintained on an ongoing basis following the incorporation of the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) into DCU.

The incorporation process provided that the Centre be supported by an Advisory Council, appointed by the relevant Church authorities. Accordingly in 2016 the Standing Committee of the General Synod nominated the first members to the Council.

The Standing Committee in November 2021 reappointed the outgoing members of the Council for a five-year period.

In collaboration with the governing structures of DCU, the Council is responsible for the relationship of the Church of Ireland with the Centre.

\* appointed March 2024 in place of Rev Canon Brian O'Rourke (resigned 2023)

† appointed March 2024 in place of Mr Robert Neill (resigned 2023)

‡ appointed September 2023

The principal activities set out in the Council's terms of reference are to support the work of the Centre and its Director and staff in the training of students as teachers in national schools under Church of Ireland / Reformed Christian faith patronage, and to make recommendations to the Representative Church Body (RCB) as trustee of the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust in relation to the Centre's annual budget and related allocations.

The June meeting in 2023 took place via videoconference, and the September meeting was based at All Hallows campus, DCU with a remote attendance facility provided for those who needed it.

Prof Anne Looney, Executive Dean, Institute of Education was invited to attend part of both meetings.

In June, Prof Looney gave the Council an update on the outcome of the review of the incorporation of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (SPD), Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDI), and Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) within DCU. The review was a five-year review that had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and had taken place in 2022. The process had involved meetings between the review panel and senior management, the Centres and other stakeholders. Ms Carolyn Good met with the review panel as the Archbishop of Armagh's nominee. The summary conclusion of the review was that the Incorporation Agreement was a success, and the review panel had complimented the denominational Centres. Prof Looney acknowledged the contribution of the staff of the Church of Ireland Centre and noted that, in addition to their specific areas of expertise, the credibility of the Centre was enhanced by their ability to represent both an Anglican perspective and an academic perspective. It was noted that the denominational Centres were well integrated within the University community, modelling the understanding of religion in the public sphere.

The Council heard that Rev Prof Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre had launched two reports during the past year, one on the involvement of the international community in parishes in the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, and the other on the mission, ethos and values of Christ Church Cathedral.

In September the Council received a presentation from Dr Jacqui Wilkinson, lecturer in the Church of Ireland Centre, on her doctoral studies. Dr Wilkinson was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Leicester in 2022 for her research entitled 'The Ethos of the Church of Ireland primary school : The Student Voice'.

Further information on the work of the Centre during the year is included in the report of the General Synod Board of Education on page 218.

The Council received annual budget figures from the Director. A request for an allocation of €74,800.00 from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust in support of the work of the Centre in respect of the academic year 2023/2024 was recommended to the RB Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Representative Body in its capacity as Trustee of the Fund Trust, and was approved (2022/2023: €66,121.49). The allocation from the Fund Trust is used to give bursaries and prizes to students, to support the provision of the teaching of religious education in the Centre and to support projects that further the Centre's ethos.

A vacancy in the membership of the Council arose during 2023 for a member of Board of Management of a Church of Ireland national school and of the General Synod Board of Education (RI), due to Rev Canon Brian O'Rourke no longer being a member of the General Synod Board of Education (RI). The Standing Committee in March 2024 appointed Very Rev Niall Sloane to this role. A second vacancy arose in September for a member of the RCB with financial or auditing expertise, following the resignation of Mr Robert Neill. The Standing Committee in March 2024 appointed Ms Sarah Taylor to this role. The Council is grateful to Canon O'Rourke and Mr Neill for their service. The Standing Committee in September 2023 appointed Prof Noel Purdy to the membership of the Council in the role of external academic expert from the island of Ireland.

**APPENDIX C**

**BISHOPS' APPEAL**

**REPORT 2024**

**Bishops' Appeal Committee**

Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield (Chair)  
Mrs Iris Sutor (Hon Sec)  
Rev John Ardis  
Ms Ruth Handy (Resigned September 2023)  
Rev Claire Henderson  
Mrs Claire Holmes  
Canon Jono Pierce  
Mrs Gillian Purser  
Very Rev Niall Sloane

**Education Advisor,**

Mrs Lydia Monds (to January 2023)  
Mrs Hilary McClay (from August 2023)

**Bishops' Appeal Diocesan Representatives**

Mr Geoffrey McMaster	– Dublin & Glendalough
Rev Ken Rue	– Dublin & Glendalough
Mrs Valerie Power	– Cashel, Ferns & Ossory
Mrs Gillian Purser	– Cashel, Ferns & Ossory
Mr Andrew Coleman	– Cork, Cloyne & Ross
Rev Jim Stephens	– Limerick & Killaloe
Vacant	– Tuam, Killaloe and Achonry
Vacant	– Clogher
Ms Jo Miller	– Derry & Raphoe
Rev Elaine O'Brien	– Connor
Vacant	– Armagh
Rev Albert Dawson	– Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh
Rev William Steacy	– Meath and Kildare
Rev Cosmin Pascu	– Down and Dromore
Rev Geoff Hamilton	– Down and Dromore

**Executive Summary**

With support from Church of Ireland dioceses, parishes, and individuals, and in collaboration with key partner mission and development agencies, Bishops' Appeal funded crucial disaster relief responses, as well as longer term education, health, and agricultural community development programmes throughout the past year.

Key to our work was our continued response to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, the emergency response to the humanitarian disaster in Turkey and Syria following the earthquake in February, to the floods in Libya, an earthquake in Morocco and the situation in Gaza and the Middle East, which became the focus of our Advent and Christmas Appeal.

**Emergency Appeals**

Bishops' Appeal would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who donated to support the Humanitarian Appeal following the Earthquake in February 2023 impacting large parts of Syria and Turkey, the ongoing support for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, and the Advent and Christmas Appeal 2023 for those impacted by the situation in Gaza and to support displaced people within the region particularly in Lebanon. There was an incredible wave of response, to date raising € 221,555 and £29,778 for the Earthquake

victims, €19,851 and £12,148 for those impacted by the floods in Libya, €6,702 and £3,641 to support those impacted by the war in Gaza and across the middle East (*funds received by the end of December 2023*). There was also ongoing funds raised for those impacted by the conflict in Ukraine raising €6,417 and £9,295 for refugees who had fled to Poland, Romania, and Hungary, as well as for people internally displaced within the Ukraine, which among other support provided stoves to provide heat and cooking facilities through Habitat partners in the region.

In order to successfully facilitate these various large appeals, we are dependent upon and so grateful to the RCB Finance department, who support us in the processing of cheques, the allocating and releasing of funds, and the issuing of receipts.

### **Parish Donations & Legacies**

Over the past number of years, and conscious of the cost-of-living crisis of the past few years and the strain that has put on peoples' finances, we have been heartened by those digging deep and giving even when things were difficult. It has enabled us to support vital work in some of the most vulnerable communities worldwide. The receipt of legacies are humbly and gratefully received and used in a way that honours the life and memory of those who give.

### **Vital Projects funded through donations and legacies – a sample**

- 'I AM A GIRL' education and sanitation programme encouraging and enabling girls to attend school in Uganda through Fields of Life.
- In partnership with Habitat for Humanity Bishops' Appeal was able to supply 250 wood burning stoves to people in Ukraine whose home have be damaged in the conflict, providing them with heat as well as a way to cook.
- Acacia and Fig Tree nurseries being established in 12 villages in Tanzania, through a grant to Feed the Minds.
- Supporting young mothers whose very young babies have extended time in ICUs in Chile through SAMS, providing training to allow the new mothers to be with their children at home at this critical stage and helping provide ways of providing other financial income.
- Supporting farmers in Malawi through Christian Aid out of extreme poverty by helping them develop sustainable livelihoods and increase their financial and nutritional resilience.
- A project partnering with The Leprosy Mission to improve the health, wellbeing, social inclusion & financial resilience of people in Bangladesh from remote, forgotten, 'leprosy hotspots' of extreme poverty which have some of the world's highest leprosy rates, leaving thousands of people at risk of a lifetime of intense suffering, disability & exclusion.

### **Advent and Christmas Appeal 2023**

In response to the crisis in the Middle East Bishops' Appeal launched an appeal to support those displaced people fleeing Gaza into Lebanon working with Tearfund partners locally, as well as raising funds for the Al -Ahli Hospital operated by the Diocese of Jerusalem, to help with the cost of replacing equipment and supplies that have been destroyed in the conflict.

### **New Diocesan Link Projects**

The Bishop's Peregrination around the parishes of Limerick and Tuam saw Bishop Michael Burrows visiting every church in the dioceses, raising funds and raising awareness about two worthwhile projects;

1. A Mothers' Union literacy project in Burundi which not only provides local women with essential skills to flourish in daily life, but also enables participants to read their bibles themselves.
2. A Feed the Minds project in Madagascar, supporting people affected by climate change to build sustainable silk production businesses rather than further eroding the natural resources.



### **Parish Donations & Legacies**

Over the past number of years, we have been heartened by those digging deep and giving even when things were difficult. It has enabled us to support vital work in some of the most vulnerable communities worldwide. Any gap in donations during Covid was filled through the receipt of legacies, which are humbly and gratefully received and used in a way that honours the life and memory of those who give.

### **Thank You**

Bishops' Appeal wishes to thank the RCB Finance Department for their continued support. The Appeal is extremely grateful to all the agencies who partner with the Church, who reach out to communities around the world. Listening to their needs and providing the necessary support and kinship to those in need. Our thanks to the hard-working committee and diocesan representatives of past and present.

Special thanks must be given to Ms Lydia Monds, who stepped down from her role as Education Advisor at the end of 2023 after 12 years with Bishops' Appeal. Lydia's passion for helping others and her dedication to her role and to aiding the wider work of Bishops' Appeal cannot be overstated. Our prayers and good wishes go with her to her new position within the Ministry for Healing. Bishops' Appeal is also very grateful to Mr Stuart Wilson from the RCB who supported the work of the committee in the gap between Education Advisors being in post.

Finally, Bishops' Appeal expresses heartfelt gratitude to all those across the Church of Ireland, individuals, parishes, dioceses and central structures for their generosity and continuing support.

**BISHOPS' APPEAL ACCOUNT 2023**

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT** Year ended 31 December

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>INCOME</b>		
Contributions	678,856	839,112
Deposit Interest	10,350	609
Sterling translation loss/gain	1,139	-
Tax refunds	15,783	12,506
	<u>706,128</u>	<u>852,227</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Administration Expenses & Salaries	20,340	39,828
	<u>20,340</u>	<u>39,828</u>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS FOR YEAR</b>	<u>685,788</u>	<u>812,399</u>
Grants Paid	527,814	788,704
Surplus for the year	<u><u>157,974</u></u>	<u><u>23,695</u></u>

**BISHOPS' APPEAL ACCOUNT 2023**

**BALANCE SHEET**

Year ended 31 December

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank	587,704	-
Cash held by the RCB	42,008	465,422
Debtors	27,262	33,578
	<u>656,974</u>	<u>499,000</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>656,974</u>	<u>499,000</u>
 <b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>		
Balance at 1 January	499,000	475,305
Surplus for the year	157,974	23,695
	<u>656,974</u>	<u>499,000</u>

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND BISHOPS' APPEAL**  
**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND BISHOPS' APPEAL**

**BISHOPS' APPEAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

	2023		2022	
	Stg£	€	Stg£	€
ARMAGH	36,488	5,152	49,218	1,000
CLOGHER	26,604	3,205	18,973	1,306
CONNOR	40,844	-	43,696	550
DERRY & RAPHOE	34,255	10,478	36,220	19,227
DOWN & DROMORE	76,927	-	119,390	-
KILMORE, ELPHIN & ARDAGH	321	13,155	731	33,164
CASHEL, FERNS & OSSORY	-	47,899	-	26,643
CORK, CLOYNE & ROSS	-	30,773	-	16,964
DUBLIN & GLENDALOUGH	-	84,965	-	108,871
TUAM, LIMERICK & KILLALOE	-	77,387	-	-
LIMERICK, KILLALOE & ARDFERT		-		30,924
TUAM, KILLALA & ACHONRY		-		9,100
MEATH & KILDARE	-	21,933	-	7,740
OTHER	55,957	70,843	36,928	239,560
TOTALS	271,39	365,790	305,156	494,419
	6			
TOTALS IN EURO		678,856		839,112

**BISHOPS' APPEAL GRANTS PAID**

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	2023	2022
	€	€
Disaster Relief	353,243	620,950
Health & Medical	37,028	53,633
Education/Communications	97,543	64,210
Rural Development		
	<u>40,000</u>	<u>49,911</u>
Totals	527,814	788,704
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY		
Christian Aid	325,980	303,117
Tearfund	53,920	108,858
Fields of Life	31,438	-
Gorta	29,667	-
CMSI	15,850	12,337
Feed the Minds	11,535	27,109
Motivation	11,535	-
Habitat for humanity Northern Ireland	11,655	216,732
International Justice Mission UK	11,535	-
Others	<u>24,699</u>	<u>120,551</u>
Totals	527,814	788,704

**BISHOPS' APPEAL GRANTS PAID**

<b>GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION</b>		
<b><i>AFRICA - € 116,214; Stg£ 35,000;</i></b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Tearfund Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Tearfund
Self Help Africa Kenya	Kenya	Self Help Africa
Christian Aid Libya Emergency	Libya	Christian Aid
Christian Aid Malawi	Malawi	Christian Aid
Open Doors Disaster Relief Morocco	Morocco	Open Doors
Christian Aid South Sudan Vocation Training	South Sudan	Christian Aid
Fields of Life I am a Girl	Uganda	Fields of Life
Fields of Life Water	Uganda	Fields of Life
Motivation Charitable Trust	Uganda	Motivation Charitable Trust
Self Help Africa	Gambia	Gorta Self Help Africa
<b><i>ASIA - € 269,521; Stg £ 37,747;</i></b>		
The Leprosy Mission	Bangladesh	The Leprosy Mission
Feed the Minds	Pakistan	Feed the Minds
Lent Appeal	Jordan	Tearfund
Child Welfare Cambodia	Cambodia	Tearfund
<b><i>EUROPE - € 9,357; Stg £ 15,464;</i></b>		
Christian Aid Ukraine Appeal	Ukraine	Christian Aid
Tearfund Ukraine	Ukraine	Tearfund
Habitat For Humanity Ukraine Appeal	Ukraine	Habitat For Humanity
CMSI Lental Resource	UK	Church Mission Society Ireland
Turkey and Syria Disaster Relief	Syria	Christian Aid
Mother's Union Domestic Abuse	Ireland	The Mother's Union All Ireland
<b><i>SOUTH AMERICA - Stg£ 26,846;</i></b>		
Christian Aid Down Honduras	Honduras	Christian Aid
IJM Supporting Survivors	Peru	Internation Justice Mission
SAMS Friendship with Barriers	Chile	South American Mission Society



# ***Independent auditors' report to the Advisory Committee of Church of Ireland Bishop's Appeal***

## **Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements**

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### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal's non-statutory financial statements (the "financial statements") for the year ended 31 December 2023 have been properly prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the basis of preparation and accounting policies in the Accounting Policies.

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the balance sheet as at 31 December 2023;
  - the statement of total return for the year then ended;
  - the accounting policies; and
  - the notes to the financial statements.
- 

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)"). Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### *Independence*

We remained independent of the Trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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### **Emphasis of matter - Basis of preparation**

In forming our opinion on the financial statements, which is not modified, we draw attention to the fact that the accounting policies used and disclosures made are not intended to, and do not, comply with the requirements of Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

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### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Advisory Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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## **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Report and Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Advisory Committee is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the Advisory Committee for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Advisory Committee's Responsibilities Statement set out on page 4, the Advisory Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they have been properly prepared in accordance with the basis of preparation and accounting policies in the Accounting Policies and for determining that the basis of preparation and accounting policies are acceptable in the circumstances.

The Advisory Committee is also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Advisory Committee is responsible for assessing the Advisory Committee's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Advisory Committee either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at:

[https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description\\_of\\_auditors\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_audit.pdf](https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf)

This description forms part of our auditors' report.





*Use of this report*

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Advisory Committee and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the Trust, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

*PricewaterhouseCoopers*

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants  
Dublin  
19 March 2024

**Appendix Di**

**Board for Ministry with Children & Families**

**Report to General Synod 2024**

**Membership**

Rt Rev George Davison (Bishop of Connor) (Chair)

Dr Peter Hammill (Secretary)

Ms Carolyn Good

Mrs Lynn Storey

Mrs Kirsty McCartney

Rev Catherine Simpson

Rev Canon Jennifer McWhirter

Very Rev Niall Sloane

Ven Ruth Elmes

Rev Julie Bell

Miss Julie Currie



Church of Ireland ✚  
Board for Ministry *with*  
Children & Families

# IMPACT

# REPORT

# 2021-2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Online Presence & Communication

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Resources

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Vision

# THE STORY SO FAR



## OUR MISSION

Children's and Family Ministry exists to equip, resource and advocate for the increased welcome, enhanced inclusion and full participation of children and their families in the whole life of the Church.

## OUR TARGETS

In 2019 a Strategy Document for the Board for Ministry with Children and Families was written, in which three clear targets were outlined for the new Board. These were:

- Increased number of volunteers accessing centrally provided resources
- Tailored supports and resources to specific contexts (urban, rural, size of venue, etc)
- Improved communication structure to volunteers and staff working in CFM.

Through this report you will see how these targets have not only been met, but indeed have been exceeded.

## OUR STORY

After the successful formation of the Board, Chaired by Rt Rev. George Davison, Bishop of Connor, with Dr Peter Hamill as Secretary, the Strategy Document was written and funding secured for an initial three year period in 2019.

Mrs Rachael Murphy was appointed as full time Development Officer in January 2021. Since her appointment she has produced a wide range of resources, established a strong online presence, facilitated numerous training workshops, and built up a strong network of Diocesan Reps with whom she has worked closely to ensure the variety of needs in each Diocese are met.

**"I FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO A COMMUNITY OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WORKERS. I HADN'T EVEN REALISED I WAS FEELING SO ISOLATED UNTIL I WASN'T ANYMORE."**

*Quote from one participant following a BCFM training workshop in 2022*

# FEEDBACK 2022-23

## **Evaluation quote from online workshop 2023**

*Encouraging and so well presented, Rachael. Thank you! I wish I could have connected to this group years ago.*

## **Evaluation from workshop 2022**

*Its good not to feel alone and forgotten*

## **Feedback from Rt Rev. Michael Burrows. Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Kilaloe**

*"I can personally testify to the importance and fruitfulness of the new emphasis on resourcing and empowering children's / family ministry and the specific role of Rachael Murphy. She has been a welcome visitor to our diocesan clergy conference and to a gathering of teachers from all the primary schools of which I am patron. Radiating enthusiasm and displaying a real mastery of her brief, she has sent people away with a new sense of what can actually be done especially in small rural parishes with limited resources scattered across a large area. Those who strive to work with children in such settings no longer feel they are on their own. She has responded promptly and imaginatively to requests for support that derive from our specific context ... most notably and wondrously providing an app which assists work with children who live on farms, whose daily talk is of tractors and farm animals, so that they can connect childhood on the farm with growth in faith. In TLK we are convinced that over time Rachael's work will make a real difference 'on the ground' and we express our thanks to those in the wider church have made a priority of this initiative "*

## **Feedback from a parish volunteer in Derry & Raphoe 2022**

*A great new resource to the Church of Ireland*

## **Evaluation from online workshop 2023**

*A great session. Rachael was a great host and very professional. I was made aware of a body of work and resource I was completely unaware of despite being a regular church attender within ROI.*

Below you can read a selection of quotes taken from the feedback given to training workshops, those who have used the BCFM resources and leaders who have interacted with the Board since its formation. They give a taste of both the individual and corporate impact the Board has had to date.

## **Email from Wendy Jenkins. Down & Dromore**

*Rachael,  
Thanks so much for creating this pack. We are going to introduce Bible Buddies to our Sunday School and Messy Church children in September. This will be a great starting pack.*

*It was after speaking to you at General Synod that we decided to introduce Bible Buddies. So thanks, once again, for all your work in producing the resources.*

## **Feedback from Rev. Abby Sines. Cork.**

*I have greatly appreciated the resources and training that have been provided by the Board for Ministry with Children and Families. Rachael has produced wonderful resources and suggestions for encouraging families in connecting what takes place on Sunday mornings with nurturing faith at home, and in particular the creativity and engaging nature of the Bible Buddies programme.*

## **Feedback from a Diocesan Rep following the residential retreat and training 2022**

*You're doing amazing things Rachael and I am SO grateful for all your support and encouragement. I'd love to see a yearly retreat facilitated - not just for training but for time away to reflect, pray & plan.*

## **Feedback from Zoe Hill, a fulltime CFM minister in Holy Trinity, Dublin & Glendaloch**

*The Board for Ministry with Children and Families is a key source of encouragement to me as I seek to inspire families & children in my parish to love God in a fresh way.*

*Whether equipping and resourcing us with new materials and ideas to raise faith, or connecting us with other volunteers & leaders - we have felt valued and supported! A particular highlight was the training retreat organised by CFM which was such a blessing to me on a personal level, but which also gave me valuable skills and enabled me to use these skills to bless other leaders & also the children and families that I minister to.*

# TRAINING DELIVERY



During the course of the last 18 months BCFM has delivered a number of training workshops both online and in person. Participants range from lay volunteers to full time CFM Parish/Diocesan staff and Clergy.

All training delivered is based on needs assessments or direct requests, and evaluations have been gathered at the end of each training. In addition we have delivered Diocesan Networking days in 3 diocese with more planned in 2024 along with further training workshops. Alongside the workshops listed below we also have Volunteer Recruitment & Retention training and we will be launching Youth Mental Health First Aid in partnership with CIYD.

## TOPIC, LOCATION & DATE

## PARTICIPANTS

## AREAS COVERED

BCFM Retreat & Training. 3 days  
Portarlington.  
November 2022

CFM Rep from every  
Diocese. Total: 12  
people.

- How to build CFM networks in each diocese
- Responding to the challenge.
- Out of The Box Storytelling Method

Reigniting Children & Families Ministry.  
Online.  
May 2023

Lay CFM  
volunteers/staff & Clergy  
Total 78 registrations.

- What has changed in society?
- How do we meet that change?
- Practical ideas to reconnect with families

Summer SwapShop  
Online  
June 2023

Lay CFM  
volunteers/staff & Clergy  
Total 52 registrations.

- Why it's important to stay connected during the summer holidays?
- Practical ideas/resources

Building connections with local schools.  
Online  
September 2023

Lay CFM  
volunteers/staff & Clergy  
Total 50 registrations.

- Why connect with schools?
- Mutual benefits & boundaries
- Practical ideas/resources

Our Welcome to Children & Families  
Cork. CCR diocese  
October 2023

Lay CFM  
volunteers/staff & Clergy  
Total 38 in person

- Viewing Church from a new perspective
- Practical ideas & resources
- Networking in diocese

Teacher Connection  
Limerick. TLK diocese  
June 2023

Teachers from  
across the diocese.  
Total 40 in person

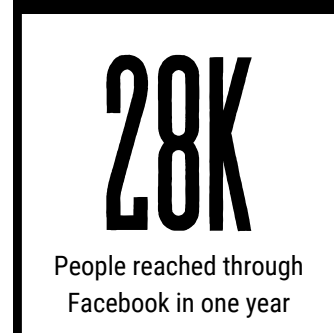
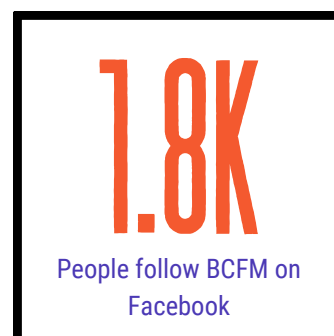
- Who is BCFM?
- How we can support schools?
- Resources

One of the first tasks undertaken was to create a strong online presence via social media, building up the network and extending our reach. A significant challenge had been identified early on that it was difficult to communicate directly with those involved in Children and Families Ministry, as emails and letters often got stuck in Clergy inboxes and were not passed on, so we sought to navigate around this issue initially via our online activity - Facebook and Instagram. This has proven to be highly effective. The second step was to create a user friendly website that was bright, easy to negotiate and packed with resources and training. This was achieved early in 2022 and both social media and website traffic has seen continued growth as you will see below.

# DIGITAL PRESENCE STATISTICS & GROWTH



1.6k Likes & 1.8k Followers on Facebook





# 300

Subscribers to our  
Newsletter

# COMMUNICATION

## Quarterly Newsletter

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

# SUMMER



  
**Staying  
connected  
through the  
Summer**



Church of Ireland  
Board for Ministry with  
Children & Families

[www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org)

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

# AUTUMN



*Farm Fun  
Curriculum*

*Autumnal  
Ideas*

*Light  
Parties*

[www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org)

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

# SPRING



*We produce a quarterly Newsletter which has relevant craft, game, and discussion ideas as well as upcoming trainings for the season. The uptake of the Newsletter has more than doubled since 2021 and now reaches close to 500 people.*

*We have over 300 people on our subscription list which is linked from the website, the newsletter is then also sent out via our Diocesan Reps to their networks, as well as being offered as a download from our social media platforms. This does not account then for those sharing the links with members of their own parishes.*

# RESOURCES

During the past 18 months we have created **over 20 resources** for use in a variety of settings: Sunday clubs, Intergenerational Services, Families at home, Toddler groups etc. Each resource has been well received and used by many churches across the island of Ireland.

On this page you can see a snapshot of the most popular resources.

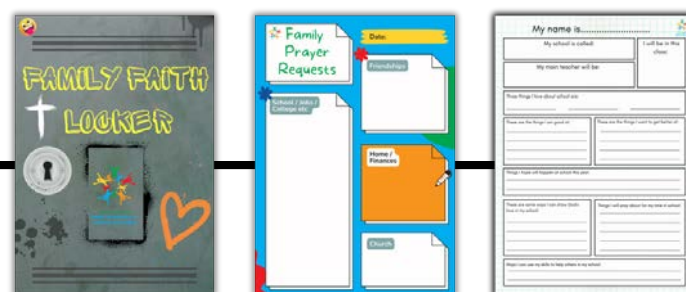


Heroes of Faith Bible Buddy Packs given as part of a Messy Church session in St Dorothea's, Gilnahirk, Down and Dromore

## Bible Buddy Packs.

The Bible Buddy resource was created to encourage families to read the Bible together. Parishes purchase small teddies that are all different and run an adoption day, where Children choose a teddy to be their Bible Buddy. The child receives: A certificate of adoption on which they name their buddy; A care guide which explains how to look after their buddy - taking it with them on adventures, loving it and most importantly to help their buddy grow strong they feed it by reading the Bible. They also receive a reading pack based on their reading level. The main pack has passages from the International Children's Bible and the Easy Reader pack is taken from the Big Bible Story book. After each passage there are "wondering" questions which encourage children to reflect on the passage and find ways it might apply to their lives today - this is not a comprehension test but a way to help them see how relevant the Bible is to their everyday life. They can then choose to write or draw their thoughts and chat with their parent/carer if they wish. There are currently 4 packs: a generic pack for anytime of the year, a pack for Christmas, one for Easter and a Heroes of Faith pack. In addition we also have an app so that parents/carers can access all the packs any time without printing.

**Farming Faith** is a 4 part curriculum designed specifically with rural parishes in mind. There are 4 lessons which can be used either for Sunday Clubs, at home, in school or as part of a messy church / intergen service. The lessons focus on: Tillage, Beef, Sheep & Machines and how each of these areas of farming life can teach us more about God and faith.



**Family Faith Locker:** This is a resource for families to use at the start of term and includes an intergenerational service for parishes based on the Blessing of the Back Packs.

Based on the idea of the school locker and how it starts the year empty with everything shiny and new. Then through the course of the year, we fill it full of the things we have learnt and the "stuff of growth" By the end of the year when we come to empty our lockers we discover memories that show how much we've grown and changed through the year. We get to look back at important lessons and moments of challenge. In the same way, we encourage you to create a family faith locker where you make a box and use some of the resources in the pack to help capture how you have all started the school year, the things you have concerns about, prayer requests and answers to prayer. By the end of the school year as the summer holidays start you can sit together and look back at all that God has done in your lives this year - chat it through and laugh about the things you've made and memories made.

# FUTURE VISION



Church of Ireland ✚  
Board for Ministry *with*  
Children & Families

## BUILD, STRENGTHEN, EQUIP & ENCOURAGE

In its short time, the Board for Ministry with Children and Families (BCFM) has made a significant impact. By shifting the focus from a generalised “youth and children’s work” approach to one that centres specifically on children and families, BCFM has proven that this approach is both valuable and effective.

Though there may be some overlap with youth work, children and families ministry presents unique challenges and requires specific skill sets. As we move forward, we plan to build upon the foundation laid by the Sunday School Society and BCFM, and meet the evolving needs of today’s families and children.

To achieve this goal, we are developing child-friendly versions of essential resources, such as the Book of Common Prayer. Additionally, we have applied for funding to create a “pick up and go” resource, which will enable smaller parishes to host relevant intergenerational services that cater for their local communities and families.

We will continue to create new resources and increase the number of training workshops provided. The effectiveness of the Diocesan Reps network will continue to be developed thus creating opportunities for identifying and responding to regional challenges.

Our goals also include hosting a significant conference for Children and Families Ministry that is accessible to the entire island of Ireland. Typically, these conferences take place overseas, so it’s crucial to provide opportunities for our parishes to access high-quality conferences without the challenge of overseas travel.

Additionally, we aim to develop a resource that inspires families without any church connections to explore the diverse range of worship styles in the Church of Ireland. The hope is for this to be a multi-media resource that can be accessed online and through schools, libraries and community centres.

Whilst resourcing and training are key components of this national ministry, the greatest impact our work to date has achieved is the encouragement and acknowledgement of the devotion, work and energy of Children and Family Ministry volunteers throughout the Church of Ireland. This is one area of ministry that can feel very isolated and forgotten. As has been heard countless times in our trainings and evaluations “it is good not to feel alone and forgotten”.

## APPENDIX E

### CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

#### REPORT 2024

#### MEMBERSHIP

Most Rev Pat Storey (Chair)	House of Bishops
Rev Ruth Elmes	Standing Committee
Rev Canon Gillian Wharton	Honorary Secretary, General Synod
Canon Dr Kenneth Milne	Chair, Literature Committee
Dr Raymond Refaüssé	Honorary Secretary, Literature Committee
Mr David Ritchie	Chief Officer, Representative Church Body
Mrs Janet Maxwell	Head of Synod Services & Communications
Ven Dr Stephen McBride	Representative Body
Very Rev Nigel Dunne	Representative Body
Rev Alan Rufli	Liturgical Advisory Committee
Rev Anna Williams	Standing Committee*
Mr Roger Childs	Standing Committee*

\*Co-option for gender, regional and other balance.

#### *In attendance:*

Mr Peter Cheney	Press Officer
Mrs Lynn Glanville	Dublin & Glendalough Communications Officer

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Initiate policy in relation to the communications strategy of the Church;
- Establish and co-ordinate the work of the sub-committees;
- Advise and support staff dealing with communications;
- Recommend and seek funding for communications projects for the benefit of the Church;
- Examine recommendations from the Literature Committee for support from the General Synod Royalties Fund;
- Identify training needs among church communications staff and volunteers, providing training where possible;
- Report annually to the General Synod.

#### SUMMARY – MAJOR OUTCOMES FOR 2023/4

- The Allocations Committee of the RB agreed to relieve financial strain on the Royalties Fund, which has become depleted in recent years, and to allow income from supply of liturgical materials to parishes to reaccumulate.
- Reprint of the *Church Hymnal* (Pew/Large Print) Edition with purchase of stock of Full Music *Church Hymnal* to ensure supply for parishes.
- Review of the Church of Ireland website and progress on improved structure and design.

## **GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND & PUBLICATIONS**

As reported in the report of the Literature Committee, the various projects supported by the General Synod Royalties Fund in the last 15 years, while supporting the publication of a significant body of materials for the benefit of the Church of Ireland, have also seen the capital in the fund significantly depleted.

Following a detailed analysis of the fund over the 15-year period since 2008 by the Board, a report was made to the RB Executive Committee, and it was subsequently agreed that allocations from the Fund should be postponed for a period to allow the Fund to recover and that the RB would offer support through the Allocations Committee to enable essential publishing projects to be supported.

A new protocol was agreed whereby applications for funding would continue to be recommended by the Literature Committee to the CCB and, if approved, would then be referred to the Chair of the Allocations Committee. The Board would like to express its thanks to the Allocations Committee for its assistance. The protocol will ensure that the arrangement will operate smoothly and allow the Church to produce resources that are regarded as essential to support the life of the Church.

During the year, the Large Print (Pew) Edition of the *Church Hymnal* was reprinted, and the Church also purchased a substantial number of the *Church Hymnal* Full Music Edition so that a secure supply of both publications would continue to be available to parishes. The last reprint of the Pew Edition was more than a decade ago and, unfortunately, inflation in the intervening period means that the price has increased substantially as has the price of the Full Music edition.

## **PRESS OFFICE**

Some of the key stories covered this year included the Primate's attendance and participation in the Coronation, the subsequent visit by King Charles and Queen Camilla to Armagh, the all-island MindMattersCOI conference, the Brigid 1500 initiative, and the Church's responses – in word, prayer, and support for humanitarian relief – to the conflict in the Middle East. The development of Pioneer Ministry and an increased focus on encouraging vocations emerged as two medium-term themes for which dedicated support will continue throughout the coming year.

The Press Officer had the opportunity to attend and take part in the Westminster Media Forum's conference on the Media Bill and the future of public service broadcasting in London in April 2023. Speakers shared a detailed insight into how policy is changing to reflect a media landscape transformed since the Communications Act 2003. Interestingly, broadcast viewing is still far ahead of on-demand services, accounting for 72% of TV set use, and radio listening also remains robust.

However, most broadcasters' revenue has been relatively static since 2012 and the BBC's licence fee income has decreased by 30% since then. The media market is increasingly moving from national distribution of channels to a world of global distribution and content discovery but there is still national demand for free and original UK public service broadcasting content; this includes a continued place for broadcast religious services – as programming should serve the community in its widest sense, and not the market.

In the course of the year, the Press Office alongside colleagues in the Board of Education, Safeguarding Board and Church of Ireland Youth Department moved from Church of Ireland House, Belfast, to new premises at 18-22 Hill Street, also in the Cathedral Quarter. The Board has recorded its thanks to the Belfast central church staff team and the Representative Church Body for completing this move in a short timeframe, during which functions continued without interruption.

The Press Office welcomed additional support provided by Anglewise Communications which led to the launch of the *Inspiring angles* video series, sharing more human-interest stories from around the Church. All videos are available at [www.youtube.com/churchofireland](http://www.youtube.com/churchofireland)

Our email and social media content continues to reach a large audience – with 4,100 subscribers to the e-bulletin, and 10,000 followers on Facebook, 6,200 on Twitter, and 2,100 on Instagram. The Church’s *Daily Worship* app – with liturgy and Bible readings from the Lectionary for every day of the year – has reached 1,300 sales, and we encourage clergy and lay people to purchase it to help with personal devotion and preparing for public worship. Find out more at [www.ireland.anglican.org/dailyworshipapp](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/dailyworshipapp)

Digital media, though, does tend to reach readers for a shorter time than print, which continues to provide readers with a tangible record and clear points of reference for how church life develops over time. We are grateful for all who share their creativity and commitment in producing newsletters and magazines, which we celebrated in the print media competition ahead of General Synod 2023.

## **TRAINING**

Two gatherings for Diocesan Communications Officers were organised, in Rostrevor in June and in Dublin in August, providing opportunities for networking and sharing ideas, including increased use of social media tagging to improve readership for online content. A media training day for archdeacons in the West of Ireland followed in September, with a similar event taking place in Belfast for northern archdeacons in February.

Guidance on copyright and photography was issued to parishes via dioceses, and the Press Office is reviewing resources with a view to providing training on copyright issues. Parishes are reminded that the Canva Pro graphic design platform is available free of charge to registered charities in the UK and Ireland, and can help to avoid the unintentional infringement of copyright when sourcing photos for online content.

## **CHURCH OF IRELAND WEBSITE**

The Church of Ireland website – [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org) – has added a considerable number of new resources in recent years, the most significant of which is the Parish Resources section. However, the world of IT is constantly changing and there is a need to look at the overall technical structure of the website, its purpose in the life of the Church and to what extent it can become more effective, and the resourcing needed to achieve all of these outcomes in an effective way.

There is currently a mixed pattern of sections that are either internally managed in terms of content either by central church departments or by committee volunteers or situated on external sites with links from the main site taking visitors to the relevant pages. Editorial changes resulting from the 2023 website review are continuing, and progress has included the development of a new Environmental Sustainability section in Parish Resources and integrating the Chaplaincy Accreditation Board’s content into the main website.

A further review of the website will be brought forward to the Board for consideration during 2024 with a proposal for further changes to be made later in 2024 or in early 2025.

## **BROADCASTING – RTÉ**

2023 was largely overshadowed at RTÉ by revelations about failures of governance that led to an under-declaration of the earnings of presenter Ryan Tubridy; a stage show (*Late Late Toy Show the Musical*) which was commissioned without proper risk assessment or board approval and made enormous losses; and a voluntary exit scheme that led to the payment of substantial packages to individuals whose posts were not redundant. Investigations into these events, which have shaken the trust of the public and RTÉ staff and stakeholders, have already led to the resignation of the former Director-General, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Strategy, and Director of Legal Affairs.

The organisation's revenue has also been severely hit by reduced licence fee collection, prompting a review of RTÉ's funding mechanism by the end of 2024. In the meantime, the new Director-General has proposed a four-year strategy involving 400 voluntary redundancies from a staff of 1,800; a 50% increase in commissioned output; and greater regionalisation. These proposals await Government approval.

Against this backdrop, the Commissioning Editor of Religious Content, Mr Roger Childs, still maintained a year-round programme of Christian worship on TV and radio – on Sundays and major feast days – as well as streamed daily Masses and Services on the RTÉ News Channel. Amongst the Anglican contributors in 2023 were groups from St Brigid's, Knocklyon (St Brigid's Day and 1500th anniversary); Christ Church, Derry; Baltinglass (Gaeilge); St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin; Aghrim (climate change); Dawson Street, Dublin (300th anniversary); St Andrew's, Lucan (bicentenary); and St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare, featured in a successful documentary, *Finding Brigid*, in which Bishop Pat Storey was interviewed. It was also the setting for an episode of *The Meaning of Life*, with Adi Roche. Bishop Trevor Williams was one of a multi-denominational group who put together a special Service in studio on Holy Thursday to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, in March. That anniversary was also the peg for *The Secret Peacemaker* – an ambitious drama-documentary, co-commissioned with BBC Northern Ireland, examining the role of Fr Alec Reid in engineering the Northern Ireland peace process. Once again, Archbishop John McDowell delivered a Christmas message on TV and radio alongside his Catholic counterpart, Archbishop Eamon Martin.

Despite financial constraints, 2023 saw several new religious series. *A Ring and A Prayer* was a six-part commissioned series (from Esras Films), which explored interfaith and intercultural marriages in a peak-time pre-watershed slot; *Donal's Feasts, Fasts & Festivals* (from Appetite TV) saw TV chef Donal Skehan immersing himself in the food traditions of six minority faith communities; *Life & Soul* was an in-house series of half-hour documentaries; and *Witness* was a new, commissioned radio magazine, presented by TCD Religious Professor, Siobhán Garrigan. It replaced the previous in-house series *The Leap of Faith*. Sadly, one casualty of cutbacks was the annual Christmas Carols TV show, although that will return in 2024. In the meantime, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was broadcast as usual on Radio 1 on Christmas Eve, one of RTÉ's longest-running broadcasting traditions.

### **BROADCASTING – BBC NI**

BBC Radio Ulster continues to broadcast *Morning Service* each Sunday with six of these each year also transmitted as *Sunday Worship* on BBC Radio 4. These are produced for BBC Northern Ireland by Blackthorn Productions which is also responsible for six *Daily Services* and eight series of *Prayer of the Day*, both on Radio 4. The majority of services are outside broadcasts from congregations, mainly from the three largest Christian denominations.

During Covid restrictions on worship, in order to continue broadcasting services, the BBC essentially had one person presenting the service with a socially distanced reader and recorded music. These were generally appreciated, possibly because they allowed a theme to be explored in more depth than would be possible in a 'normal' service. During the year 2023, Radio Ulster broadcast ten services in that format.

Radio Ulster also broadcasts *Thoughts for the Day* each week day morning and *Sunday Sequence*, which continues to explore a wide range of subjects.

## LITERATURE COMMITTEE

### MEMBERSHIP

Dr Kenneth Milne (Chairman)  
Canon Peter K McDowell  
Ven Richard B Rountree  
Rev Kenneth G Rue  
Rev Bernard Treacy OP  
Dr Raymond Refaussé (Honorary Secretary)  
Ms Cecilia West  
Mr George Woodman  
Mrs Janet Maxwell (*ex officio*)

In attendance:

Mr Bryan Whelan, Publications Officer (*to August 2023*)  
Mr Peter Cheney, Press Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the Committee will set out to:

- Promote church-related publication within and beyond the Church of Ireland;
- Manage Church of Ireland Publishing;
- Evaluate applications for support from the General Synod Royalties Fund.

### MAJOR OUTCOMES FOR 2023

Arising out of the Action Plan for 2023:

- The fifteenth booklet in the Braemor Studies series, which seeks to publish the best of the final year dissertations in CITI, was edited, designed, and published.
- Cooperation with CITI in the redesign of the cover of Braemor Studies.
- Cooperation with the online purchasing facility which assists with promotion and marketing, sales and distribution continued.
- An Avoidance of Libel protocol was adopted.

### CHURCH OF IRELAND PUBLISHING

The Literature Committee has continued to further the work of Church of Ireland Publishing (CIP), the publishing imprint for the Church of Ireland.

The following titles were published in 2023:

Kenneth Milne (ed.), *Journal of the General Synod, 2021*

Michael O'Neill, *An Architectural History of the Church of Ireland*

Ken Rue, *Church of Ireland Sunday and Weekday Readings Advent Sunday 2023 to Eve of Advent Sunday 2024*

*Liturgical Resources in the Case of Sudden and Unexpected Death*

*A Service of Prayer and Naming in Cases of Miscarriage and Neonatal Death & A Funeral Service in Cases of Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Neonatal Death*

The Publications Officer resigned during the year and a successor has yet to be appointed.

### ONLINE PURCHASING



The Literature Committee expresses its gratitude to the Central Communications Board and to the staff of the finance and IT departments of Church of Ireland House for supporting the facility to purchase Church-related materials online via the Church of Ireland website.

This facility has proved extremely popular and is being widely used. Ms Heather Jestin continues to assist with the distribution of materials to parishes. Orders can be placed online, or by e-mail or by phone using the following addresses:

Online ordering: <https://store.ireland.anglican.org/store>

E-mail: [heather.jestin@rcbcoi.org](mailto:heather.jestin@rcbcoi.org)

Tel: +353 (0)1 4125 665

### **GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND**

The Committee recommended the following grants:

- €45,000 to print 4,000 copies of the *Church Hymnal*
- €4,000 to support the publication of *Search*

Applications to the fund should be addressed to Dr Raymond Refaussé, Secretary to the Literature Committee, c/o Synod Department, Church of Ireland House, Church, Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin, D06 CF67.

Due to the serious depletion of the General Synod Royalties Fund it was agreed that allocations from the Fund should be postponed for a period to allow the Fund to recover. A new protocol was agreed whereby applications for funding would be recommended to the Board and, if approved, would then be referred to the Chair of the Allocations Committee.

### **ACTION PLAN 2024**

- Prepare the sixteenth book in the Braemor Studies for publication;
- Support the publication programme of the Liturgical Advisory Committee;
- Support the CCUD in the publication of a revised edition of *Guidelines for Interfaith Events & Dialogue*;
- Support the Rev Kevin Moroney's proposed book of essays on Anglican liturgies.

## APPENDIX F

### THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

#### REPORT 2024

#### MEMBERSHIP

Most Rev John McDowell  
Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson  
(Chair)  
Mr Ken Gibson (Hon Sec)  
Mr Neville Armstrong  
Mrs June Butler  
Ms Zephryn Patton  
Rev Jane Burns

Dr Elizabeth Leonard\*  
Rev Martin O'Connor\*  
Rev Rob Clements†  
Rev Dr Rory Corbett†  
Ven Andrew Orr†  
Rev Andrew Campbell‡  
Mr Michael Trimble‡  
Mr Steven McQuitty KC‡

Rev Andrew Irwin‡  
Dr Claire Jones‡  
Ms Hannah O'Neill‡  
Dr Harriet Wilkinson‡  
Dr Caroline Elliott-Kingston‡  
Mr Keith Gardiner‡

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\* To May 2023

† To Synod 2024

‡ From January 2024

The Church and Society Commission submits the following report with appendices referencing its work since the General Synod of May 2023.

#### Executive Summary

Over the last year the Church and Society Commission continued its work to provide oversight and direction for the Church of Ireland's work in respect to social theology in action. In the time since the last Synod, the Commission has worked proactively to prepare reports and other resource material for the Church and reactively to respond to government reports, public consultations, and events in society.

#### Membership

The Commission would like to thank all of those who have contributed their time and expertise over the last year, with particular thanks to Dr Elizabeth Leonard and Rev Martin O'Connor who both stepped down from the Commission this year and Rev Rob Clements, Rev Dr Rory Corbett and Ven Andrew Orr who are stepping down at Synod 2024. All five have made tremendous contributions to the Commission and have been generous with their time and expertise.

With a significant number of new and preexisting vacancies the Commission has been incredibly lucky this year with the response to a call for expressions of interest. The enthusiastic response has provided an influx of new members with a fantastic breadth of knowledge, enthusiasm, and experience.

#### Report

##### Troubles Legacy

Following a private member's motion, passed at Synod 2023, CASC has begun work on a project around the topic of how the Church can resource clergy in caring for those suffering with trauma related to the Troubles and how to help those individuals give voice to their history. A sub-group of the Commission met with the proposer and seconder of the motion to discuss how they would wish to see the Commission approach the matter, and with representatives and members of groups which focus on the traumatic legacy of the Troubles such as Healing Through Remembering, Corrymeela and the South East Fermanagh Foundation. Through

discussion with these individuals a number of existing projects such as the Belfast Cathedral Service of Lament and the Presbyterian Church’s project *Considering Grace* were highlighted.

In addressing this motion, the Commission was aware of the short turnaround time outlined within it. In speaking with the proposer and seconder it was agreed that, rather than produce a token piece of work for this year’s General Synod the Commission would instead focus on creating the groundwork for a meaningful response which can be brought to a future meeting of the General Synod.

### Assisted Dying

In 2020, a private member’s bill was put to Dáil Éireann, which sought to legislate for the provision of assisted dying to persons who are terminally ill and wish to end their lives. Following examination by the Oireachtas Committee on Justice it was recommended that a special committee be established to examine and report on the topic. In 2023, this committee, the Joint Committee on Assisted Dying was established, and began seeking input from various groups on the matter.

The Commission followed this issue closely and engaged with the progress of the bill. In December 2023, Rev Dr Rory Corbett represented CASC at the Joint Committee’s public meeting with representatives from religious, faith based and other philosophical groups and clearly outlined the established stance of the Church of Ireland on the matter, articulating the moral, ethical and practical issues which are raised by legislation in this area.

### Domestic Abuse

The Commission wishes to thank the Mothers’ Union for their tremendous work in the last year on the topic of domestic abuse, with particular attention to the *Changing the Story* conferences which so expertly illustrated how the Church can and should be aware of and responding to domestic abuse within our communities. The Commission is thankful in particular to Mrs June Butler, whose presence on the Commission has provided an insight into the excellent work being done by the Mothers’ Union.

### Guest Speakers

Continuing a tradition of inviting external guests to speak to the Commission on matters related to their work before their regular meetings, this past year the Commission has welcomed two guest speakers.

Rev Prof Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU, spoke to the Commission regarding her research into Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, its impact on the local community and how this compares to its missional goals.

Ms Caoimhe Leppard, Project Coordinator and Researcher with the RCB gave a brief presentation to the Commission on the topic of Housing and Community, outlining areas of potential interest to the Commission.

## **Statements and Documents**

[Submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying](#)

[Statement to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying Debate \(5/12/2023\)](#)

## **Appendix G**

### **Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Review Policy Review Committee**

The Prevention of Bullying and Harassment policy forms part of the Dignity in Church Life Charter and Policies adopted by General Synod in 2015. The policy contains a provision that it is subject to review on a regular basis and Standing Committee passed the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the first such official review at their meeting in November 2022.

The TOR provided that the Review Committee should consist of three members nominated by Standing Committee and one representative from the House of Bishops supported as required by the RCB Chief Officer, Mr David Ritchie and the RCB HR Manager, Mr Eddie Hallissey. The committee members are:

The Right Reverend Michael Burrows  
Ms Hazel Corrigan  
Mrs Judith Peters  
Ven Dr Stephen McBride

The Committee met several times in 2023 and 2024 and substantial progress has been made on a significant redrafting of the policy in the light of the experience of its implementation over the last eight years. The Committee acknowledges and thanks the very important contributions made by a number of people who had direct experience of the application of the policy, and their views continue to inform the work of the Committee.

The extent of the work required only became apparent as the process got underway and the Committee hopes to complete its review in mid-2024 with a view to laying an amended policy before General Synod in 2025.

## GS Complaints procedure

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Income</b>								
Deposits	0	0	(1,000)	0	1,000	0	(814)	0
Less - deposit refund	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
Support from General Purpose Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net deposits	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(814)</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Costs</b>								
Legal - External	0	0	6,027	0	0	0	0	0
Legal - In-House Legal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mediation	0	0	6,013					
Expert witness costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative and secretarial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel & subsistence	99	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catering	0	0	536					
Sundry	692	0	316	0	0	0	0	0
Facilities hire	0	0	758					
	<u>791</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13,650</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>791</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13,650</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(814)</u>	<u>0</u>

Costs will be charged to the RCB income and expenditure account in the year the complaint hearing takes place.

## **Appendix I**

### **Future of Curacies Working Group**

#### **Report to General Synod 2024**

##### **Membership**

Mr Michael Johnston (Chair)  
Rt Rev Andrew Forster (Bishop of Derry & Raphoe)  
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (Honorary Secretary)  
Very Rev Lynda Peilow (Standing Committee)

##### **RCB Staff In Attendance**

Ms Rebekah Fozzard

The purpose of the Future of Curacies working group is to provide recommendations for supporting the deployment, provision and funding of curacies. The working group is chaired by Mr Michael Johnston, chairperson of the Stipends Committee. An updated Terms of Reference was approved by Standing Committee in November 2023 with membership to include one member of the House of Bishops, one member of Standing Committee (an Honorary Secretary), two members of the Stipends Committee and one member of the Allocations Committee. The group is supported by the RCB Project Manager, Ms Rebekah Fozzard.

The group are working within the scope of the long-term vision of the House of Bishops and are exploring areas including finance, education and housing. A number of objectives have been identified by the group, with the purpose of developing a strategic, sustainable and progressive model for curacy across the church.

They include:

- Developing protocols and procedures to standardise funding and provide financial assistance to parishes with a curate assistant.
- Identifying and documenting other sources of funding and enduring support grants for parishes and curate assistants.
- Exploring and developing innovative options for housing particularly in areas of high cost and low availability.
- Working with the Coordinator of Continuing Ministerial Education and Church of Ireland Theological Institute to understand the current programme of continuing ministerial education and support any enhancement to reflect the changing needs of curates and training rectors.

Recognising that expertise in these areas is across a number of stakeholders, the working group is working closely with subject matter experts, including but not limited to the House of Bishops, the Representative Body (in particular, the Property Committee, Allocations Committee and Stipends Committee), the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, the Co-ordinator of Continuing Ministerial Education, the Rev Dr William Olhausen, curate assistants and training rectors.

Evidently there is a need for a concerted effort to support parishes to appoint, mentor and enhance this critical period in the training of a curate assistant. The working group has found that lack of financial resources is a considerable barrier for many parishes considering a curate assistant, and that the cost of appointing a curate assistant versus other sorts of ministry is perceived to be expensive. e.g., it can seem to be more cost effective to employ a lay person into a variety of roles. The working group have also identified housing as an issue in areas where there is low availability and a high cost to securing housing. Feedback from stakeholders has also emphasised a strong desire to provide a robust and positive training experience to shape the curate assistant's ministry over the coming years.

It is recognised across all stakeholders that the parish can greatly benefit from having a curate assistant to share in the full range of ministry. Whilst the parish benefits in the short-term the Church benefits in the longer term, through increasing numbers of those in ordained ministry, in line with the long-term vision of the House of Bishops.

It is expected that the working group will report back to the RB Executive Committee and Standing Committee on progress, with the final report to be presented to the House of Bishops, RB Executive Committee in June 2024 and Standing Committee following that.

## APPENDIX J

### CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISABILITY

#### Membership

Rev Aaron McAlister	Ms Emily Casey (resigned Jan 2023)
Rev Alistair Donaldson	Mrs Stephanie Casey (resigned Jan 2023)
Mr Jasper Chisnall (resigned June 2022)	Ms Gemma Willis
Ms Rachael Mackarel (resigned Jan 2023)	Mrs Dorothy Jones
Ms Jennifer Bullock	Mrs Kirsty McCartney

#### Planning for the future

The group functions in a consultative way, working with other committees and Church organisations to promote awareness of and action on disability and inclusivity needs.

The Consultative Group has certain priorities in its planning for the future:

- a. To make people think beyond disability and towards access for all;
- b. To make people aware of the legislation in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and outline the implications of the same;
- c. To make people aware of key issues involved in making sure properties are accessible.

As the Group is currently low on members, it is proposed that a fresh call for submissions of interest be put out in 2024. The aim is to recruit several new members with a broad range of experience and expertise, who will be able to help drive plans for 2024, which include:

- 1) Website update – the Group’s information on [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org) has not been updated for some time, and it is now planned to work on this as soon as new members are appointed. One of the ways the Group will be looking at to improve the website is to explore the possibility of using ‘Easy Read’, an accessible format for people with intellectual disabilities.
- 2) Link-ups and collaborations – we plan to contact the following organisations with a view to potential collaborations:
  - Faith in Kids
  - Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
  - Mencap
  - Autism NI
  - Autism Initiatives
  - Through the Roof
  - Barnardos
  - Jack & Jill Foundation
  - Cerebral Palsy Ireland
  - New Wine Ireland

The Group also plans to explore possible connections with the MindMatters Project.

- 3) JAM (Just A Minute) Cards – these cards are being ordered, along with posters, for distribution to all churches in Ireland. It is hoped that having them available will encourage everyone to give people with disabilities a little bit of extra time and space.
- 4) Flyer – we are preparing a flyer for distribution at General and Diocesan Synods. This is to increase awareness that the Group is available for consultations and collaborations on any issues pertaining to disability – contact [aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org](mailto:aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org).



**Conclusion**

The Consultative Group continues to seek consultation with and support from Church Members with either a professional or personal knowledge in the area of disability. While Covid-19 has hampered the Group's efforts, we are hopeful that the next couple of years will allow us to start to make progress on our ideas and plans. We also seek prayerful support in the year ahead as we continue with our first projects.

Priorities Fund Report to the Standing Committee March 2024									
	Conversion rate Sterling to Euro								
	€1.15350 / £1								
Application Number	Applicant	Diocese	Amount Requested		Recommended Grant		Recommended Grant 2nd Year		Standing Committee Decision
			£	€	£	€	£	€	
<b>Outreach Initiative</b>									
OI- 21	<b>Shankill Lurgan</b>	Dromore	£18,200		£10,000	€11,535	£8,000	€9,228	
	Outreach to teenagers dealing with drug use and anti-social behaviour								
OI- 22	<b>Irish Baroque Orchestra</b>			€1,000		€0		€0	
	Materials to Assist Concerts' in 2024								
OI- 24	<b>Bunclody Union (Ferns)</b>	Ferns		€1,138		€1,138		€0	
	Parish Gazebo to increase/allow youth and community events								
OI- 25	<b>Camp and Dingle Select Vestry</b>	Ardfert		€20,000		€15,000		€0	
	Development of St James church Dingle -phase 1 -WC and Kitchen & emergency exit								
OI- 26	<b>St Annes Cathedral</b>	Connor	£20,000		£15,000	€17,303	£5,000	€5,768	
	Consultancy re Centre of Acknowledgement and Memories from troubles								
OI- 27	<b>St Annes Trust</b>	Connor	£2,500		£2,500	€2,884	£0	€0	
	Cross community singing event for schools								
OI- 28*	<b>St Aidan's Parish Church, Kilmore</b>	Armagh	£22,000		£5,000	€5,768	£0	€0	
	Digital audio visual system for the Parish Church								
OI- 29	<b>Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund</b>		£400		£400	€461	£0	€0	
	Static payment of £400 for surviving spouses								
OI- 30*	<b>Greystones Parish</b>	Glendalough		€9,000		€5,000		€0	
	Audio visual for the Parish Hall. Extending the use to community								
OI- 35	<b>Community of Brendan the Navigator</b>	Cashel Ferns Ossory		€750		€750		€0	
	Funding of three day pilgrimage days along Saint Declan's Way								
OI- 36	<b>St Judes Ballynifeigh</b>	Down	£19,382		£5,000	€5,768	£0	€0	
	Development and expansion of outreach to the local community								
OI- 37	<b>Branial Community Church</b>	Down	£12,950		£3,000	€3,461	£0	€0	
	Establishment of a Christian Union for students of Castlereagh Campus of Belfast Met								
OI- 39	<b>Magherally and Annaclone</b>	Down	£20,000		£10,000	€11,535	£5,000	€5,768	
	Support for the growth of youth and children's ministries								
OI- 40	<b>St. John's Parish, Lurgan</b>	Down	£3,150		£3,150	€3,634	£0	€0	
	Expansion of the HUB (set up in 2022) community programme including Alpha courses								

continued --->

	Conversion rate Sterling to Euro	€1.15350 / £1								
Application Number	Applicant	Diocese	Amount Requested		Recommended Grant		Recommended Grant 2nd Year		Standing Committee Decision	
			£	€	£	€	£	€		
OI- 41	<b>Saint Columb's Cathedral Sunday School</b> Adopt a grandparent project - connecting local youth to the elderly living at home or in	na	£1,000		£1,000	€1,154	£0	€0		
OI- 42	<b>Ards Connect, Ballyhalbert</b> A New outreach project for children and young adults in the rural area of the Ards Peninsula	Down	£20,000		£5,000	€5,768	£5,000	€5,768		
OI- 43	<b>Willowfield Parish Community Association</b> Support for our Outreach work with adults and families in our impoverished area of east Belfast	na	£30,000		£7,000	€8,075	£0	€0		
OI- 44	<b>Glen Community Church,, Newtownards</b> Lads and Dads group, building relationships with those who have no church connection	Down	£20,000		£12,000	€13,842	£8,000	€9,228		
OI- 45*	<b>St Stephen and St Luke</b> Outreach and evangelism in Belfast City Centre , developing a new worshipping community	Connor	£20,000		£10,000	€11,535	£10,000	€11,535		
OI- 46	<b>Tullycarnet Church, East Belfast</b> Partnership with Prison Fellowship - Christmas dinner and fun day for ex-prisoners and families.	Down	£3,200		£3,200	€3,691	£0	€0		
OI- 47	<b>St Pauls Church Castlewellan</b> Alterations to the church for parent and toddlers, pensioner lunches, alternative styles of worship	Down	£25,000		£0	€0	£0	€0		
OI- 48	<b>Bryansford Parish Church</b> Timber building to enable Church to expand community connections	Down	£30,000		£0	€0	£0	€0		
OI- 49*	<b>ST. PAUL AND ST. BARNABAS, BELFAST</b> Installation of lift , renovating the kitchen to enable outreach events and counselling	Connor	£45,000		£10,000	€11,535	£5,000	€5,768		
OI- 50	<b>St. John's Parish, Lurgan</b> To improve contact with, and support families in area of social and economic deprivation.	Down	£5,875		£5,875	€6,777	£0	€0		
OI- 51	<b>Dublin Simon Community</b> Engagements with people sleeping rough, including training programmes	na		€14,310		€0		€0		
OI- 52	<b>Killough Youth &amp; Children's Outreach</b> Outreach in a rural community - programmes and events for family, kids and adults	Down	£5,000		£5,000	€5,768	£0	€0		
OI- 53	<b>Diocese of Cashel Ferns and Ossory</b> Funding assistance to host the Church of Ireland Stand at the National Ploughing Championships	Cashel Ferns Ossory		€15,000		€15,000		€0		
OI- 56	<b>St Michael's Parish Belfast</b> To further develop a Neighbourhood Chaplaincy in the loyalist estate at Lower Shankill, Belfast	Connor	£43,000		£15,000	€17,303	£10,000	€11,535		
OI- 57	<b>St Columba's Derryvolgie</b> "Global Made Local" - connections between overseas ministry volunteers and local migrants	Connor	£40,000		£20,000	€23,070	£20,000	€23,070		
OI- 58	<b>Derg Parish Church</b> Outreach through a parish shop for people of different nationalities in the local area	Derry	£500		£500	€577	£0	€0		
OI- 59	<b>St Peter and St James, Belfast</b> To assist Christian educational in the parish by installing electronic whiteboards in both halls.	Connor	£2,000		£2,000	€2,307	£0	€0		

continued --->

	Conversion rate Sterling to Euro	€1.15350 / £1								
Application Number	Applicant	Diocese	Amount Requested		Recommended Grant		Recommended Grant 2nd Year		Standing Committee Decision	
			£	€	£	€	£	€		
OI- 60	<b>PEPPER JOHNS MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE</b> Development of Suicide Awareness group, Family Mediation, Men's Shed and counselling	Down	£10,000		£5,000	€5,768	£0	€0		
OI- 61	<b>St James's Crinken Church</b> Funding salary for Storehouse Ministry, which provides food packages to community	Dublin		€15,000		€0		€0		
OI- 63	<b>Solas Project</b> To support a Schools programme in secondary schools which suffered the most during Covid	Dublin		€10,240		€6,000		€0		
OI- 64	<b>St Canice's Faughanvale Parish Church</b> To assist with the completion of a new Parish Centre after flooding	Derry	£50,000		£15,000	€17,303	£0	€0		
OI- 65	<b>The Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice</b> Production of six videos to encourage greater ethnic diversity in the Church of Ireland	Dublin		€9,500		€9,500		€0		
OI- 66	<b>Drumglass Parish</b> Extend ministry for men including physical exercise, mental health, loneliness and unemployment	Armagh	£12,500		£8,000	€9,228	£0	€0		
OI- 67	<b>United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough</b> Assistance for events/meetings for the Lambeth Calls Initiative	na		€10,000		€5,000		€0		
OI- 68	<b>St Comgall's Church, Parish of Rathcoole</b> Extending community engagement and audio-visual equipment for live streaming	Connor	£7,000		£7,000	€8,075	£0	€0		
OI- 69	<b>Waterford Union of Parishes</b> Parishes's collaboration with community using its bells and bell ringing.	Waterford		€10,000		€8,000		€0		
OI- 70	<b>The Church of the Holy Evangelists, Carnmoney</b> Funding for a part time outreach worker connection with children and families	Connor	£15,000		£5,000	€5,768	£5,000	€5,768		
<b>Christian Education</b>										
CE-4	<b>Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal</b> To provide education and training on world poverty across the Church of Ireland	na		€6,500		€6,500		€0		
CE- 5	<b>Diocesan Council of Cork, Cloyne and Ross</b> To establish a city-centre hub and mission resource centre in at 14 Cove Street-Cork City	Cork		€40,000		€20,000		€10,000		
CE- 7	<b>Church Mission Society Ireland</b> The creation and promotion of CMSI's annual educational resource for children and young people.	na	£3,000		£3,000	€3,461	£0	€0		
CE-8*	<b>Kilternan Church of Ireland</b> The Kitchen Table Project encouraging family faith discussion at home	Dublin		€3,000		€3,000		€0		
CE-9	<b>Saint Canice's Cathedral</b> The Red Book of Ossory -Church's role in medieval life focusing on Bishop Ledrede	Ossory		€30,000		€10,000		€0		
CE-10	<b>Love For Life</b> Development of new RSE relationship programmes and resources for schools and Church	na	£40,000		£12,000	€13,842	£12,000	€13,842	continued --->	

		Conversion rate Sterling to Euro	€1.15350 / £1									
Application Number	Applicant	Diocese	Amount Requested		Recommended Grant		Recommended Grant 2nd Year		Standing Committee Decision			
			£	€	£	€	£	€				
CE-11	<b>SEEDS Children's Ministry</b> Funding sensory material and resources to help children engage fully with Bible	na	£1,000		£1,000	€1,154		£0	€0			
CE-12	<b>Alpha Ireland</b> Digital platform making Alpha Youth deliverable to each pastoral situation particularly for youth	na		€18,000		€12,000			€0			
CE-13	<b>Crosslinks</b> Support for children's junior and senior camp from 20th - 25th July in the Kilbroney Centre	na	£2,000		£2,000	€2,307		£0	€0			
CE-14	<b>Abbeyleix &amp; Killermogh</b> Educational outreach - to assist / support travel via provision of minibuses	Leighlin		€800		€800			€0			
<b>Innovative Ministry in a Rural Context</b>												
IM-4*	<b>Baillieborough Group of Parishes</b> Equipment in two church halls for ministry and outreach activities	Kilmore		€1,690		€1,690			€0			
IM-5	<b>St John's Parish Church, Upper Kilwarlin</b> Church Hall development for outreach to rural community	Down	£10,000		£10,000	€11,535		£0	€0			
IM-6*	<b>Castle Archdale Parish Church</b> Building a parish room as a new community facility in the church grounds	Clogher	£15,000		£10,000	€11,535		£0	€0			
IM-8*	<b>Kiltyclogher Church of Ireland</b> Equipment for a community outreach hub/youth cafe, as part of the Village Renewal Scheme.	Clogher		€17,565		€12,000			€0			
IM-9	<b>Lecale Area Mission Partnership</b> Support for toddler groups, youth groups, sunday schools in parishes within the Lecale group	Down	£5,000		£5,000	€5,768		£0	€0			
IM-16*	<b>Mullabrack</b> Seed funding for the internal redevelopment of the old school house for youth ministry	Armagh	£15,500		£10,000	€11,535		£0	€0			
<b>Training - Lay &amp; Ordained</b>												
T-3	<b>HOUSE OF BISHOPS</b> Training and education in the Dioceses of the Church of Ireland, through the Diocesan Bishops	na		€40,000		€40,000			€0			
T-4	<b>All Aboard - Connor Children's Ministry</b> To engage with families through Toddler Ministry events	Connor	£2,000		£2,000	€2,307		£0	€0			
T-5	<b>Board for ministry with children and families</b> All-island Children & Family conference to resource and inspire parishes for children's ministry	na		€8,000		€8,000			€0			
			<b>Totals</b>	<b>£597,157</b>	<b>€281,493</b>	<b>€462,706</b>			<b>€117,276</b>			
<i>* Grant funding is subject to Diocesan Council approval being obtained for the initiative</i>												
									<b>Total recommended grants, 1st and 2nd year</b>		<b>€579,982</b>	

<b>STANDING COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>PRIORITIES FUND</b>		
<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</b>		
<b>Year ended 31 December 2023</b>		
	2023	2022
	€	€
<b>INCOME</b>		
Contributions	466,820	390,146
1		
Investment Income	31,292	30,026
Individual Contributions	347	245
Bequest Income	-	61,995
	<u>498,459</u>	<u>482,412</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Administration Expenses	(20,981)	(26,062)
2		
<b>Operating Surplus for the Year</b>	<u>477,478</u>	<u>456,350</u>
<b>ALLOCATIONS &amp; GRANTS</b>		
Allocations & Grants Distributed	(443,004)	(414,262)
3		
<b>Surplus after Allocations &amp; Grants</b>	<u>34,474</u>	<u>42,088</u>
Valuation Movement	81,370	(136,225)
Currency translation adjustment	1,945	(5,868)
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<u><u>117,789</u></u>	<u><u>(100,005)</u></u>

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

**PRIORITIES FUND**

**BALANCE SHEET  
December 2023**

**Year ended 31**

		2023 €	2022 €
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>			
Investments held by the RCB	5	1,135,599	1,054,228
		_____	_____
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash held with the RCB	6	375,677	337,591
Debtors	7	-	1,668
		_____	_____
		375,677	339,259
		_____	_____
Net Assets		<u>1,511,276</u>	<u>1,393,487</u>
<b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>			
Balance at 1 January		1,393,487	1,493,492
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		117,789	(100,005)
		_____	_____
Balance as at 31 December		<u>1,511,276</u>	<u>1,393,487</u>
		=====	=====

**Notes to the Financial Statements**

	2023	2022
1. Contributions	€	€
Contributions from the dioceses	466,820	390,146
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
2. Administration Expenses	2023	2022
	€	€
Salaries & PRSI	20,050	20,000
Stationary, Printing	804	4,246
Miscellaneous & Transfers	127	1,816
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>20,981</u>	<u>26,062</u>
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
3. Grants & Loans	2023	2022
	€	€
Ministry	45,436	41,529
Retirement Benefits	461	452
Education	56,527	51,296
Outreach Initiatives	278,674	287,663
Innovative Ministry	61,906	33,322
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>443,004</u>	<u>414,262</u>
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

4. Capital Commitments

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 the Priorities Fund had committed grants of €343,741 for Jan 2024 – March 2026. These grants have not been provided for in the Financial Statements.

5. Invested assets are shown at market value at both 31 December 2022 and 31 December 2023.

2022

2022



Standing Committee Report 2024

6. Cash on deposit held by the RCB	€	€
Cash on deposit held by the RCB	375,677	337,591
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

This represents cash held on behalf of The Church of Ireland Priorities Fund by the RCB in pooled bank accounts.

	2023	2022
7. Debtors	€	€
Contributions Accrued	-	1,668
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

8. Foreign Currency transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2023, €1 = £0.8669 (2022: €1 = £0. 8853).

9. An accountants' report has not been provided for these Financial Statements as the cash balance of €375,677 and Investment balance of €1,135,599 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.

10. The Priorities Fund is not the beneficial owner of any tangible fixed assets, and thus no depreciation charge arises in the current or previous financial year.

## **Appendix L**

### **Third Level Chaplaincy Review Group**

#### **Report to General Synod 2024**

##### **Membership**

Mr Michael Johnston (Chair)  
Rt Rev Andrew Forster (Bishop of Derry & Raphoe)  
Ven Barry Forde  
Rev Robert Jones  
Rev Canon Alan Marley  
Rev Dr Christine O'Dowd-Smythe  
Very Rev Lynda Peilow

##### **RCB Staff In Attendance**

Mr David Ritchie  
Ms Rebekah Fozzard

The purpose of the Third Level Chaplaincy review group is to draw up a comprehensive plan for the future of third level chaplaincy and a structure for its management.

The working group is chaired by Mr Michael Johnston, chairperson of the Stipends Committee. An updated Terms of Reference was approved by Standing Committee in November 2023 with membership to include one member of the House of Bishops, two members of Standing Committee, one member of the Representative Body and one University chaplain. The group is supported by the RCB Project Manager, Ms Rebekah Fozzard.

The working group has four primary objectives:

- To consult with the financial committees of the RB to develop the protocols, policies and procedures required to implement a transparent, equitable funding system to deploy and maintain third level chaplains across the sector.
- To work closely with the Church of Ireland Theological Institute to enhance a programme of continual ministry education which focuses specifically on core themes and activities for third level chaplains. It will include a way for chaplains to be able to measure the impact and effectiveness of their chaplaincy programme as well as addressing the need for supervision.
- To investigate the resources required to implement a national third level chaplaincy programme and to establish a mechanism to support parishes and dioceses to respond to calls for tender, external funding, educational and other opportunities.
- To explore ways to enhance the recognition and integration of chaplaincy ministry and governance of chaplaincy ministry within the Constitution.

It is expected that the working group will report back to the RB Executive Committee and Standing Committee on progress, with the final report to be presented to the House of Bishops, RB Executive Committee in June 2024 and Standing Committee following that.

## Appendix M

### Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board

#### General Synod Report 2024

*“All adults and children have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected from harm or the risk of harm.”*

(Church of Ireland Safeguarding Policies)



Dr Niall Moore  
Safeguarding Officer (ROI)



Ms Gillian Taylor  
Safeguarding Officer (NI)

#### Members of the Safeguarding Board

- The Archbishop of Armagh, The Most Rev John McDowell (Chairperson)
- The Archbishop of Dublin, The Most Rev Dr Michael GStA Jackson
- A Clerical Honorary Secretary of General Synod, Rev Canon Gillian Wharton
- Representatives of clergy from Northern Ireland, Bishop Ian Ellis and Rev Dr Christopher St John
- Representatives of clergy from the Republic of Ireland, Rev Ruth Elmes and Rev Eugene Griffin
- Representative of the Representative Church Body, Rev Canon Paul Thompson
- Chief Officer and Secretary General, Mr David Ritchie
- Independent members: Mr Paul Stephenson, Child Protection in Sport Officer at NSPCC, and Ms Shirley Scott, Policy Manager with the Rape Crisis Centre

The Safeguarding Board membership includes representatives of the northern and southern provinces appointed by their Archbishops and independent experts in safeguarding from outside of the Church of Ireland. During 2023, the Safeguarding Board welcomed Canon Paul Thompson as the representative of the Representative Church Body.

#### Summary of activities

##### Policy development

The Safeguarding Officers, Mr Robert Dunne (RI) and Ms Gillian Taylor (NI), worked with external advisors to prepare policies which were presented to the Safeguarding Board for consideration, these included:

##### *Amalgamated Child Safeguarding policy*

The Safeguarding Officers have worked with an external consultant to bring together and update the Church of Ireland Child Safeguarding policies, this new policy is compliant with both Northern Irish and Republic of Ireland legislation providing a single policy applicable to all Church of Ireland parishes. The new policy addresses the safeguarding requirements for Pioneer Ministry, updates re-vetting requirements, and addresses the role of diocesan staff in the implementation of safeguarding policy and practice across the Church of Ireland. The Safeguarding Officers are seeking comment from the House of Bishops in advance of finalising this policy, and before developing and delivering the required training.

##### *Resources Paper*

During the year the Safeguarding Board received papers addressing the ability to sanction those accused of abuse, the management of accusations of abuse, and a detailed paper on the role of the Safeguarding Officers

and diocesan staff in the management of safeguarding cases. The Safeguarding Board has requested a review of the organisation of safeguarding and in particular the division of responsibility between the development of policy by the Safeguarding Board and the implementation of policy by the dioceses. This review will be completed during 2024.

### **Safeguarding training**

Throughout the year, the Safeguarding Officers provided training to diocesan safeguarding trainers, who in turn provide training to clergy, staff and volunteers. Parish Panel training was delivered via Zoom throughout the year in both jurisdictions. The Safeguarding Officers are available to address any questions that may be referred to them either by Parish Panels, members of the clergy, or diocesan safeguarding trainers.

Training in relation to the recently adopted Pastoral Visiting Principles was provided to students training for ordination at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, and it is expected that this training will be offered to members of the clergy during 2024.

During the year, the Safeguarding Officers and the independent members of the Safeguarding Board completed extensive Risk Assessment and Risk Management training which was delivered by external consultants. This training has equipped the Safeguarding Officers with tools and knowledge in managing risk and has informed the advice offered to diocesan and parish staff and volunteers.

### **Case management**

The Safeguarding Officers have developed a draft case management policy which is consistent with the Resources Paper. For complex cases, a case management committee should be established comprising of diocesan representation, Safeguarding Officer, legal, and RCB representation and any other necessary expertise. It is envisaged that in the future this committee would have an independent chairperson. It should be noted that any allegation of sexual abuse should be referred to the appropriate Parish Panel and Safeguarding Officer and in accordance with safeguarding policy must be reported to the statutory authorities.

### *Restorative Planning Group*

During 2022, the Board established a Restorative Planning Group to explore how the Church of Ireland might adopt a restorative victim informed approach to engaging with victims of sexual abuse. During 2023, meetings were held with restorative practitioners, and it was determined that while this approach should be considered for individual cases, a more general policy would require careful planning and agreement as to what supports could be provided. An immediate recommendation of the Restorative Planning Group is to formalise the RCB central records so that these can be used to develop policy and for reporting to government bodies.

### **Vetting Services**

Vetting staff in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland provide administrative support for parishes and dioceses in the vetting of staff and volunteers. It should be noted that when the new amalgamated Child Safeguarding Policy comes into effect, re-vetting will be required every three years in both Northern Ireland and in Republic of Ireland.

### **Staffing**

Mr Robert Dunne resigned during 2023, and Dr Niall Moore took up the position as Safeguarding Officer for the Republic of Ireland in February 2024. Ms Andrea Bridge transferred to a role in the RCB Library and Mr Alex Kinch was appointed as Vetting Administrator for the Republic of Ireland. The Safeguarding Board welcomed these new staff to the RCB. Ms Gillian Taylor has continued in her role as Safeguarding Officer for Northern Ireland and Ms Christine Cody and Mrs Claire Geoghegan have continued to provide Vetting Administration and administrative support to the Safeguarding Office.

Further information regarding safeguarding can be found on <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/> .

## **Appendix I**

### **Safe-Guarding Trust Board**

#### **MARCH 2022 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **SAFEGUARDING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATED MARCH 2022 DUE FOR REVIEW MARCH 2025**

#### **MEMBERSHIP ELECTION YEARS -**

#### **Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board - Terms of Reference:**

##### **Overall Statement**

The Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board (“the Board”) exists to develop and approve safeguarding policy, to monitor implementation and to report to Standing Committee and the Representative Body as appropriate.

All policies will be in compliance with Irish and UK law as appropriate and will be informed by best practice.

The Board is committed to learning from experience. By a process of continuous improvement, it will monitor and challenge the effectiveness of The Church of Ireland’s safeguarding policies and processes.

The Safeguarding Board will submit an annual report for inclusion in the Church of Ireland General Synod Book of Reports.

##### **Functions of the Board**

The Board:

- Will review and agree changes to the policies on an annual basis (in June).
- Will develop a 3-year strategic plan with input from relevant external professional bodies and will monitor progress at least annually.
- Will review child and adult safeguarding policies every three years with input from external professional bodies as required.

The Safeguarding Officers will attend and will report to the Safeguarding Board at each meeting. The reports of the Safeguarding Officers will address:

- Policy – changes in legislation, recommended changes to policies
- Training – content, delivered, issues arising
- Compliance – reporting on audits and issues arising from cases
- Operations – Active case numbers and vetting report
- Issues – this is an opportunity to report any issue(s) not covered above

##### **Membership of the Board**

- a) Two representatives from the House of Bishops (preferably one from each legal jurisdiction) – one of whom shall be the Chairperson.
- b) One representative from the Representative Church Body
- c) The Chief Officer and Secretary General.
- d) An Honorary Secretary of the General Synod.
- e) Four members of the clergy: two nominated triennially by the Archbishop of Armagh, and two nominated by the Archbishop of Dublin. In the event of a vacancy arising, it shall be filled by the Archbishop who first nominated the original nominee. Nominations will reflect a gender balance and a rural/urban balance, in so far as is possible.

- f) External expert members (to be co-opted as the Board determines up to a maximum of four people).

The quorum for meetings will be 6 members of the Board to include at least one independent member.

### **Meetings**

The Board will meet at least three times per year.

The Board will meet in January annually to prepare its Annual Report to General Synod, and as often as it determines thereafter.

Dates of meetings for the year will be agreed at the first meeting of the year. Should a matter of urgency arise the Chairperson may convene a special meeting through the Secretary.

### **Reporting**

The Chairperson of the Safeguarding Board shall be responsible for direct liaison with the Chief Officer and the Secretary of the Board following Safeguarding Board meetings, including circulation of minutes, agendas and reports. The Standing Committee of the General Synod or the Representative Church Body may ask the Safeguarding Board to convene to discuss any Safeguarding issue upon which it requires further advice.

### **Evaluation of terms of reference**

The Safeguarding Board's terms of reference will be reviewed annually. Any amendments to these Terms of Reference will be submitted to Standing Committee for approval.

### **Standing Committee June 2016**

On the proposal of the Honorary Secretaries, the following resolutions were passed:

That the Standing Committee approves the establishment of a joint Standing Committee/Representative Body Safeguarding Trust Board to monitor the development of safeguarding policies for both children and vulnerable adults, to have responsibility for the development of training across the island and the management of safeguarding issues as they arise.

That the Standing Committee further approves the suggested membership of the said Board as consisting of the Primate, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Secretary General, the Chairman of the RB Executive Committee, and an Honorary Secretary.

On the proposal of the Ven George Davison, seconded by Mr Sam Harper, the following resolution was passed:

That the Standing Committee nominates the following to the Board:

Rev Gillian Wharton.

**Appendix N**

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
		€	€
<b>INCOME</b>			
Representative Church Body	1	571,341	624,610
Royalties Fund Income		48,413	40,185
Grants/Contributions		15,157	5,100
Deposit Interest	2	2,213	-
		<u>637,124</u>	<u>669,895</u>
		-	-
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Services provided by RCB	3	330,545	321,601
General Synod Expenses	4	44,616	43,717
Miscellaneous Expenses	5	19,238	28,414
		<u>394,399</u>	<u>393,732</u>
		=	=
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<u>242,725</u>	<u>276,163</u>
<b>ALLOCATIONS AND GRANTS</b>			
Allocations to Ecumenical and Anglican Organisations	6	137,141	124,817
Allocations to Church related Organisations	7	242,849	163,579
		<u>379,990</u>	<u>288,396</u>
(Deficit) for year		<u>(137,265)</u>	<u>(12,233)</u>

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

<b>FUND ACCOUNT</b>	<b>Year ended 31 December</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash on deposit held by RCB 8	149,454	289,599
Net Assets	<u>149,454</u>	<u>289,599</u>
<b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>		
Balance at 1 January	289,599	315,088
(Deficit) for the year	(137,265)	(12,233)
Currency translation adjustment	1,925	(4,965)
Transfer to Children’s & Family Ministry	-	(8,291)
Adjustment to 2022 closing balance	(4,805)	
Balance as at 31 December	<u>149,454</u>	<u>289,599</u>



**Notes to the Accounts**

1. Income from Representative Church Body

	2023 €	2022 €
Representative Church Body allocation	804,065	750,838
Refund unexpended allocation	(232,724)	(126,228)
Total income from RCB	<u>571,341</u>	<u>624,610</u>

This represents amounts which were allocated by the Allocations Committee of the Representative Church Body to fund the activities of the Standing Committee.

2. Deposit Interest

	2023 €	2022 €
Royalties Fund	2,213	-
	<u>2,213</u>	<u>-</u>

3. Services provided by the RCB

Services provided by the RCB relates to the time apportionment of certain RCB staff who provided Standing Committee support.

	2023 €	2022 €
4. General Synod Expenses		
Venue and Facilities	44,616	43,717
	<u>44,616</u>	<u>43,717</u>

5. Miscellaneous Expenses

	2023 €	2022 €
Publications & Printing	7,826	7,557
Honorary Secretaries' expenses	7,250	10,694

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Porvoo Expenses	-	1,715
COI Church & Society CO	-	1,789
Council for Mission	1,070	4,469
Commission on Ministry	2,827	678
Subscriptions		
Histographer	265	212
	-	1,300
	<u>19,238</u>	<u>28,414</u>
	=====	=====

6. Ecumenical and Anglican Organisations	2023 €	2022 €
Anglican Consultative Council	56,388	55,215
Irish Council of Churches	25,570	25,038
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland	11,535	11,296
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	12,594	12,911
World Council of Churches	4,637	12,359
Conference of European Churches	5,310	5,180
Delegates' expenses (travel/conferences)	12,005	2,818
	<u>128,039</u>	<u>124,817</u>
	=====	=====

7. Allocations to Church related Organisations	2023 €	2022 €
Central Communications Board	127,988	93,798
Grants paid to General Church Organisations	5,000	5,000
Grants paid to Support Allocations	11,000	11,000
Church of Ireland Marriage Council	9,102	6,244
Royalties Fund Expenditure	98,861	47,537
	<u>251,827</u>	<u>163,579</u>
	=====	=====

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8. Cash on Short Term Deposit

	2023	2022
	€	€
Royalties Fund	110,298	157,536
Hymnal Revision	-	1,455
Other Account Balances	39,156	130,608
	<u>149,454</u>	<u>289,599</u>

This represents cash held on behalf of Standing Committee by the RCB in pooled bank accounts.

9. Foreign currency transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling on 31 December 2023, €1 = £0.8669 (2022: €1 = £0.8853).

10. An accountant's report has not been provided for these financial statements, as the balance of €149,454 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.

## APPENDIX O

### **WORKING GROUP CONCERNING A CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE BY THE CHURCH TO HISTORIC INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE (HISTORIC INQUIRIES WORKING GROUP)**

#### **Working Group Report**

#### **Membership**

Archbishop of Armagh  
Archbishop of Dublin  
Mr Henry Algeo  
Mr Ken Gibson  
Rev Canon Gillian Wharton  
Mr Lyndon MacCann SC  
Mr David Ritchie  
Very Revd Shane Forster

In attendance: Mrs Janet Maxwell

The Historical Inquiries Working Group met in June 2023 to receive updates on matters relating to the various inquiries into historical institutional and clergy abuse on the island of Ireland.

#### **Republic of Ireland: Mother & Baby Institutions**

A memorandum was agreed in June 2023 with the Office of Minister Roderic O’Gorman regarding points discussed in the meeting with the meeting in February 2022. During the meeting with the Minister it had been noted that the Church of Ireland neither owned nor operated any of the homes included in the inquiry, albeit that individuals involved in running those homes were themselves members of one or other of the Protestant denominations in Ireland. The Minister said he was open to engaging with other Protestant denominations. With respect to the government’s scheme, the Minister had explained to the Dail, that the State’s response includes elements of financial redress, memorialisation, provision of services to facilitate access to records and other initiatives. The Minister expressed his hope that the Church of Ireland might contribute to the scheme. The Working Group expressed the willingness of the Church to support the government’s efforts in respect of access to any material records. This would mean assisting the adoption tracing by locating references in parish registers to help re-construct family histories. Additionally, the Working Group expressed its interest in participating in initiatives around memorialisation of homes that operated under a Protestant ethos and hoped this might be developed along with other Protestant denominations. It is not clear what value the State puts on the various forms of assistance referred to in the meeting with Minister O’Gorman.

In January 2024, a took place between some members of the Working Group along with other Standing Committee member and Ms Sheila Nunan, who was appointed as negotiator in respect of the government’s redress scheme on behalf of the Minister O’Gorman. Her role is to engage with religious bodies who had a historical involvement in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions. Ms Nunan explained that the Scheme has been developed to provide redress to any resident of one of the named mother and baby homes

who meets the criteria in the legislation. Ms Nunan clarified that contributions were being sought on a voluntary basis and acknowledged that the State was not basing its claim on fault or on ownership or management of these homes, but on a desire to have religious bodies participate with the government in its scheme. Ms Nunan told the meeting that the government's redress scheme will cost in the order of €800 million. She did not confirm if other Protestant denominations were also being approached on the same basis. As far as the Working Group is aware, the Church of Ireland remains the only non-owner and non-operator of a home to have been approached to date by the Minister in terms of seeking a contribution to the government's scheme for redress. No commitment has been given on behalf of the Church regarding the making of any financial contribution. Certain questions have been put to Ms Nunan regarding the Scheme, for which answers are still awaited.

After the meeting with Ms Nunan, the RB received a request to provide EY (formerly Ernst & Young) with information regarding the finances of the Church. An appropriate response is being prepared by the RB. Further dialogue with the State in relation to the Scheme is anticipated during 2024.

#### **Northern Ireland – Mother & Baby Homes Inquiry and Historical Clerical Sexual Abuse Inquiry**

The RB has worked with representatives of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) conducting a survey of minute books relating to the Church of Ireland Rescue League and the Church of Ireland Moral Welfare Association (Northern Dioceses) held in Family Routes and in the RCB Library, Braemor Park, Dublin. These records were subsequently digitised by PRONI. The Working Group agreed that, should a request be made to relocate these records to a central archive based in Northern Ireland at a subsequent date, this would be considered positively. A central archive of records has been created in recent years in the Republic of Ireland by the State in order to facilitate adoption tracing services.

The NI Executive Office has indicated that a Public Inquiry into Historical Clerical Child Sexual Abuse will be launched in Northern Ireland, and progress towards this has recommenced following the restoration of an Executive at Stormont. As with the Mother and Baby Inquiry in the Republic of Ireland, the Public Inquiry will hear testimony and consider redress, but this will not take the form of having to prove harm. It has been suggested by the Executive Office that the Public Inquiry may require legislative powers which have yet to be completed.

**APPENDIX P**  
**REPORT TO STANDING COMMITTEE FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF**  
**EPISCOPAL ELECTORAL COLLEGE PROCESS**

**Members**

Ms Hazel Corrigan	Honorary Secretary
Rt Rev George Davison	Episcopal nominee (Chair)
Mr Ken Gibson	Honorary Secretary
Very Rev Shane Forster	Provincial Registrar (Northern)
Mr Lyndon MacCann S.C.	Assessor
Rev Robert Marshall	Provincial Registrar (Southern)

**In attendance:**

Mrs Janet Maxwell

**Terms of Reference**

“To examine the Electoral process from the date a forthcoming vacancy is announced until the Electoral College completes its work, paying particular attention to

- the composition and purpose of the Shortlisting Committee;
- the timeline for the various steps;
- communication issues;
- standardisation of approach to Electoral Colleges, and
- the role of the facilitator appointed to assist the diocesan electors.

In addition, in the light of the reduction of dioceses in the Province of Armagh, to consider what changes, if any, might be needed to the numbers involved in Colleges in that Province.

The Review Working Group

The Review Working Group will comprise of not more than six persons including the two lay honorary secretaries, an Assessor and a Provincial Registrar, to be agreed by the Archbishop of Armagh and the Honorary Secretaries, and a bishop to be nominated by the House of Bishops.

Timeline

The Working Group will carry out a thorough review, resulting in carefully formulated recommendations, as appropriate, with a view to bringing any legislative proposals to the General Synod in 2023. Should the need arise, it may continue its work and bring any legislative proposals to General Synod 2024. The Working Group will report on progress to the meetings of the Standing Committee.

Sensitivity and Confidentiality

In conducting the review, the Review Working Group will be cognisant of both the sensitivities and confidentiality of the Episcopal Electoral College process and of the impact on candidates, both who have been elected and those who were not.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Working Group, having consulted with participants in recent Episcopal Electoral Colleges recommends a number of changes requiring:

- a) A bill to implement certain changes to be proposed at General Synod May 2024;
- b) Additional guidance to achieve greater consistency in approach across all electoral colleges.

**REPORT**

The Working Group met seven times, considering the various items raised in the Terms of Reference and conducting a consultation exercise with members of recent electoral colleges and also seeking the observations

of those individuals nominated as candidates during the process. Responses were anonymised and individual views were treated with sensitivity and confidentiality within the process.

The Working Group's report to the Standing Committee shares the feedback received and indicates proposed regulations and legislative proposals that the Working Group believes will be necessary to implement those recommendations that have been identified as broadly agreed based on the response to the consultation process that was conducted.

### **Shortlisting Committee**

The agreed view of the Working Group based on the consultation responses is that the work of shortlisting is properly exercised by the whole electoral college and not by a smaller group. Consequently, the work of the Shortlisting Committee needs to be re-envisioned as a Due Diligence Committee. It will not require so many members to fulfil this function. Examination of the proposal of nominees at the recently held electoral colleges, revealed that there was no need to reduce the lists of candidates. In other words, there is no shortlisting for the Shortlisting Committee to do. However, the Shortlisting Committee is already undertaking due diligence work. The Working Group considered views expressed regarding the size of the proposed Due Diligence Committee, and concluded that the work undertaken will focus on criteria set out in Regulations and in Chapter VI 3(12) and that a smaller number of members will undertake this task more effectively. The whole College will exercise discernment in respect of candidates.

#### *Recommendation 1*

*The Working Group recommends altering the description of the role and function of the Shortlisting Committee and renaming the committee to reflect its role in delivering due diligence. This will require legislative amendment. The working group also recommends reducing the membership to 4 and this is included in the Draft Bill.*

#### *Recommendation 2*

*It is also recommended that guidance is produced, so that the due diligence work is consistent between candidates and between different electoral colleges.*

### **Timeline**

The Working Group observed and found it reflected in comments received in the consultation process, that timelines were not consistent between colleges at various stages. In particular, diocesan electors had very little time to produce and consider the Statement of Episcopal Needs, and there was no fixed time for the appointment of a Facilitator to guide this work.

#### *Recommendation 3*

*The Working Group recommends that a timeframe is introduced to ensure that the various requirements of the new process can be achieved, and that there is consistency in each electoral college.*

### **Communication Issues**

Responses to the consultation process highlighted communication issues at various stages:

- a) Communication of how the process works to members of the electoral college;
- b) Communication between diocesan and provincial electors regarding their respective views;
- c) How the process of nomination within the college should happen;
- d) Communication of the Statement of Episcopal Needs to members of the college. This included the format and method of presentation; the status of the information contained and with whom it might be shared;
- e) Communication to nominees regarding their subsequent participation in the college;
- f) Communication from the college to successful and unsuccessful candidates at the end of the process;
- g) Communication from the college to the media via the Church of Ireland Press Office and the need for an information embargo that is respected by members of the college until the stated time has passed.

The Working Group concluded that some of these issues arose from lacunae in the current protocols, and others because of a lack of guidance, which is addressed in the Regulations.

*Recommendation 4*

*The recommendation is that in certain respects, the protocols should be expanded and other aspects might best be addressed by means of guidance.*

**Standardisation of approach across colleges**

A common theme of many responses was that there was too much disparity in the detail of the process as it was interpreted across the electoral colleges in both provinces. Participants who had been members of more than one college regarded this as a seriously negative dimension.

The Working Group notes that many of its recommendations are intended to increase the consistency of the process across all episcopal electoral colleges and that this is a desirable outcome.

**Role of the Facilitator**

Many responses to the consultation noted discrepancies in approach between different Facilitators. Based on the responses received, the Working Group felt it would be desirable to produce guidance for Facilitators.

*Recommendation 5*

*The Working Group proposes that it will draft guidance for Facilitators and bring this back to Standing Committee for consideration later in the year.*

**PROVINCE OF ARMAGH**

The Working Group was asked to consider the numbers of electors involved in colleges in the province of Armagh in the light of the reduction in the number of dioceses in the Province. Currently, there are two lay diocesan episcopal electors and two clerical diocesan episcopal electors more than the balancing number of provincial episcopal electors. Having considered the changes that would be necessary to achieve balance again, the Working Group would propose that in the Province of Armagh, the vacant diocese elects 10 clerical electors and 10 lay electors, rather than 12 of each as at present. This would mean that diocesan and provincial electors would again be in balance, without inflating the total number of members of the electoral college.

Special provision following the translation of a bishop to Armagh.

When the bishop of a diocese is translated to the See of Armagh and the electoral college is called to fill the vacancy, if the vacancy is in the Province of Armagh, the diocese of Armagh shall send five clerical electors and five lay electors to the college; if the vacancy is in the Province of Dublin, the diocese of Armagh shall send six clerical electors and six lay electors to the college.

**ADDENDUM TO REPORT**

**PERSONAL COMMENT FROM THE REVD ROBERT MARSHALL, PROVINCIAL REGISTRAR SOUTHERN PROVINCE**

The concept of an episcopal election is an anachronism. The word "chosen" used in the Archiepiscopal Roll of Dublin since at least 1871, is more appropriate to inform what is a process of discernment. The integrity of that process is not achieved by the proposed clarification contained in Paragraph 6 (4) of the heads of the draft bill nor in Regulation 11 of the regulations proposed for adoption by the Archbishops.

Although called an Electoral College, the representatives of the Church assembled to choose a nominee for endorsement by the House of Bishops engage in an act of discernment. As at CACTM, the decision of



candidates is to let their names go forward and they are not then subsequently involved. Consequently, the involvement of candidates (none of whom are lay members) in an electoral college to choose a new member of the Order of Bishops is an anomaly.

The only solution to the anomaly is that Candidates should not be members of the College.

The provision of Chapter 6 Section 13 of the Constitution requires shortlisted candidates to withdraw from the meeting and does not provide for their readmission. It was a far-seeing provision but it is a blunt instrument which led to the adoption of different interpretations in Dublin and Armagh. A better approach is to provide that supplementals may be summoned prior to the second meeting of the College in place of a candidate who has become ineligible for membership of the College.

Appointment of a supplementalist will not be a breach confidentiality which applies to the proceedings of the College not to its assembly. Consequently, the proposal will not have an adverse effect on the confidentiality of the meetings of the College. A candidate attending the first meeting would be confidentially bound and attendance at the Due Diligence Committee will arise in the ordinary course of business.

Subject to the addendum, I concur in the remainder of the Report.

*Robert D Marshall, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023*

Reverend Robert Marshall  
Provincial Registrar of Dublin

## **Appendix Q**

### **Pioneer Ministry Council**

#### **Report to General Synod 2024**

Following the formal launch of Pioneer Ministry in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin in February 2023, the Pioneer Ministry Governing Council was established by General Synod 2023. The Council was established to uphold and advocate for the vision of Pioneer Ministry to reach those with little or no connection to church, to oversee the delivery of its objectives and values, and oversee the processes by which employed pioneers and funded pioneer projects might receive funding and support, subject to the decision of the Pioneer Approvals Committee. As a Governing Body the Council receives reports from and provides support to the Pioneer Leadership Team, established to spearhead the new movement of Pioneer Ministry within the Church.

The Council is greatly encouraged by the actions to date with much activity over the last year, while recognising there is a significant body of work that lies ahead to grow pioneer ministry, develop the role of the Council itself, support the Leadership Team, and mobilise pioneer ministry and pioneers, lay and ordained, volunteers and employed, across the whole church.

From inception the Pioneer Movement has worked towards 5 key objectives, and the report of the Council addresses each of these in turn.

#### **1. Governance and Leadership**

For Pioneer Ministry to be credible, sustainable, and flourish it is, and will be, important to establish, embed and grow a robust governance and leadership structure for Pioneer Ministry. The establishment of the Pioneer Ministry Council and Pioneer Leadership Team are two important building blocks in this leadership and governance structure. The Leadership Team has reported to the Council, the Representative Body, House of Bishops, and the Council will report to Standing Committee, and through this inaugural and future reports, to General Synod. Through transparent and regular communication, the aspiration is that pioneer ministry will be embedded within, owned by, and provide support to, the whole of the Church of Ireland. The updates are also shared via social media and through other forms of traditional media such as diocesan magazines and the Church of Ireland Gazette.

The Council has met on four occasions, and at the time of reporting is overseeing the processes of the Leadership Team through the first iteration of applications for new pioneers and funded pioneer ministries, which have come in from across the island. This process itself is pioneering and the Council will reflect on how processes can be refined and improved for future years.

The National Director, Rev Rob Jones has visited all 11 dioceses throughout the year, meeting with Bishops, attending multiple diocesan synods, clergy and lay gatherings to communicate the vision and begin the process of implementing pioneer ministry in each setting and context.

#### **2. Diocesan Pioneer Ministry Hubs**

The vision for pioneer ministry is that it will be a 'ground up' movement. For this to happen, it is vital that within every diocese there is a group, or even a number of groups, of people including the diocesan pioneer ministry advocate appointed by the Bishop, who will champion, support, and advocate for pioneer ministry. These groups will be Pioneer Ministry Hubs. Shaped to serve the needs of each diocese in its own context,

Hubs will grow awareness of pioneer ministry, support pioneer initiatives, enable the training and resourcing of volunteers, network with Hubs from other dioceses, and engage with the national Pioneer Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is currently engaged with numerous dioceses to establish these Hubs, and already is seeing a range of healthy diversity as each diocese, in its own context, shapes hubs around how pioneer ministry might actually work in that diocese.

Hubs across the island are at different stages of development, but it is envisaged that each will grow to play a vital role in some or all of the following ways:

#### *Networking*

- Connect with the Pioneer Leadership Team and in particular the National Director
- Support the pioneer movement across the church through networking with other dioceses and pioneer conferences

#### *Growing Awareness*

- Encourage pioneer learning communities of pioneers within the diocese
- Advocate and champion pioneer ministry across the diocese – its activities, ministries, synods, councils and other bodies

#### *Support, train, resource voluntary pioneers and projects*

- Help deliver training and resources for pioneers at parish level
- Provide support to pioneer initiatives within the diocese

#### *Funded Pioneers and Projects*

- Support the Bishop and diocese with bringing forward proposals for funded pioneer projects and pioneers
- Support the yearly Diocesan Discernment and Selection Process for full time pioneers
- Provide local and contextual diocesan support to any full-time pioneers within the diocese (complementing the support provided by Church Army / CITI and the National Director)

#### *Develop Funding & Resources*

- Look to grow funding and resources for pioneer ministry

Whilst Hubs will play a crucial operational role in each diocese, pioneer ministry is also growing and establishing pioneer new ‘learning communities’. Learning Communities are designed to take small groups in local settings, parish (or even diocesan), through a change process to explore what it means to pioneer in their setting – what is the status quo, what is working, what isn’t, what is right, wrong, or even confusing? These communities will be made up of diverse leaders chosen by the Bishop who are committed to shared peer pioneer learning, mutual support, strategic partnership and praying for each other. A number of learning communities are already up and running studying together the book *‘Pioneering a new future- a practical guide to shaping change and changing the shape of Church’*.

### **3. Identify, Train, Deploy and Support Volunteer and Employed Pioneers**

Much of the focus and energy in this new season has had to focus on the creation of a new selection and training process for employed pioneers.

A selection process has been agreed with the House of Bishops and a new guidebook published which is being implemented through every diocese, as part of a pathway of discernment for those exploring vocation and

calling to reach those with little or no connection with church. A meeting between the Leadership Team and Diocesan Director of Ordinands confirmed how the exploration of vocation to pioneer will sit alongside and complement the exploration of those considering ordained or lay reader ministry within the church. The selection process for pioneers is not to a pathway that will lead to ordination. It is to a period of deployment into a pioneer ministry project and training that will run concurrently from the first day of deployment. It is envisaged that some pioneers may, in the years that follow, discern a call to some form of ordained ministry, and this will be a separate pathway of discernment towards Ordained Local Ministry or some form of transfer into stipendiary ministry according to the appropriate protocols at that time.

To complement the Selection Process for pioneers a process has also been established for the development of pioneer ministry proposals that may seek financial support from the Pioneer Ministry fund established and kept under review by the Representative Body.

As mentioned above a new guide book, accessible both in print and online, provides more information on how pioneers may be discerned, how proposed ministries might receive funding, how recruitment & appointment will work, and what happens once deployment and training begins. At the core of all discernment, development, recruitment and deployment, every new pioneer and every new ministry will be:

- **Missional** – reaching those with little or no connection to church.
- **Contextual** – working within and culturally appropriate to a particular community or locality and context.
- **Ecclesial** – growing a new community of faith over time.
- **Formational** – developing disciples and not just gathering a crowd.

It is envisaged that the first cohort of pioneers to be deployed and trained in new ministries approved for funding will commence in September 2024. The deployment will last for up to 5 years with training delivered part-time, alongside deployment, during the first 3 years.

#### *Training – Certificate in Pioneer Ministry*

An extensive body of work has been undertaken to develop a new training course for the (UK) Level 4 Certificate in Pioneer Ministry. This will be run by our key training partner, Church Army, supported by the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, and validated by Durham University. This is a three-year programme of part-time study focused on formational learning with the core emphasis on evangelism and forming new communities of faith within a pioneering context. The Training Team includes seven teaching staff with a wide range of experience and specialism, from communication skills to pioneering, from biblical studies to contextual evangelism, with training taking place through residential weekends based in both Sheffield and Dublin, as well as online training.

#### *Pioneer Ministry Gathering – Autumn 2024*

Whilst much energy has necessarily been given to the development of this course and the processes for selecting and identifying pioneers and pioneer ministry proposals, the broader aspiration is for pioneering activity to happen at every level of the Church. This cannot be a movement that simply produces a limited number of funded pioneers for a specified period of time. Through the Hubs and Learning Communities the vision is to mobilise people everywhere for pioneer ministry. Learning from one another will be vital and to that end arrangements are being made for a National Pioneer Ministry Gathering in the Autumn of 2024 to encourage, inform, and be inspired for the work of pioneer ministry across the Church.

#### **4. Establish and support new pioneer communities and churches**

The establishment of the Governing Council, Pioneer Hubs and Learning Communities and the first cohort of funded pioneers and pioneer projects all represent new networks and communities committed to reaching those with little or no connection to church. The creation of these new projects or ministries, in part funded by the Pioneer Ministry fund, which will help grow pioneer communities and churches that are missional, contextual, ecclesial and formational. The Council and Leadership Team look forward to supporting these new initiatives

and to working across all dioceses to create new communities of faith contextualised for their setting in the years that lie ahead.

## **5. Integration of Pioneer Ministry into the culture and structures of the Church of Ireland**

Everything that has been reported is evidence, and representative, of a commitment to growing pioneer ministry as a ministry *of* the Church of Ireland. Every diocese, parish, chaplaincy and activity of the church was once something that was planted and new. Pioneer ministry seeks to work within and alongside these expressions of ministry as together we seek to reach those with little or no connection to church.

The Bill for Pioneer Ministry before Synod 2024 seeks to recognise pioneer ministry and pioneer ministries within Chapter V of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. This will enable new ministries to be fully recognised as a part of a diocese or parish, and for those pioneer ministries that need to be self-governing with concomitant obligations relating to charitable registration, financial and property management, and safeguarding, will ensure that the Constitution is the proper Governing Document of the ministry.

### **Summary**

It is clear that much work has been undertaken with plenty more exciting activities and work ahead to further develop and grow pioneer ministry across the Church of Ireland as we all work collectively. The Council is greatly encouraged by the shared will to support and resource Pioneer Ministry across all levels of the church – General and Diocesan Synods, House of Bishops, Representative Body, Standing Committee and the Theological Institute – and expresses its sincere gratitude to everyone, and to the Pioneer Leadership Team as together we seek to reach those with little or no connection with church.

For more information, please go to [www.pioneerministry.org](http://www.pioneerministry.org) or email the National Director, Rev Rob Jones at [rob@pioneerministry.org](mailto:rob@pioneerministry.org).

## APPENDIX R

### COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIOCESAN SYNODS AND COUNCILS

15<sup>th</sup> October 2023

To: The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod  
Church House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6  
D06 CF67

Dear Honorary Secretaries,

We are instructed to inform you that at the Joint Diocesan Synods for the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and the United Dioceses of Limerick, Killaloe & Ardfert which took place on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the following private members motion was carried by secret ballot –

“This Synod, while acknowledging the Church’s traditional teaching on marriage as set out in the Book of Common Prayer, believes that pastoral and liturgical provision should be made for those persons of the same sex, whose marriages have been previously recognised by law, and who wish to have an appropriate service of prayer and dedication. This Synod therefore requests that the General Synod and House of Bishops allow some measure of Diocesan discretion in the provision of suitable prayers for use where such services are locally desired and acceptable and where no priest or minister would be required to act against their conscience.”

The votes cast totalled 116; 100 voted For; 12 voted Against; 1 abstained and there were 3 spoiled votes.

Yours sincerely,

Heather Pope  
Tuam Diocesan Administrator

Lorna Sharpe  
Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Secretary

**From:** Ian Walshe (D&G) <[dgsecretary@dublinchurchofireland.org](mailto:dgsecretary@dublinchurchofireland.org)>

**Sent:** 19 October 2023 14:47

**To:** Janet Maxwell <[janet.maxwell@rcbcoi.org](mailto:janet.maxwell@rcbcoi.org)>

**Cc:** Nicole Gallagher <[nicole.gallagher@rcbcoi.org](mailto:nicole.gallagher@rcbcoi.org)>

**Subject:** Diocesan Synod

Dear Janet

I refer to our recent conversations and wish to confirm that at the recent Diocesan Synod on 3 October 2023 the following resolution was passed: -

“These Synods, while acknowledging the Church’s traditional teaching on marriage as set out in the Book of Common Prayer, believes that pastoral and liturgical provision should be made to those persons of the same sex, whose marriages have been previously recognised by law, and who wish to have an appropriate service of prayer and dedication.

These Synods therefore requests that the General Synod and House of Bishops allow some measure of Diocesan discretion in the provision of suitable prayers for use where such services are locally desired and acceptable, and where no priest or minister would be required to act against their conscience.”

Yours sincerely

**Ian L Walshe**

Diocesan Secretary  
The United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough  
Church of Ireland House  
Church Avenue  
Rathmines  
Dublin 6  
D06 CF67

Tel: +353 1 496 6981

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Direct email: [dgsecretary@dublincurchofireland.org](mailto:dgsecretary@dublincurchofireland.org)

Joint email: [secretary@dublincurchofireland.org](mailto:secretary@dublincurchofireland.org)

23/10/2023

### **Diocesan Synod of Cashel Ferns and Ossory 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Proposal submitted to Synod by The Very Reverend Stephen Farrell (Dean of Ossory) and seconded by Mr Shane Reynolds (Portlaoise Union with Ballyfin).

Motion:

(i). “This Synod, while acknowledging the Church’s traditional teaching on marriage as set out in the Book of Common Prayer, believes that pastoral and liturgical provision should be made for those persons of the same sex, whose relationships have been previously recognised by law, and who wish to have an appropriate service of prayer and dedication.

This Synod therefore requests that the General Synod and House of Bishops allow some measure of Diocesan discretion in the provision of suitable prayers for use where such services are locally desired and acceptable, and where no priest or minister would be required to act against their conscience.”

I certify that this motion was adopted by the Synod on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and as Bishop, I hereby ASSENT to the motion being brought to General Synod 2024.

---

Bishop Adrian Wilkinson

8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

To: The House of Bishops.  
The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod.

Dear Sir/Madam,

At our recent meeting of Diocesan Council on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the following resolution was passed. We communicate the same to you on behalf of the Diocesan Council of Down and Dromore as a matter of correspondence:

We have noted with concern that at their recent diocesan synods, the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, and Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe, have requested that both the House of Bishops and General Synod make pastoral and liturgical provision for those persons in same-sex civil marriages, and that local Diocesan discretion is permitted where such services of prayer and dedication may be desired and requested.

The response of this Diocesan Council is as follows:

The Council agrees and affirms the Church of Ireland's teaching on marriage as clearly set out in Canon 31.1, 'according to our Lord's teaching'. We believe that what is proposed is indicative of a departure from this teaching.

This Council believes that the request is incompatible with constitutional and synodical procedures in the Church of Ireland.

Furthermore, this Council believes that any such provision will cause a serious fracture to the unity of the Church of Ireland.

This resolution shall be communicated by the Diocesan Honorary Secretaries to the Honorary Secretaries of General Synod and to the Secretary to the House of Bishops.

Signed on behalf of the Diocesan Council.

The Reverend Adrian Dorrian)  
The Very Reverend Geoff Wilson            ) Honorary Secretaries  
Dr Elizabeth Leonard)  
Mr Basil O'Malley)

15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

To: The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write concerning the motions passed at Dublin & Glendalough, Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe & Cashel, Ferns & Ossory Synods as communicated to Standing Committee (Nov 2023), and further concerning the subsequent motion passed at a meeting of the Diocesan Council of Down & Dromore (7<sup>th</sup> December), that I understand



has been communicated to the Honorary Secretaries for the attention of Standing Committee (Jan 2024). With regard to the latter, I write having contended that a not dissimilar motion not be taken at the most recent meeting of the Diocesan Council of Connor (Nov 2023) on the basis of convictions set out below.

I fully acknowledge the breadth and depth of feeling, and diverse opinions, on the substance of the various motions, and do not seek to impede important deliberation and debate by pedantically calling into question matters of process. I have no doubt that the discussion will be had in some manner, and trust that all voices will have the opportunity to be heard. However, there are some matters of ‘process’ that seem to me to be so foundational regarding who we are as a Church, that to proceed in the manner of the aforementioned motions may be to inadvertently sow the seeds of our own divide.

First, under the Constitution Diocesan Synods are authorised to exercise powers and make regulations for the ‘temporalities of the Church’ (II.32). There is a delicate balance between the role and understanding of a diocese as an area of ministry under the spiritual oversight of its bishop, and the role and function of its Synod in supporting that role through regulations, motions, decisions and appointments for the delivery of ministry of the Church. Within this delicate balance a Diocesan Synod is not empowered however to pass motions or make statements pertaining to the doctrine, teaching, or liturgy of the Church (even if statements simply purport to affirm the doctrine of the Church, such as the Down & Dromore motion). It is acknowledged that the three motions (Nov 2023) defer to General Synod and the House of Bishops as the two bodies that are empowered, in different ways, to determine or make statements on doctrine and liturgy etc. However, in both commenting (in different ways) on the current position of the Church, and in relation to the three motions (Nov 23) requesting a direction of travel that will require some form of change, all motions fall outside of the proper role and powers of a Diocesan Synod / Council.

Second, the Church of Ireland is not governed by the principle of a majority of dioceses, but by a majority of the house of bishops and house of representatives, acting together at General Synod. Moreover, and the point was made clear in the recent review of synodical representation, there are only two types of representatives – clergy and lay. Both are elected through diocesan processes, but representatives are sent *from* a diocese, not *for* a diocese. Dioceses do not arrive with a mandate at General Synod. We do not conduct proceedings by block diocesan votes. We should take great care not to admit, even by implication, motions that create any sense of dioceses acting as ‘provincial synods’, or that sets one (or multiple) dioceses against another. This concern is deepened by the implication in the three motions (Nov 23) that dioceses may have their own autonomy and discretion in relation to liturgical and pastoral provision. In this regard I am in agreement with the second and third parts of the Down & Dromore motion, namely on constitutional incompatibility and fracturing the unity of the Church.

Third, and I have no doubt this would become a matter of considerable debate, the implications of such distinctions being applied according to the geographical boundaries of dioceses on the island are far-reaching, creating pastoral inequalities (in all directions), shaping the culture of episcopal elections and clerical appointments, episcopal oversight and canonical obedience, to name but a few. My concern is not simply that implications may be far-reaching, but that admitting the current motions, in their current form with all of the reservations stated above, is to admit by implication that we may provide for such distinctions according to current diocesan structures. This, I would contend, is highly presumptuous and we should take great care as a matter of principle not to inadvertently admit this.

Fourth, and this is outside of the remit of Standing Committee and will be for the House of Bishops to determine, I would simply observe that Diocesan Synods / Councils do not have a mandate to make requests to the House of Bishops on matters pertaining to doctrine, teaching, liturgy. The processes for seeking the same are quite limited and are clearly stated to include the introduction of experimental liturgies (I.26) or by request of an Ecclesiastical Tribunal (VIII.39).

As stated at the outset, none of the above is to stymie or seek to block, somewhat pedantically, legitimate, and worthy deliberation and debate. That will come, I have no doubt, irrespective of the aforementioned motions

and reservations expressed herein. I have great confidence in the ‘relationality’ at the heart of who we are as a Church for such deliberation to be conducted with mutual respect and regard for one another. However, given all that has been stated I would respectfully request that Standing Committee confirm:

1. That the role of Diocesan Synods and Councils is to exercise powers and make regulations for the temporalities of the church
2. That Diocesan Synods and Councils, whilst properly permitted to exercise such powers for the ministry and mission of the church within the diocese, are not permitted to pass motions or make statements pertaining to the doctrine, teaching or liturgy of the Church.
3. That the Church of Ireland is not governed by the majority will of autonomous dioceses, but by the house of bishops and house of representatives at General Synod
4. That representatives are elected from a diocese and not for a diocese and are not bound at General Synod to represent a diocesan view or motion.

If agreed, I respectfully request that:

1. The Honorary Secretaries of Standing Committee communicate the same to the Diocesan Secretaries of the dioceses concerned.
2. That the communications from all four dioceses will not be put before Synod, or, in the event that they will be communicated to Synod, that the response from Standing Committee on the role of Diocesan Synods/Councils and the governance of the Church of Ireland will be stated.

I wish to reiterate that all of the reasoning above informed my own contention that a motion not dissimilar to that passed by Down & Dromore Diocesan Council *not* be taken by the Diocesan Council of Connor. If this reasoning is misplaced and I am misguided then I shall welcome clarification in order that I might revisit my own judgment on such motions within Connor diocese, and perhaps others in the remaining dioceses might welcome similar clarification.

I have, as both a courtesy but also in good faith seeking to add light and not heat, shared this communication with the four bishops of the dioceses concerned. I never have been, and hope never will be, drawn to procedural pedantry over things (and more importantly people) that truly matter, yet believe the issues raised to be of real substance concerning who we are, and how we might emerge, as a Church.

Yours Faithfully,

Ven. Barry Forde  
Diocese of Connor

## HISTORIOGRAPHER'S REPORT 2024

The year past saw the publication of several additions to the long list of books on aspects of Church of Ireland history. The Church's publishing house, Church of Ireland Publishing produced Michael O'Neill's *An architectural history of the Church of Ireland*, launched in both Dublin and Armagh. David Caron's *Michael Healy: 1873-1941 An Túr Gloine's stained glass pioneer* which is published by Four Courts Press includes much of interest to those concerned with the Church's built history and associated arts. Notable studies pertaining to the Church in specific locations included Séan Farrell's *Thomas Drew and the making of Victorian Belfast* (Syracuse University Press) and Seán Gannon's *History of Protestant Limerick 1912-1923* (Limerick City & County Council) including among its sources the archives of St Mary's Cathedral. Additionally a most beautifully-produced bicentenary history produced in hardback by Gandon Editions Oysterhaven, Kinsale, Co Cork and edited by parishioner Lesley Roberts charts the evolutionary story of *St Mary's Carrigalane, 1823-2023*.

The Church of Ireland also figured in several treatments of a biographical nature: Liam MacMathúna and Máire Nic An Bhaird (eds.) 'Douglas Hyde: Irish genealogy and international impact' in *Éigse*, ancillary vol. 3, and Mary McAuliffe and Harriet Wheeler (eds.) *The diaries of Kathleen Lynn: a life revealed through personal writing* (UCD Press) and Paul O'Brien's *Seán O'Casey: political activist and writer* (Cork University Press). Mention should also be made of a publication from 2022, St James' Parish Church, Moy (diocese of Armagh) by Shirley E. McKay.

Canon David Crooks' works on transcribing the registers of parishes in Derry and Raphoe has long been valued. Similarly noteworthy is the work of the 'Anglican Record Project', initiated by Mr Mark Williams 'for the transcription and indexing of registers and other documents/sources of genealogical interest of Anglican parishes in the British Isles'. Transcriptions provided by the Anglican Record Project relating to several Church of Ireland dioceses are available in the RCB Library in hard copy and online on this link <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library/anglican-record-project/how-the-project-came-about>

At a time when so many titles are competing for the attention of reviewers and for space in scholarly journals, it is valuable that the Church of Ireland journal Search, edited by Rev Canon Ginnie Kennerley, with reviews editor Dr Raymond Refaussy, ensures that much important writing for the study of the Church's history receives attention, while providing opportunities for those who contribute reviews to assess the value of such writing.

All titles mentioned above are on the shelves of the RCB Library whose staff have, as always, been most helpful where this report is concerned.

Dr Kenneth Milne

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION NI - GENERAL SYNOD REPORT 2024**

### **Aims**

The current aims of the Board of Education NI are, to:

- Develop, in conjunction with other churches, a clear and shared vision of education shaped by core values of the Christian faith.
- Advise the Synod of developments in educational policy in NI and represent the Church as an educational partner to the Department of Education and other educational bodies.
- Liaise with other churches within the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) in promoting the interests and safeguarding the rights of transferors.
- Facilitate the nomination of transferor governors to controlled primary and post-primary schools.
- Make submissions to relevant government departmental consultations.
- Engage with the Education Authority, the Controlled Schools Support Council and other sectoral bodies.
- Engage with Institutions of Higher Education regarding the future preparation of teachers for the Controlled sector.
- Seek, in conjunction with other churches, continued curriculum support of the RE core syllabus in schools.

### **Report**

#### **1. Current Issues**

The Board of Education (NI) is concerned by the voices in the media, politics and society which might question the role of faith in education. The Board believes that a school is best served by a non-denominational Christian ethos open to those of all faiths and non.

The Board of Education (NI) support the TRC in their pursuit of a revision to the Religious Education curriculum in Northern Ireland. The Board of Education (NI) endorse the position that Collective Worship is a Christian act and is vital in the retention of a Christian ethos in all Controlled and Church of Ireland schools.

The Board of Education (NI) is concerned with the direction of travel of an imposed part of the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum concerning abortion and sexual reproduction for all schools in Northern Ireland.

The Board of Education (NI) welcomes the appointment of a new Minister of Education. The Board supports a proper funding solution for all schools including appropriate salaries for all teaching and ancillary staff.

The Board of Education (NI) is actively supporting the reconstitution of the boards of governors and encourage all those who appoint governors to do so prayerfully and with wisdom.

#### **2. Education Authority (EA)**

The Rev Canon Amanda Adams and Miss Frances Boyd have served as representatives on the Board of the Education Authority (EA), Canon Adams since its formation in 2015 and Miss Boyd since April 2020. Miss Boyd's term will be completed in April 2024 and Canon Adams will conclude in April 2025 at the latest. The direct involvement of the Church of Ireland in the work of the Education Authority is a practical expression of the church's concern for the moral, social, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and mental development of the next generation.

Established under the Education Act (NI) in 2014, the EA is a non- departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of Education (DE), and as such is responsible to DE for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people. It is the employing authority for all staff in Controlled Schools and for non-teaching staff in Catholic Maintained Schools and is the funding authority for Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools. Since its inception, EA also has statutory duties relating to the facilitation and promotion of Irish Medium Education, Shared Education and the Community Use of Schools. EA also provides and delivers Youth Services in Northern Ireland, both directly and indirectly through its support of the voluntary sector.

Since 2022 the EA has engaged with two major reviews, namely the Landscape Review of the EA and the wider Independent Review of Education. Since the publication of the Landscape Review, the EA has been constructively engaging with DE to develop a high-level action plan to progress the recommendations that are specific to EA, as well as wider systems recommendations. As part of this work, EA has been working in partnership with DE to progress two “end to end” reviews, focusing on School Improvement and Special Educational Needs. The Independent Review of Education did not publish its report until December 2023 and DE is currently considering its recommendations.

Recent reviews have acknowledged that, since its establishment in 2015, the EA, encouraged by its Board, has been on a continual path of transformation. Significant progress has been made, despite challenging circumstances. The EA Board has reviewed its governance structures and procedures to enhance its effectiveness in scrutinising proposals and holding EA officers to account, thus ensuring that the interests of children and young people are best served. As staff are at the heart of excellence when it comes to education and youth services, Staff Development and Support have been priorities and are reflected in a range of professional learning programmes as well as health and well-being initiatives. Listening to and engaging with staff is also seen as crucial to transformed services. Engagement forums are now well established and have been strengthened by the newly formed NI School Leadership Forum. It is unfortunate that on-going industrial action has reduced the participation in and therefore the effectiveness of staff engagement, but it is hoped that 2024 will see a resolution to long standing pay and grading issues for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Transformation, increased cost effectiveness, and efficiency are also underpinned by improved services. The Education Information Solutions (EdiS) Programme launched in 2021, is the largest such programme in Europe. A ten-year programme, it will, when fully implemented, support a dynamic educational environment and delivery of digital services. Significant progress has been made during the year allowing parents easier access to services as well as improved access for schools to HR, payroll, and other administrative functions. All of these have yielded high levels of user satisfaction.

Unfortunately, the EA continues to face huge financial pressures. EA began the 2022/23 financial year with an underlying, recurrent opening deficit which had built up over the preceding years from unfunded, inescapable demand pressures and unfunded pay and price inflation. The funding gap increased during 2023 and EA faced demands to further reduce expenditure by more than £200 million. There is no question that such a reduction will negatively impact every child in Northern Ireland with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and those from socially deprived areas. It was against this background that EA has had to make provision for increasing numbers of children with special educational needs. EA staff and schools are to be commended on how they have worked collaboratively and with innovation to meet the needs of children in these circumstances. The EA Board also faced very difficult and challenging decisions and will continue to do so unless and until education in Northern Ireland is properly funded.

During the coming year the EA will proceed with the reconstitution of Boards of Governors in all schools. The importance of having all Transferor posts filled in Controlled Schools cannot be

overestimated as this will ensure that the church can continue to work for the benefit of children and young people in local communities to help them to discover and fulfil their God given potential.

The Board wishes to thank Miss Boyd and Canon Adams for their steadfast and wise work as members of the EA Board.

### **3. Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC)**

TRC has held meetings with a range of key stakeholders in the education sector including the Minister of Education, Education Authority, Stranmillis College, Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Catholic Trustees Support Service, and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. The TRC has also engaged with local political parties to ensure they keep education at the forefront of their policies.

The TRC continues its role at all levels of Area Planning including: the Department of Education Area Planning Strategic Group (APSG); the Area Planning Working Group (APWG); and the Area Planning Local Groups (APLG). Dr Hamill is the TRC representative on APSG and APWG and Mr Ray Gilbert is the TRC representative on the Southwest and North APLGs which includes the Church of Ireland schools.

The TRC has been working with representatives from the Catholic Church to agree the conditions required for creating Jointly Managed Church Schools. The working group have agreed on an ethos document, a guide to creating such a school and minimum conditions for consideration of such a school. They are currently working on a joint Scheme of Management document and look forward to a real project to work on.

The TRC will be supporting all church nominators of Transferor Governors through the current process of reconstitution. The TRC would encourage all clergy and nominators to ensure that all Transferor Governors positions are filled with the best persons to serve our children and the schools they attend.

The TRC is chaired by Dr Andrew Brown (Presbyterian representative) and the four Church of Ireland representatives are Bishop Andrew Forster, Rev Amanda Adams (Vice-Chair), Rev Catherine Simpson, and Dr Peter Hamill.

### **4. Controlled School Support Council**

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) is the advocacy body for Northern Ireland's controlled schools. Established in September 2016, it is gone from strength to strength and more than 95% of controlled Schools are members.

Dr Hamill is the Church of Ireland TRC representative on the CSSC Board. CSSC continues to raise the profile of the Controlled Sector and the Board of Education (NI) is delighted the impact CSSC makes on schools and wider education issues. CSSC supports schools facing changes and comments directly on the individual development proposals published by the Education Authority.

### **5. Church of Ireland Schools**

The Board of Education NI has been active in the support of Seagoe Primary School in Portadown and The Drelincourt School in Armagh. The Board is working closely with the governors of The Drelincourt to look at their way forward for the future.

### **6. Membership**

The Board was deeply saddened by the passing of Mrs Sue Hogg, who had been an active member of the Board for a number of years.

The Board has welcomed Miss Irene Knox from Clogher Diocese.

The Board wishes to thank Dr Peter Hamill for his ongoing service and commitment to the Board.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

Members:

Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev FJ McDowell (Chair)

Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev A Forster

Rev M Kingston (Clerical Hon Sec)

Mr K Gibson (Lay Hon Sec)

***Elected members:***

ARMAGH	Rev M Kingston Mr T Flannagan
CLOGHER	Rev Paul Thompson (Board of Education only) Miss Irene Knox
CONNOR	Rev A Campbell (Board of Education only) Mr Ray Gilbert
DERRY	Vacant Mrs A Reid
DOWN	Rev C Simpson Vacant

**Co-opted members:**

Rev A Adams

Mrs R Forde

Mr M Johnston

Rev M Ferry

Miss F Boyd

Mrs E Trew

Dr Noel Purdy

Mr I Bell

Mr Robin McLoughlin

Mrs Diane Cheshire

**CIYD representative:**

Mr S Henry

***Honorary Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***

Vacant

***Honorary Treasurer, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***

Mr M Johnston

***Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***

Dr PJ Hamill, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION RI TO GENERAL SYNOD 2024

### Summary:

1. Personalia
2. New Boards of Management (Primary)
3. Training for Boards of Management (Primary)
4. Education Policy Developments with Department of Education
5. National Council for Curriculum Development (NCCA)
6. Religious Education Curriculum – ‘Follow Me’ Development
7. Church of Ireland Primary Management Association (CIPSMA)
8. Church of Ireland Centre, DCU
9. Ukrainian Students in Church of Ireland Schools – Update
10. Report on Advisory Services to Schools
11. Redeployment of Teachers Report
12. Communications
13. Small Schools ‘Cluster’ Project Report
14. Special Needs – Report on the introduction of a new Special Education Teacher Allocation Model.
15. Child Protection Policy Developments (Children First)
16. Report on the SEC
17. Anglican Communion Schools Network Report

### 1. Personalia

Steve Grasham – Mr Steve Grasham resigned as the RI CIYD officer in December 2023 and, therefore as a member of the Board, to begin a new role as a Church Evangelist in England. The Board wishes Steve every success and blessing in his new role.

Margaret Larminie – the Board was saddened to learn of the death of Ms Margaret Larminie, former Secretary of the General Synod Board of Education in August 2023. Bishop Michael Burrows attended the memorial service for Ms Larminie and offered condolences on behalf of the Boards of Education and the Church.

The Board were saddened to learn of the death of Mr Martin Hanevy, retired Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education in April 2023. During his time as Assistant Secretary, Mr Hanevy took a close interest in the provision of education for the Protestant community, which included engagement on the SEC, the patronage of Ashton Comprehensive and facilitating some second level schools entering the ‘free scheme’. The Board wishes to express its sympathy to the Hanevy family and to Mr Hanevys’ former colleagues at the Department of Education.

Ms Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, with responsibility for School Governance, a section of the Department with which the Board maintains a close relationship as an Education Partner, moved to a new role at the Department of Social Protection. The Board wishes Ms Shanley every success in her new role.

At the January 2023 meeting, the Board elected the Rt Rev Michael Burrows as the vice-chairman of the Board, in accordance with Chapter 19 of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

### 2. Boards of Management (primary)

The new four-year term of office for primary level Boards of Management commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (2023 – 2027). A ‘Step by Step’ Guide to the Election of Boards of Management was issued to all schools on behalf of the Board to assist with the elections process.

The Board wishes to thank all who have served on a primary school Board of Management over the previous four-year term and thanks all those who are continuing as board members or have joined their Board of Management for the first time. The management of primary and second level schools depends on volunteers giving freely of their time and expertise. The Board and school patrons continue to be grateful to all who serve on boards of Management. The Board wishes also to take this opportunity to



recognize the important role the chairperson of a Board of Management holds in the life of a school and to thank those who serve as chairpersons of Boards of Management.

### **3. Training for Boards of Management.**

As currently organized, general training modules are produced by the Department of Education to be delivered to school Boards of Management. While the modules are produced by the Department and funding for their delivery is provided by the Department of Education, the training is organized and provided by and on behalf of the school patron with the aim of the available modules being delivered over the four-year term of the Boards of Management. Participation in training is entirely voluntary for Board of Management members.

The modules of training currently provided by the Department of Education are:

1. The Board as a Corporate Entity
2. School Finances and Financial Compliance
3. Child Protection Procedures
4. Health and Safety
5. Staff Recruitment and Appointments
6. Legal Issues – compliance and regulation
7. Data Protection and GDPR compliance

Some school Patrons provide an additional module on Ethos and Faith Development in a school context. The roll-out of training for Boards of Management is done on a diocesan basis and commenced in January 2024. The intention is to deliver all of the available modules in each diocese during the term of office of the Boards of Management. Modules will also be available to view online in due course.

In previous years, the Department of Education training modules were augmented by conferences and events organized by the CIPSMA (who also provided funding for the Department of Education modules to be recorded and made available online).

Schools also have the option of participating in the various webinars produced by some of the education law expert law firms. Bodies such as the NCSE and NCCA also provide online webinars on various topics which can be accessed by Board members.

A new education service called ‘OIDE’ was launched by the Department of Education in September 2023. Oide combines a range of education system support services into one entity and is aimed at teachers and principals.

### **4. Education Policy Development with the Department of Education**

As part of its obligations as a state funded Education Partner, the Board engages in education policy development on a range of topics. This engagement can range from direct discussions and negotiations by the secretariat with the Department of Education, on behalf of the Board; to the Board itself giving close consideration to a particular policy and approving it for implementation across the education system. The Board also has representation at the Primary Education Forum (represented by the Secretary and Ms Sarah Richards, Board member), which is a deliberative forum on the specifics of ‘Forbairt’, the strategic plan of the Department of Education.

Engagement with the Department of Education included the following consultations:

- Consultations on Policy on Participation of Children and Young People in Decision Making.
- Consultation on Irish Medium Education
- Consultation on a Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance
- Consultation Process on Review of the EPSEN Act
- Consultation on Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Strategy
- Consultation on the revised SET Allocation Model
- Consultation on the revisions of the Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour in Schools.

The following policies and issues were considered by the Board:

- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools
- Child Protection Procedures for Boarding Schools
- Teacher Union Conferences Deliberations

- Governance Manual Review
- Review of Teacher and Parental Grievance Procedures
- Teacher Supply Issue
- ICT Grant non-payment

In addition to the above engagement on education policy matters, the Board made formal written submissions to the Department of Education on the following issues (which are available to view on [www.ireland.anglican.org/education](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/education)):

- Submission on School Book Scheme
- Submission on Life Long Learning
- Submission on Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Strategy

### **5. NCCA Developments involving the Board**

The new primary curriculum was launched in 2023. The Board contributed to the development of the curriculum through numerous consultation inputs over the many years of consultation prior to the launching of the new curriculum.

The new primary mathematics curriculum was also launched in 2023 and is currently being rolled out in schools.

At second level, the NCCA is reviewing the Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum. Consultations on that review were undertaken throughout 2023 and it is understood that recommendations will go to the Minister for Education in 2024. It is understood that consultations will open on a revision of the RSE/SPHE curriculum at primary level in 2024. The Board will engage in those submissions. The NCCA has given assurances that any revisions will be child-centred and age appropriate.

### **6. RE Curriculum Development**

The Board was grateful to Dr Jacqui Wilkinson for presenting to the Board on research conducted for her PhD (awarded by the University of Leicester in 2022) on the topic of “The ethos of the Church of Ireland primary school: the student voice”. Dr Wilkinson joins the Rev Professor Canon Anne Lodge, Ms Carolyn Good and the Secretary to form the RE Curriculum Development Group. The Group met a number of times in 2023 to assess the ‘Follow Me’ RE curriculum and to determine how the curriculum might be represented and delivered in the future. The work of the Development Group is ongoing and it will continue to report back to the Board on its deliberations in 2024.

### **7. CIPSMA**

The Church of Ireland Primary School Management Association (CIPSMA) is the network for Boards of Management of primary schools under Church of Ireland patronage. The CIPSMA has provided support for various conferences and seminars for Board members in Church of Ireland primary for over a decade and previously published the Handbook for Church of Ireland primary school Boards of Management. The CIPSMA was particularly strong in advocating for the inclusion of various provisions in the Admissions to School Act 2018 and were successful in persuading the Minister for Education in including a specific provision in the draft Bill to permit the prioritization of children from Protestant faith background in school admissions (a provision which Roman Catholic schools no longer enjoy). More recently, the CIPSMA has provided funding for a number of board training modules to be produced for online viewing, which was of particular importance during the covid-19 pandemic. The Board notes that CIPSMA intends to convene an EGM in 2024. The Board hopes that the members of CIPSMA will look with confidence towards the future of the Association and continue their important work in support of Church of Ireland primary schools.

### **8. Church of Ireland Centre, DCU**

The core work of the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU is concerned with the Bachelor of Education programme. The Centre delivers key components on the B.Ed to the Centre’s students including the teaching of the RE Certificate in Teaching the *Follow Me* programme, delivering Religions, Ethics, Morals & Values modules, the Small Schools specialism and additional supports in Irish. Students on the CIC

B.Ed pathway undertake the majority of their placements in schools under Church of Ireland and other reformed Christian patronage. The Centre also supports programmes for post-primary religion teachers and chaplains.

24 teachers completed the RE Cert course (Follow Me) with Dr Jacqui Wilkinson in 2023. The course was a combination of afternoon/evening online sessions and attendance at three webinars. The course is again planned to run in 2024. Three webinars for schools were also held in 2023 on the themes of Storytelling in RE, Easter resources and Outdoor Learning in RE. A schools' project asked schools to visit their church and photograph their favourite spot. A video was created of the photographs and three schools received gifts of books. Webinars are also planned for 2024 on the themes of RE and the new primary curriculum framework, using fiction to teach about world religions and supporting schools during times of bereavement. A resource was created and sent to all schools for Advent 2023 using the Mexican Posada tradition and a Lenten prayer resource is being planned for 2024.

The Director of the Centre reviews all applicants for the Centre's B.Ed pathway to check eligibility for entry in line with the requirements of the derogation to the Employment Equality Act. The Centre produces information for post-primary schools and deals with many enquiries about the pathway. In September 2023, a new cohort of 1<sup>st</sup> year students commenced the B.Ed programme with the Centre. These students come from all around the Republic of Ireland. The Church of Ireland Centre, DCU, liaises with primary schools under Church of Ireland and other reformed Christian patronage through school placement for its students, as well as the provision of supports, participation in research and sharing of a biannual Newsletter.

The Centre held a number of events during 2023 including two conferences. The *Making Connections Conference* for principals / Boards of Management and others associated with Church of Ireland primary schools was held in DCU All Hallows' on Saturday 7 October. Keynote speakers were Dr Jacqui Wilkinson who presented on her completed doctoral research exploring school ethos and the voice of the child in Church of Ireland primary schools, and Ms Jacinta Regan from the NCCA who presented on ongoing work on SPHE and RSE in the Irish primary curriculum. The morning concluded with a panel of principals presenting on innovations in their schools and communities and a BEd4 student presenting on the Lighten our Darkness by Numbers initiative. *But that's a Whole Other Story* conference told the foundation and current stories of the five Protestant comprehensives marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of four of them. Keynote speakers were Dr Peter Murray, Prof Jim Gleeson, Dr Ken Fennelly, Rev Prof Anne Lodge and Prof Annette Scheunpflug. Detailed reports on both conferences can be found on the Dublin and Glendalough diocesan website and the Church of Ireland website.

## **9. Ukrainian Students**

In the 2023 Report to General Synod, it was reported that schools had welcomed significant numbers of children from Ukraine as a result of the war in Ukraine. This continued to be the case through the year and statistics provided to the Board by the Department of Education indicate that in 2023 (circa) 100,000 people arrived in Ireland from Ukraine and in the region of 17,500 Ukrainian students were accommodated within the Irish education system. Church of Ireland schools, at both primary and second level, have continued to play a significant role in the response to the Ukrainian way by welcoming children from Ukraine into their schools.

## **10. Advisory Service to Schools**

A central part of the role of the secretary and education advisor is to provide advice and guidance to primary schools under the patronage of the Church of Ireland. Through a long-standing arrangement, this advisory service is also provided to schools under the patronage of the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Society of Friends (Quaker). In the 2023 school year, over 1,500 enquiries from schools were replied to by phone or email. Advice to school patrons also accounted for a significant level of the advice provided; as did liaison with the Department of Education on a variety of issues on behalf of schools and patrons. Through a partnership agreement with CPSMA, schools now have access to the advisory

services of the CPSMA in addition to those provided by the education staff in Church House. This new development has been greatly welcomed by schools and marks a significant enhancement of support and resources for school principals and the chairpersons of Boards of Management. It should be noted however, that the provision of this advisory service limits the amount of time available for Church House staff to initiate and develop other projects which may be of benefit to the wider church and also limits the scope for advocacy and other forms of political and social engagement.

### **11. Redeployment Panels and Teacher Redeployment**

The Board of Education RI office operates the panels for redeployment of teachers on behalf of Church of Ireland patrons. In 2023, eighteen teachers were redeployed from one Church of Ireland primary school to another where the numbers of children in the first school were insufficient to retain the allocation of a teacher. In those circumstances, the teacher is redeployed to a school which has a vacancy arising due to the numbers of teachers rising or from a resignation or retirement of a teacher. When all teachers are redeployed and the redeployment panels are cleared, schools can then advertise their vacancies. This ‘centralized’ facility is provided to assist Church of Ireland bishops (Roman Catholic bishops manage and maintain their own panels in each of their respective dioceses).

### **12. Communications**

The Board of Education RI office has begun reissuing Education Newsbrief to schools in the 2023 school year. The intention is to issue the Newsbrief in September, Christmas, Easter and End of Year (June) and otherwise as required. Published editions of Education Newsbrief will also be made available online for ease of reference and wider circulation. It is hoped that Education Newsbrief will become a valued resource for principals and Boards of Management.

The Board wishes to thank Ms Rachael Murphy, Children and Families Board Officer, for her assistance in producing Education Newsbrief.

### **13. Small Schools Cluster Initiative.**

The Small Schools Project is made up of six clusters throughout Ireland, each with a cluster coordinator nominated by a partner body. Clusters are located in Donegal, East Galway, Connemara, Kerry Gaeltacht, West Waterford and Wicklow. Each cluster has a set of unique circumstances, which has enabled them to approach the project from a particular angle. The Donegal Cluster is comprised of four primary schools under Church of Ireland/Protestant patronage and are located between Killygordon and Dunfanaghy spanning a range of 50km. The four schools in the cluster have DEIS status. The main focus for the Donegal Cluster is that of Wellbeing of the School Community. In this, the cluster is looking at the wellbeing of pupils, staff, and the principals themselves. The cluster is working collaboratively on many levels to ensure that the goal of looking after the wellbeing of all is central to the project. Pedagogical activities for students, collaboration and joint professional learning opportunities for teachers and school staff to share best practice as well as principal coaching, curricular and administrative sharing of ideas all make this a very dynamic cluster. The cluster has established a shared drive where good practice is shared. The cluster has developed a great dynamic among the four schools and are finding the support of one and other invaluable. The vision is to continue to grow this support not only among the principals themselves but among all members of the school community through joint initiatives, professional learning opportunities and collaborative pedagogical events. The Donegal cluster initiative is financially supported by the Irish Primary Principals Network and we wish to record our thanks to the IPPN for their generous support of this project.

### **14. Special needs – New SET model**

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has announced a review of the Special Education Teacher (SET) allocation model for schools. The Board gave close consideration to the proposed revisions and was provided with the draft Guidelines to schools by the NCSE for review and comment prior to them being issued to schools. The revised allocation model will continue to involve an assessment of need based on data from the school on three variables: school enrolment; literacy/numeracy levels and socio-economic data. The NCSE has given an assurance that it is not the intention to disadvantage any school with the

revised model and that an appeals provision will also be provided. A circular on the details of the operation of the revised model was issued by the Department to all schools (primary and post primary) in January 2024.

### **15. Child Protection Policy change and development**

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools were revised in 2023. Dr Howard Welch, principal of the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Donegal, represented the Board on the policy development group which revised the procedures. Schools were advised of the new requirements under the revised procedures in September 2023. While a many of the required changes related to operational matters, a number were significant and included new procedures regarding Boarding school facilities. The Board welcomed the revision of the procedures as a further ensuring that the school environment is safe for all pupils and students.

### **16. SEC**

The Secondary Education Committee was originally established by a resolution of the General Synod in to negotiate with the State on the specifics of the introduction of the ‘Free Education Scheme’. These negotiations resulted in the establishment of the SEC as an entity to distribute the ‘Protestant block grant’, under the chairmanship of Bishop Gordon Perdue, late bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. The agreement was, and continues to be, that the grant is paid to parents of children of a Protestant faith to ensure that they received subsidized access to education on an equality basis to those who had access to ‘free’ education. While a number of Protestant secondary schools subsequently entered the free education scheme and no longer charged tuition fees, the SEC grant continues to provide support and access for Protestant children to attend a school of their own ethos. The funding which parents receive (which is transferred directly to the school) is provided from capitation funding which schools in the ‘free scheme’ receive directly from the Department of Education. Through this arrangement, the Protestant secondary schools which are comprehended by the SEC are in receipt of capitation funding and should be viewed as part of an arrangement which makes them analogous to a free scheme school. However, this point continues to be contended by the Department of Education (who designed the scheme originally).

The Annual Report of the SEC is available to view at [www.secgrant.ie](http://www.secgrant.ie). The SEC is a charity and a company (Clg), fully funded by the Department of Education, accountable to the Department of Education and the Oireachtas. Mrs Hazel Corrigan, Honorary Secretary of the General Synod, chairs the Board of Directors of the SEC and Dr Ken Fennelly, is the company secretary. Information regarding applications is available at [www.secgrant.ie](http://www.secgrant.ie) and members of General Synod are asked to encourage parents with a child at primary level to apply for the grant. The SEC also asks clergy and those who are chairpersons of primary Boards of Management, to please publicise the availability of the SEC grant in your school and parish.

### **17. Establishment of the Anglican Communion Schools Network**

Within the 44 member churches that constitute the Anglican Communion, there are a number of official networks on specific areas which bring together Anglicans from around the world to plan and work together on areas of common concern in a diverse range of subjects, including church planting, environment, women, canon law and health and community.

The Anglican Consultative Council has established a new education body for the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion Schools Network is chaired by the Archbishop of Perth, Australia, the Most Rev Kay Goldsworthy and is regarded as an important new development for the Anglican Communion as an outworking of one of the Five Marks of Mission of the Church across the Anglican Communion. The Secretary was appointed as the representative of the Church of Ireland on the Anglican Communion Schools Network by the Archbishop of Armagh, following a request from the office of the Anglican Communion. Further information about the ACSN is available at: <https://www.anglicanschoolsaustralia.edu.au/>.



## Church of Ireland Youth Department

### General Synod Report 2024

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### ***Executive***

<i>President</i>	The Most Rev Patricia Storey
<i>Chairperson</i>	Mrs Brigid Barrett
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mr Edward Hardy
<i>Secretary</i>	Mrs Judith Peters

Rev Aaron McAllister  
Rev Philip Bryson

##### ***Central Board – Executive (above) and:***

Rev Peter Ferguson  
Miss Valerie Walker  
Rev Alan Breen  
Miss Amy Sherlock  
Miss Sally Siggins  
Rev Alex Morahan  
Rev Martin O’Kelly  
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston  
Miss Hannah O’Neill

##### ***Co-options***

Mrs Brigid Barrett  
Mrs Hilda Connolly  
Mrs Christina Baillie

##### **Standing Committee Representatives**

Rev Catherine Simpson  
Mr Edward Hardy

##### ***National Youth Officer***

Mr Simon Henry

##### ***Youth Ministry Development Officer (Southern Region)***

Mr Steve Grasham (resigned December 2023)

##### ***Office Manager***

Mrs Barbara Swann

#### **Executive Summary**

The CIYD team consists of a National Youth Officer, Mr Simon Henry, and a Southern Regional Development Officer, Mr Steve Grasham (resigned December 2023). They are both provided with administration and communications support by our Office Manager, Mrs Barbara Swann.

CIYD launched their Strategic Plan in 2022 for 2022-2025 alongside engagement with The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (ROI) and the *National Quality Standards Framework* - a process of self-evaluation and continuous improvement in refocusing its role and areas of ministry for the future.

*Developments of note in 2023 were:*

- “Exalt” – devotional prayer app for young people in partnership with Missional Generation

- “Fuel ADVENT” – a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the popular FUEL resource, focusing on seasonal readings to help young people focus on regular bible reading habits.
- The continued success and engagement of the Young Leaders In Ministry Fund, established to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Act of Disestablishment and to support Church of Ireland Ministry in the future, for young people aged 15-25 years actively involved in church life.
- NEXT STEPS – A bursary fund to significantly encourage the number of young people and current youth leaders to undertake 3<sup>rd</sup> level qualifications and development within the wider youth ministry sector, supported by the Priorities Fund.
- CIYD National Youth Forum meeting in January, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of a 3-year cycle focusing on mental well-being and faith and church.
- Climate Justice Toolkit launch in partnership with GFS and Tearfund Ireland
- Missional Generation partnership – VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) resources including 3 days of seminars and workshops at Summer Madness & youth group & schools toolkits.
- Partnership with the Irish Health Service to provide accredited Youth Mental Health First Aid training.
- Prayer Journal – linking in with CIYD’s A Day of Prayer for the Church’s Ministry with Young People, the Sunday before Advent, this free journal was created in partnership with Missional Generation.

### **CIYD ACTIVITIES IN 2023**

All our activities continued to support and develop youth ministry with key stakeholders.

#### **Youth Ministry Leadership: Support and Development**

In partnership with dioceses, and in response to their specific needs, CIYD organized regular training and support events for those involved in youth ministry in a paid (full-time and part-time) or volunteer capacity. These events were tailored to the needs and contexts of each region.

- Southern Region – CIYD’s “Connect” programme, training youth workers and volunteers, met regularly throughout the year online, facilitated by Mr Steve Grasham – covering areas such as Mental health, Climate Justice and peer support for Southern DYOs. We were also able to run in partnership with Missional Generation VR & AR training with mobile phone technology and VR headsets.
- Northern Region - The “Connect” programme, partnering with the Irish Methodist Youth Department, continued throughout 2023 with relevant training for youth workers and volunteers. This included Discipling Gen Z with Growing Young Disciples organisation, Talking to Teens about Sex & Relationships with ACET UK and Suicide Awareness training. We concluded our year of events with a “Connect Christmas” event in December with lunch and a Christmas Communion led by the Irish Methodist Church President, Rev David Turtle.
- Annual Youth Workers’ Retreat – We had our annual retreat for youth workers in Manchester, facilitated by the Diocesan staff team in the Diocese of Manchester – it was a great to hear and glean information about the youth ministry and youth projects in the Diocese and spend time away together with like minded folks.
- Summer Madness – The festival continues to thrive at its new home on the grounds of the Portglenone Monastery, Co Antrim. Numbers were very encouraging from the majority of our dioceses and it is heartening to see young people together worshipping and learning more about Jesus. Our National Youth Officer, Simon Henry, was also a host on the mainstage platform at worship sessions each day with the CIYD venue very active with a programme of seminars each day focused on digital discipleship.
- Winter Madness – CIYD was involved with supporting this Saturday evening event in Dublin & Glendalough Diocese in March, with a great turnout and our National Youth Officer Mr Simon Henry on hosting duties.

### **Engagement with Young People**

Whilst most of the work of CIYD seeks to resource Youth Leaders and to be available to assist in Youth Ministry Programmes, where guidance is appreciated and where participation is sought, the organization is also keen to assist directly with diocesan youth programmes.

- National Youth Forum – This annual event, which gathers young people from each diocese to be a voice for affecting change in the church, took place with encouraging attendance from all over the island and led by Bishop Michael Burrows for our opening plenary and facilitation by Susie Mapledoram (Youth Officer for Diocese of Manchester) in the second of a 3 year cycle focusing on young people, mental health and their faith journey.
- Summer Camps – Throughout the summer months our full-time staff supported Diocesan summer camps and events.

### **Diocesan Support**

CIYD is heavily involved in supporting Youth Leaders, both employed and volunteer, in the work that they do with young people across both the Northern and Southern Regions. They have also worked to raise the profile of youth work in the wider church. This has been done in a variety of ways:

- Direct work with Dioceses - CIYD staff supported a range of Diocesan events and resources as well as working with certain Dioceses on strategic development and supporting DYOs. We also host our all Ireland DYO Gathering facilitated by Innovista Ireland in November.
- Day of Prayer 2023 - this well-established Day of Prayer for young people and youth ministry, on the Sunday before Advent, continues to be popular with a resource book available in print and download. It can be used in lots of other ways to develop prayer opportunities in young people, groups and services. In 2023 we were able to offer free copies of another print run of our “Prayer Journal” for young people to compliment the current resource.

### **Resource Development and Communication**

CIYD like to be available for recommending and providing resources for youth leaders and clergy in a wide range of areas related to youth ministry.

- ‘I Believe’ – This Confirmation resource continues to prove popular with both clergy and young people alike and merited a recent reprint. The resource has been written with the content of the Church of Ireland Confirmation Service in mind and refers to elements of the Apostles' Creed, The 10 Commandments and the Church Catechism. It is a 12-week course examining essentials of our faith and offers interactive activities to enhance the learning experience for candidates.
- “Exalt” – devotional prayer app for young people in partnership with Missional Generation
- “Fuel Advent” – our 3<sup>rd</sup> run in the FUEL series, focusing on seasonal readings helping young people focus on regular bible reading habits.
- “Climate Justice Toolkit”- a resource for youth groups in partnership with GFS and Tearfund Ireland
- “Missional Generation” – VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) resources
- “Youth Mental Health First Aid” - Partnership with the Irish Health Service for this unique training.
- “Climate Justice Toolkit” Additions – A Journal for young people was released as a complement to the main resource, as well as an Assemblies & schools talks resource for youth workers and clergy.

### **National Quality Standards Framework**

This process involves self-evaluation of the organization based on various criteria laid down by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

### **Representation and Collaboration**



CIYD staff and Central Board members continued to represent the Church of Ireland on committees of the following organisations:

- Church of Ireland Board of Education (ROI & NI)
- Church of Ireland Council for Mission
- Board for Ministry with Children and Families
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- National Youth Council of Ireland Board - Special Orgs, Equality and Inclusion Network & Membership Review Committee
- Summer Madness Main-stage committee and seminars teams
- Youth Link NI Council
- “Together” Youth Leaders Forum
- Education Authority (NI) Regional Advisory Group

### **CIYD ACTIVITIES IN 2024**

Our staff team continue to work closely with Diocesan Youth Officers and key stakeholders in each Diocese so that CIYD can better complement the work of each Diocese and seek to establish new initiatives and links where appropriate.

### **Youth Ministry Leadership: Support and Development**

- Southern Region – Bespoke training events will continue to take place both to support existing youth leaders and to equip upcoming leaders as well as collaboration with diocese in seeking missional opportunities.
- Northern Region – regular training days are planned for the year ahead with our “Connect” programme in partnership with the Irish Methodist Youth Department. A youth workers’ retreat is planned for May to Ibiza to work with the 24/7 Prayer movement & the Anglican church on the island.
- Summer Madness - CIYD will be running the Connect Café as usual and hosting breakfasts and a seminar stream for youth leaders, developing our partnership with Missional Generation. CIYD is also involved in shaping main stage and seminar streams at committee level as well as having our National Youth Officer, Mr Simon Henry, as one of the mainstage hosts.
- CIYD Youth Forum – CIYD’s annual Youth Forum in 2024 will have a focus on mental health, faith and church, and will be a longer weekend based on encouraging feedback from Dioceses.

### **Development and Communication**

- Churches working together – Northern Region - under new Education Authority (NI) funding streams and criteria, denomination youth departments are actively looking at new ways of working together to benefit faith development in young people across the region, as well as becoming individual Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations to the benefit of funding for parishes and groups on the ground.
- “Holy Habits” – delayed due to the pandemic, CIYD aims to launch a youth group bible study resource in 2024.
- “Instagram” – CIYD will continue to focus on our account - **ciyd\_insta** – in 2024 to improve communications with relevant stakeholders and agencies and to promote our own work resources.

### **National Quality Standards Framework**

The NQSF process will continue with the implementation of a Continuous Improvement Plan for those involved in working for and running the organisation.

### **Representation and Collaboration**

CIYD staff and Central Board members will continue to represent the Church of Ireland on committees of relevant organizations.

### **DIOCESAN REVIEW:**

## **ARMAGH**

Whilst parishes have undergone much change in terms of how God’s work across a new generation has emerged (post Covid), faithful local volunteer teams, parish support by the Rector and Vestry towards youth and children’s ministry and prayerful support from parents remain central to the Good News flourishing through the Church and local communities.

### **Key developments 2022 – 2023**

The work of the Armagh Youth and Children’s Board (AYAC) in terms of its ministry to serve young people and children continues to grow. The AYAC “mini-residential” (The Kilbroney Centre, January 2023) saw approximately 60 young people and leaders enjoy a range of activities and ministry (led by Rev Sarah Parkinson). We are grateful that the weather remained dry for the majority of the outdoor pursuits! Another highlight of the year was the Easter Dawn Service led by Archbishop John on Easter Sunday, 2023. Wonderful seeing so many gather to praise the Risen Christ including teens and their bleary eyed youth leaders who took part in the worship following an “all-nighter”. Summer Madness continues to be an important occasion in the life of parish youth groups including the Diocesan BBQ when busy youth leaders get some respite from the cooking and washing.

### **The Mind Matters Working Group**

The Mind Matters Working Group met on three separate occasions across 2023. A key emphasis of the Group has been in focussing on the mental health experience of young people and their families with an emphasis (as of 2024) on supporting children and teens facing bereavement. These meetings offered parishes in receipt of funding for their local mental health ministries an opportunity to gather informally for prayer, support and information sharing. The Mind Matters Working Group also provided a sounding board for the Youth and Children’s Officer for the Diocese as regards the delivery of the St. John of God/Health Service Executive, Youth mental health first aid programme and a series of awareness evenings across rural deaneries for parents on this critical topic.

### **The Archbishop of Armagh’s “Flourish” Initiative**

Alongside Rev David McComb, the experience of supporting parishes across the Diocese in terms of an inter-generational approach to environmental action has been deeply encouraging. Many of the projects have involved young people, children and families by way of locally driven projects and undoubtedly this mission remains critical in terms of the Church’s engagement with a new generation and their “flourishing”. A summary video as to some initiatives to date can be viewed at [www.armagh.anglican.org](http://www.armagh.anglican.org)

### **Parish Youth and Children’s Ministry.**

Parish based youth and children’s ministry across 2023 has remained varied and challenging. From supporting Rectors as to the delivery of confirmation, to offering training and consultancy to re-established Sunday Schools to visiting new Parish youth clubs and communicating as to youth and children’s ministry resources; youth and children’s work whilst facing many challenges remains resilient and faithful across the Diocese of Armagh. A very grateful thanks for all the work of the Church of Ireland Youth Department, funding and the excellent support of the CIYD National Youth Officer, Mr Simon Henry, the practical wherewithal of Mrs. Barbara Swann and the wisdom, initiative and gentle support of Steve Grasham (Church Army).

## **CASHEL, FERNS & OSSORY**

2023 was a very encouraging year for diocesan youth ministry and we are delighted that we have been able to rebuild much of what was lost during the Covid-19 Pandemic. In January 2023, a small group of teenagers and young adults attended the CIYD Youth Forum, accompanied by Rev Canon Nicola Halford. This was a very positive weekend for the young people as they contributed to the conversation regarding young people, their mental health and what role the church can play in this area. In April we held a very large diocesan confirmation retreat in Newtown school.

75 confirmation candidates joined together from across the diocese for three days of worship, games, outdoor pursuits and a lot of fun. Worship was led by Rev Canon Nicola Halford who focused on particular topics relevant to those who are preparing for confirmation such as prayer, the Church and how we serve God by

serving others. On Sunday morning we joined in the Palm Sunday service with Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, and we were warmly welcomed by Dean Bruce Hayes and the congregation there. Bishop Adrian also joined us over the weekend and he spoke with the young people about their upcoming Confirmations.

In July, we returned to Gurteen Agricultural College in July for our diocesan residential summer camp. After the success and popularity of last year we decided to extend the week to include a junior weekend for young people in 3rd, 4th and 5th class.

We had 35 young people attend Gurteen for the Junior camp weekend and 50 young people for the Senior camp. We are sincerely grateful to Mr Sean Murphy, CITI ordinand, who was our chaplain and led our worship for the week. It is our hope that this time away in Gurteen will help to deepen the young people's commitment and encourage them on their faith journey.

The large diocesan events held in our diocese are organised by the Bishop's Youth Advisory Group. This group of youth workers and clergy meet approximately four times a year to plan and implement our diocesan youth programme as well as offer each other support and ideas for parochial youth ministry. Parishes within our diocese are continuing to rebuild youth clubs and parochial youth ministry following the disruption of Covid-19.

## **CONNOR**

This year showcased another great collection of Diocesan events for young people from across Connor Diocese to gather and for leaders to be equipped in youth ministry.

We ran our Diocesan Sub Camp during Summer Madness to provide support and catering assistance to groups attending the festival. This year we had 12 Parishes attending and many clergy, young adults and Parishes helping to run the sub camp.

Streetreach is our residential, mission opportunity for young people partnering with a local Parish.

In 2023 we partnered with the Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane & Kildollagh, the Grouped Parishes of Ballintoy & Dunseverick with Rathlin Island and St Patrick's Coleraine & St Andrew's Ballysally. We held pop up prayer meetings, ran a kids club, did outreach work and served practically.

Our Launch training day ran in September and gave a great opportunity for children's and youth leaders to be equipped and resourced for the year ahead.

At Connor Takes the Castle we had over 100 young people and leaders gathered for a full weekend of fun, activities and learning about God together. This is our Diocesan youth weekend and we were delighted to have Mrs Millie and Mr Lawrence Bellew speak on the book of Jonah and finding our identity in God.

Thanks to CIYD for their ongoing support of the youth ministry in the Diocese and to all those supporting young people across Connor Diocese.

## **CORK, CLOYNE & ROSS**

The Cork Diocesan Youth Council has had another action packed, exciting year.

In February, the "Great Escape" event took place with a trip to Cork City Gaol (Jail) museum for a tour. After the visit to the Gaol, the group had to make an escape of their own at one of Cork's Escape Room games.

In March, the Confirmation Retreat weekend in Bandon took place. It is a great weekend for the young people to meet the Bishop and clergy.

Easter arrived soon after and CDYC were able to run their SUN Up residential weekend with the group spending Saturday doing activities and on Easter Sunday everyone headed to the local beach for a dawn Eucharist Service at 6am to join Dean Jeffers.

Lots more events were held in May, June and July – Sailing was attempted in Glandore, followed by a day trip to Oysterhaven Outdoor Pursuits Centre.

And last summer, the Diocesan Youth Officer, Ms Hilda Connolly, brought 3 leaders to help in the CIYD Connect Café at Summer Madness.

After summer, they took part in Christain Aid walk in Sheep's Head and stayed over afterwards in Bantry Church Hall that evening, followed by church with Canon Willoughby the next morning.

In October, we had a cinema and pizza night in Baltimore Church.

In November, we had a very special occasion to celebrate and that was the 20-year Anniversary of the Cork Diocesan Youth Council. The celebrations began with a BBQ hosted by Bishop Colton and his wife, Susan, in the Palace earlier in the year for the council members and the young leaders.

Also in November, Bishop Colton held a special service in St. Fin Barre's Cathedral where he commissioned the new youth council and also welcomed the youth who came along. He had also treated the young people to a day of Bowling and Crazy Gold before the service.

In December, the Christmas Shopping Trip took place followed by the movie "Journey to Bethlehem."

The new year started off with a visit to the main branch of the Fire Department in Cork's Anglesea Station. There the firefighters went through all the different types of trucks and equipment and what each one is used for.

Afterwards, they visited the Garda Station, and went through the different types of units within the guards and some of the issues they deal with.

Parish youth groups have been working away throughout the diocese and are attracting big numbers again.

As you can see by the report, the Cork Diocesan Youth Council are very much active and working full steam ahead, with plenty more planned for over the coming months.

## **CLOGHER**

### **Aims & Objectives**

The aims for our Youth Ministry Programme continue to be led by our Diocesan aims and objectives for youth work. These aims and objectives focus on our 5 "T"s, which reflect the Anglican Communion's five marks of mission; Tell, Train, Tend (People), Transform, and Tend (Creation).

### **Youth Ministry Grants**

There are encouraging signs but youth work remains tough. Many of our applications were to the end that youth ministries would be better equipped to offer modern, tech savvy, programmes and presentations, for programme costs, community outreach initiatives, equipment for youth spaces and more. It is encouraging to see youth ministries taking up these opportunities to plan new initiatives and endeavours to reach out and disciple young people.

### **Building Together**

A funding stream was made available to encourage and enable the development of partnership building in Youth Ministry. This promoted larger and joined events, ventures, weekends, outreaches, etc... that would bring together 3 or more youth ministries. The aim was to make possible a larger expression of youth ministry (possibly on a rural deanery level) and encourage networking, the sharing of ideas and resources and include a presentation of the gospel and/or an invitation to consider faith in Jesus Christ and become a disciple.

### **Summer Mission Grants**

A funding stream was made available for those who were seeking help with financing a Missions Trip at home or abroad with a particular recognised organisation. Also finance was made available for young people attending a Summer Camp or Conference.

### **Youth Ministry Projects**

It would be great to hear from parishes who have a larger vision for youth ministry than they might be able to act on – perhaps hindered by financial constraints or know how. As we move forward we want to be open to new ideas, new ventures, and building partnerships that can make our plans happen.

### **Looking Forward**

As we look forward may our eyes be firmly fixed not on changing cultural trends, nor on the discouragement of lower numbers or empty seats, but on Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith. Even his nearest and dearest abandoned Jesus when difficult circumstances arose but that was not the last word. The fire and wind of the Spirit came and changed that tide and turned what seemed like the end into revival.

### **DERRY & RAPHOE**

Our year has been building on the momentum of groups restarting, the creation of the Toolbox resource with SEEDS using the MindMatters COI and Benefact Trust funding and helping parishes in any way that's needed from speaking, resourcing and training.

We've had our own calendar of events including two Confirmation days, attending the CIYD Youth Forum, our DRY Weekend in Gortin Activity Centre exploring the book of Ruth, attending Summer Madness and running our first Young Leaders' Training course incorporating the Serve programme. It's been exciting to see our young leaders graduate from our training course and hear how they are leaders in their parishes and schools. Alongside all of these, we've had our monthly youth event held in the Waterside, Londonderry run in partnership with Exodus NW and the Methodist church. This is open to any young person of secondary school age and we have seen friendships form and flourish, and faith grow.

The big project in our Diocese was launching the Toolbox resource, a mental health programme for all ages which explored the five steps to mental health wellbeing in a practical way while linking it to our faith. We've seen this used across our Diocese in Sunday schools, confirmation and youth groups, Men's sheds, Mothers' Unions and bible studies.

In all that we do we remember the message of Ephesians 3:20 - *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us"*.

### **DOWN & DROMORE**

2023 was a very productive and busy year for the diocese of Down and Dromore, it seen the conclusion of the delivery of an OCN Level 2 Certificate in Youth Work Practice delivered to 10 participants. This is to help the delivery of youth programmes across the diocese and raise up leaders who deliver quality youth work programmes. A huge thanks to CIYD for supporting this project with some funding.

We were delighted to have another number of Saturday Night Lives, we had 2 SNL events. One in Holywood and another in Saintfield, with around 60-70 young people attending both. These were excellent for developing faith and enabling connections across the diocese. Prior to the summer beginning, we ran a Fun Day at St John's Moira, with 50-60 young people coming along and enjoying various activities and a BBQ.

Down and Dromore Diocese had a marquee at Summer Madness, this was there to support the 200 strong group who attended from across the diocese. During July we had our usual Camps, this catered for 120 young people and 20-30 leaders. This was a vibrant and busy programme, with young people being disciplined in the faith encouraged to make friends and new connections.

As a way to support our employed workers and our volunteers, we organised three fellowship evenings (Banbridge, St Marks Newtownards & Knocknagoney) to inspire, equip and engage our volunteers and workers across the diocese. This was a real encouragement and seen over 150 people attend over the 3 nights. There was the delivery of our SERVE Programme once again and this was delivered with 14 young people, a mixture of them came from Magherlin, Moira and Holywood parishes.

There was a celebration and graduation night just prior to Christmas. Prior to the half term break in October, there was the delivery of the Kilbroney Weekend this was delivered with 60 young people from the diocese being encouraged to consider their identity in Christ, thanks to Jack Wilson for so excellently guiding our weekend. Our last event of the year happened prior to Christmas, in the Gathering - where we had our Christmas SNL and an excellent turn out of 60 young people. A huge thanks to the team at The Gathering for hosting us and for Stuart Balmer speaking so excellently on the theme of Christmas Unwrapped.

## **DUBLIN & GLENDALOUGH**

2023 was a full and busy year where we were blessed to see God's hand at work in many different ways. It started with a flourish in January where we hosted a workshop for parents and clergy working with anxious teenagers, youth worship nights, school services and retreats, youth worker support lunches and were part of CIYD's annual Youth Forum.

The next few months saw the production of our Lenten Labyrinth resource with Irish and Ukrainian translations. We also had the pleasure of bringing DGYC and Summer Madness together, in order to run Dublin's first ever Winter Madness. Over 120 local young people gathered together to worship and hear Rev Scott Evans share about the story of the Prodigal Son.

Leaving primary school is a big moment in a person's life. In May we ran three "Moving Schools" events. We invited 6th class pupils and their parents along, and together they talked about some fears, challenges and the excitement of moving to secondary school. A facilitated discussion for parents allowed them to express concerns too, and through it all, we reminded ourselves of the role God can play in it all.

We were delighted to have a few youth groups attend Summer Madness again this year, and summer quickly rolled into term time where we launched the new academic year with our "Big Days Out". These fun packed days are a great excuse to get youth ministry up and running again, and to meet up with other groups.

Autumn was filled with youth groups, school assemblies, youth leader training, resourcing and supporting. Our annual youth worker/chaplain breakfast provided a space to connect with each other and gain training to support our young people.

Finally, our year drew to a close with an amazing worship night run by various youth groups in Wicklow. The focus at it was 'hope', and that is what we are bringing into our next year at DGYC.

## **KILMORE, ELPHIN & ARDAGH**

A survey to get a picture of what is happening across our diocese for children and young people was completed by 15 parishes in 2023 and it was encouraging to see 87% of these parishes having Sunday school or another regular programme for kids. There were several holiday bible clubs in the summer including: Manorhamilton, Swanlinbar, Kildrumferton, Drung and Longford. Clergy and lay-leaders have been involved in assemblies, afterschool clubs, as well as participation in special services for Easter, Harvest and Christmas. There has been an increase in work in secondary schools again this year, including RE classes and youth alpha. Many young people from KEA attended summer youth camps such as Intent, MOVE and Summer Madness. Restart grants for children's and youth ministry supported 7 parishes in our Diocese and we are very thankful for the ongoing funding from CIYD which helps enables initiatives like this. There is a growing need for additional volunteers to lead and assist with youth and children's work in parishes and we continue to pray for God's provision in this regard. In January 2024 three young people from KEA attended the Youth Forum - a very positive start to the year.

## **MEATH & KILDARE**

Youth Ministry in Meath and Kildare has grown in strength in the last year. Largely thanks to links with our Diocesan schools and the success of the Lighten our Darkness initiative in Mullingar we had 26 young people attend Summer Madness and a further 12 attend the CIYD Youth Forum in January. We have found it hard to get people to attend central Diocesan events but have seen greater success in local ministry. Holiday Bible Clubs were held in Naas and Mullingar and there are monthly Youth Clubs organised in Navan and Naas.

Especially successful was '12 Revelations of Christmas'. This was a youth led Nativity ministry in our National Schools and we visited 8 different schools throughout December with students from Wilson's Hospital School. In Wilson's itself the Christian Union has doubled in numbers over the last year and we held an Ash Wednesday Service for the 1st time. Particularly exciting to see is how God is encouraging young people to share their faith. In November we held a Youth-led Songs of Praise service in the school Chapel and in March 2024 we had a weeklong 'Mission Week' supported by members of the Christian Union, CIYD and Youth for Christ.

## **TUAM, LIMERICK & KILLALOE**

The volunteer committee of United Diocesan Youth Council of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe planned and completed a good range of day, weekend and weeklong events. The programme catered for children from age of eight years (3<sup>rd</sup> class national school) of age right up to young adults in mid-twenties during 2023.

**The following were some of the key highlights from 2023**

- Representation at National Youth Forum organised by CIYD and inputs from Diocesan representatives.
- Meeting with Tuam representatives in May to explore the consolidation of the two youth entities into a unified body.
- Joining and working with the diocese of Meath & Kildare at Summer Madness.
- Connecting with a group of Floridians for worship sessions and a disco at our Senior Week Camp in July. Thank you to Mr Steve & Rev Fran Grasham, Rev Arthur Minion and Mr Edward Hardy for leading the wonderful worship sessions.
- Junior Summer Camp, at Ovoca Manor in August, created opportunities for our leaders to explore and develop new skills and talents, including leading worship, cooking, and organising games and activities.
- A standout moment was collaborating closely with Bishop Michael Burrows to organise and execute a very successful Confirmation Follow-Up Weekend in Wilson's Hospital, Co. Westmeath in October. Thank you to Rev Canon Jane Galbraith, Rev Alistair Doyle and Bishop Burrows for leading terrific, thought-provoking worship times.
- Meeting many enthusiastic young people, volunteers and clergy from the Tuam part of the diocese especially at the Confirmation Weekend and Galway Multi Activity Day. With thanks to Rev Alistair Doyle for leading a very memorable service using Haribo sweets to teach about prayer.
- It was great to see very good numbers of participants at many events throughout the year, especially the Mega Christmas Day trip to Dublin which had over 70 people!
- Our dedicated team of volunteer leaders and committee members who continue to give up their time to help create these unforgettable events.

UDYC of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe continues to be very thankful to individuals, parents/guardians, parishes, diocese, CIYD and wider church and community for continued support and help.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH  
DEPARTMENT**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**BOARD’S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with accepted accounting practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Department and of the surplus or deficit of the Department for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Board confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Department and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Department and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



**CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT****INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT****Year ended 31 December 2023**

		2023	2022
		€	€
<b>INCOME</b>			
Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth	2a	250,391	224,173
Funding provided by the Representative Church Body		188,798	163,786
Other Income	2b	6,130	6,600
		<u>445,319</u>	<u>394,559</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Office & Administration Expenses	3	(41,692)	(39,200)
Staff Costs	4	(163,563)	(147,315)
Fees & Membership	5	(1,891)	(1,720)
		<u>(207,146)</u>	<u>(188,235)</u>
<b>Operating Surplus for the Year</b>		238,173	206,324
<b>TRAINING, PROGRAMME &amp; GRANT ALLOCATIONS</b>			
Training, Programme & Grant Allocations	6	(272,490)	(234,757)
<b>Deficit after Training, Programme &amp; Grant Allocations</b>		<u>(34,317)</u>	<u>(28,433)</u>
Currency translation adjustment		(1,147)	(2,040)
<b>Net (Deficit) for the year</b>		<u><u>(35,464)</u></u>	<u><u>(30,473)</u></u>

**CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT****BALANCE SHEET****Year ended 31 December 2023**

2023	2022
€	€

<b>TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS</b>	7	-	321
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	8	83,905	116,935
Cash at bank		8,987	2,852
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		92,892	119,787
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Creditors	9	(45,292)	(37,044)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Assets		47,600	83,064
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>			
Balance at 1 January		83,064	113,537
Net Deficit for the year		(35,464)	(30,473)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance as at 31 December		47,600	83,064
		<hr/>	<hr/>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1. General Information

The Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) is the Church's youth policy making body with full reporting rights and responsibilities to the General Synod. CIYD is responsible for the support and development of youth work in the Church. Training, resource materials, and support and advice for youth leaders, young people and Clergy are available.

	2023	2022
	€	€
<b>2a. Department of Children, Equality, Disability Integration and Youth</b>		
- Youth Services Grant Scheme	221,180	212,673
- Youth Climate Justice Fund	13,324	11,500
- Capital Funding Scheme	15,887	-
	_____	_____
	250,391	224,173
	=====	=====

The funds received under YSGS were applied to supporting the costs of the organisation as detailed in expenditure section of Income & Expenditure Account under the following headings: Office & Administration, Staff Costs, Fees & Membership and finally Training, Programme & Grant Allocations. The full grant awarded and received under the YSGS is recorded in the Financial Statements for both current and prior year.

**2b. Other Income**

	2023	2022
	€	€
Deposit Interest	2,537	695
Donations	1,777	2,429
Programme Grant	1,790	3,476
Sundry	26	-
	_____	_____
	6,130	6,600
	=====	=====

**3. Office & Administration Expenses**

	2023	2022
	€	€
Insurance	3,206	2,891
Audit Fees	5,535	4,938
Rent	16,453	22,100
Telephone, Postage & Internet	3,215	3,585
Office Expenses	10,619	4,808
Depreciation	321	321
Resources	54	192

Church of Ireland Youth Department – Report 2024

Sundry	124	108
Bank Interest & Charges	2,165	257
	<u>41,692</u>	<u>39,200</u>
	<u><u>41,692</u></u>	<u><u>39,200</u></u>
4. Staff Costs	2023	2022
	€	€
Staff Salaries	144,090	131,931
Staff Expenses	16,504	12,385
Central Board & Executive	2,969	2,999
	<u>163,563</u>	<u>147,315</u>
	<u><u>163,563</u></u>	<u><u>147,315</u></u>
5. Fees & Membership	2023	2022
	€	€
General Membership Fees	1,891	1,720
	<u>1,891</u>	<u>1,720</u>
	<u><u>1,891</u></u>	<u><u>1,720</u></u>
6. Training, Programme & Grant Allocations	2023	2022
	€	€
Training Events	97,942	76,338
Programme Events	34,842	18,023
Devolved Funding Grants	120,380	113,703
Summer Madness	5,768	13,677
Youth Link NI	13,558	13,016
	<u>272,490</u>	<u>234,757</u>
	<u><u>272,490</u></u>	<u><u>234,757</u></u>
7. Tangible Fixed Assets	2023	2022
	€	€
<b>Cost</b>		

Church of Ireland Youth Department – Report 2024

At 1 January	99,738	104,864
Currency Adjustment	2,080	(5,126)
Additions	-	-
At 31 December	<u>101,818</u>	<u>99,738</u>

**Depreciation**

At 1 January	99,417	104,223
Currency Adjustment	2,080	(5,126)
Charge for the year	321	320
At 31 December	<u>101,818</u>	<u>99,417</u>

**Net Book Value**

At 1 January	321	641
At 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>321</u>

8. Debtors	2023	2022
	€	€
Cash on deposit held by the RCB	81,892	114,298
Prepayments	2,013	2,637
	<u>83,905</u>	<u>116,935</u>

9. Creditors	2023	2022
	€	€
Accruals	45,292	37,044
	<u>45,292</u>	<u>37,044</u>

10. Foreign Currency transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2023, €1 = £0.8669 (2022: €1 = £0. 8853).



# ***Independent auditors' report to the Board of Church of Ireland Youth Department***

## **Report on the audit of the financial statements**

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### **Opinion**

In our opinion, Church of Ireland Youth Department financial statements:

for the year ended 31 December 2023 have been properly prepared, in all material respects in accordance with the basis of preparation in the accounting policies. We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the balance statement as at 31 December 2023;
  - the income and expenditure account for the year then ended;
  - the accounting policies; and
  - the notes to the financial statements.
- 

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)") including ISA (Ireland) 800. Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Independence**

We remained independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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### **Emphasis of matter - Basis of preparation**

In forming our opinion on the financial statements, which is not modified, we draw attention to the fact that the accounting policies used and disclosures made are not intended to, and do not, comply with the requirements of Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

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### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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### **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Board are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.



In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the Board for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Board's responsibilities set out on page 4, the Board are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Board are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Board are responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at: [http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description\\_of\\_auditors\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_audit.pdf](http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf).

This description forms part of our auditors' report.



*Use of this report*

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Board and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the entity, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

*PricewaterhouseCoopers*

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants  
Dublin  
19 March 2024



## **THE COVENANT COUNCIL REPORT 2024**

The Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Church of Ireland**

The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe (Co-Chair)

Ms Elva Byrne

Very Rev Nigel Dunne

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott

Ven Barry Forde

Rev Clare Kakuru

#### **Methodist Church in Ireland**

Rev Canon Dr Heather Morris, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland (Co-Chair)

Rev Andrew Dougherty

Ms Gillian Kingston

Rev Dr Janet Unsworth (Secretary)

Rev Canon Dr Sahr Yambasu

#### **Presbyterian Observer**

To be confirmed

#### **In Attendance**

Mr Stuart Wilson (Committee Support, Church of Ireland)

#### **Introduction**

The Covenant Council continues its work in advocating for the furtherance of the Covenant agreed between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland. We have welcomed the opportunity to gather in a residential format yearly as well as to hold other one-day meetings as helpful to the business before us.

#### **Areas of Current Work**

As reported last year, the current work of the Council is focused on the various practicalities, opportunities and obstacles faced by both the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland in the realisation of interchangeability of ministry between the two denominations.

The principal areas of discussion continue to be:

**1. *Understandings of Ministry and Episcopate within each denomination and the implications of these for those who move to serve in the other denomination***

There is mutual recognition that under the gift of interchangeability any minister that moves with the blessing and permission, and in good standing of the sending church will minister faithfully and fully under the sole authority of the receiving church. During the past year, we have considered the importance of putting in place some protocols to enable the movement of clergy from one polity to another. Work is continuing on the nature of these, and we will bring recommendations in due course.

## **2. *Covenant Partnerships***

The Covenant Council continues to provide support and guidance to those partnerships and projects that have been enabled by the Covenant while continuing to review the guidelines and protocols required for such arrangements. The charity registration of covenant partnerships is a complex matter, remains a concern to the Council and work continues to address the issues given the regulatory frameworks both sides of the border. During the past year, we have also considered the need to ensure that when changes in clergy take place in local contexts, that this is facilitated well.

## **3. *The nature of co-operation and collaboration at local and Diocesan/District level as well as at a national level (Chaplaincy in further and higher education, prisons and healthcare, formation in ministry, and lay readers/local preachers)***

We continue to look for a wide variety of opportunities for co-operation and collaboration. A long-held aspiration has been the possibility of interchange of Methodist Local Preachers and Diocesan Lay Readers. Given this, we are glad to report that a pilot is being undertaken in the Dublin area by the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Southern District of the Methodist Church. We hope that this exchange will provide a template that can be taken up in other settings.

As well as these discussions, a revision of the ‘Guidelines to the Journey’ booklet is taking place. It is planned that the updated version will be made available in PDF format in the near future. While the booklet provides information on key areas to be borne in mind when working together and when visiting or planning worship in the other polity, it is still hoped that the Council might be in a position to undertake the provision of training sessions. Such training would be of benefit to those engaged in local Covenant partnerships, as well as those who wish to facilitate the more ‘occasional’ expressions of interchangeability of ministry enabled by the decision of last year’s General Synod. The sessions would provide the opportunity for clerics of both denominations to become more familiar with each other’s liturgy and worship styles.

## **Membership**

Since the last report of the Covenant Council to General Synod, the Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu has joined the Methodist members on the Council.

Discussions continue with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland regarding the nomination of a Presbyterian Observer.

Over recent years, the Council has reduced its membership on several occasions. To enable fuller participation and representation from those involved in local partnerships, it is the intention of the Council to grow its membership again in the near future. Measures will be brought to Synod and Conference in due course to facilitate this.

## **Motion to Propose at General Synod**

The Covenant Council proposes the following motion for the consideration of the General Synod:

“That the following be elected as Church of Ireland Representatives on the Covenant Council for the coming year:

The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe (Co-Chair)  
Ms Elva Byrne

Very Rev Nigel Dunne  
Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott  
Ven Barry Forde  
Rev Claire Kakuru”

## COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE REPORT 2024

### MEMBERSHIP (20)

*A Bishop (Chairman): The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe*  
*WCC Representative: VACANT*  
*ACC Representative: Rev Canon Katharine Poulton*  
*ACC Representative: Mr Glenn Moore*  
*Porvoo Contact Group Person:*  
*The Rev Canon Helene Tarneberg Steed (resigned 2023)*  
*The Rev Canon Stephen Fielding (appointed 2023)*  
*An Honorary Secretary of General Synod: Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston*  
*Hon Records Secretary: Rev David White*  
*Hon Secretary: Very Rev Niall Sloane*  
*The Archbishop of Dublin*  
*The Bishop of Derry*  
*Rev Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum*  
*Rev Dr Christine O’Dowd Smyth*  
*Rev Suzanne Cousins*  
*Ms Cate Turner*  
*Canon Dr Kenneth Milne*  
*Ms Gina Coptly (appointed 2023)*  
*Rev Abigail Sines (appointed 2023)*  
*Rev Canon Kevin O’Brien (appointed 2023)*  
*Mr Femi Atoyebi (appointed 2023)*  
*Dr Bridget Nichols (appointed 2023)*  
*Dr Ryan Hawk (appointed 2023)*

### INTRODUCTION

The Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue was first established by the General Synod as the Home Reunion Committee in 1905 and assumed its current name in 2007. The Commission was previously known as the Committee for Christian Unity.

Its terms of reference are:

- To promote within the Church of Ireland the vision of Church unity;
- To promote and support movements in Ireland towards co-operation among the various Christian bodies;
- To maintain Church of Ireland membership of, and participation in, national and international ecumenical bodies;
- To address, in consultation with the Standing Committee, developments within the Anglican Communion;
- To encourage and engage in inter-faith encounter and dialogue;
- To report annually to the General Synod.

The membership consists of up to 20 members elected annually by the General Synod.

The Church of Ireland has a rich network of relationships with fellow Anglican churches and other Christian traditions within Ireland and overseas. It is a member of the Anglican Communion and the following ecumenical networks:

- the Irish Council of Churches (ICC);
- the Irish Inter Church Committee;
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI);
- the Conference of European Churches (CEC);

- the World Council of Churches (WCC);
- the Porvoo Communion (which brings together Anglican and Lutheran Churches); and
- the Reuilly Common Statement (between Anglican and French-speaking Protestant Churches).

As an observer on the Meissen Commission, the Church also has links with the Evangelical Church in Germany.

The Commission on Christian Unity and Dialogue’s three working groups focus on Anglican, European and inter-faith matters.

The **Anglican & Ecumenical Affairs Working Group** considers the Church’s relations within the Anglican Communion and within the Porvoo Communion, and with the Moravian Church. More information on the Anglican Communion is available at [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org)

The **European Affairs Working Group** works closely with the ICC’s European Affairs Committee and the CEC to discuss and consider common concerns for European Churches.

The **Inter-Faith Working Group** seeks to build relationships and encourage dialogue with people from other faiths who are living in Ireland.

The Church of Ireland is in full communion with the other members of the Anglican Communion and Porvoo Communion, the Union of Utrecht of the Old Catholic Churches, and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. Relations between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland are covered by the Covenant Council.

The Commission’s members attend the annual conferences of other Christian denominations in Ireland and hold regular meetings with the Roman Catholic Church and with the Presbyterian Church.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Once again, the following pages set before General Synod members and other readers the vast terrain covered by the CCUD and in particular by its working groups as we seek to support the Church’s ecumenical vocation. It may sound a trifle self - righteous to say it, but for a small church our level of commitment to wider conversations and international ecumenical structures is frankly remarkable. We owe a great deal to our Commission and Working Group members for whom all of this is a time - consuming labour of love. And in this context once again the indispensable work of our Honorary Secretary, Dean Niall Sloane deserves particular praise. How he keeps his co - ordinating eye on so many evolving issues and dialogues is quite miraculous.

It would be easy to single out many other individual members for special praise also, but on this occasion, I really must mention Canon Dr Kenneth Milne who is stepping down from most of his work with us and in particular from the task of steering the European Affairs Working Group. I have at this stage a fairly long memory myself of the affairs and counsels of the Church of Ireland, and throughout my lifetime Dr Milne has always ‘been there’, a unique repository of wisdom and experience. Long before the demanding era of Brexit, and much encouraged by figures such as the late Archbishop Donald Caird, he and others realised that the Church of Ireland must work with other churches to allow the voice of faith to be heard in the European public square, and that opportunities offered in the European treaties for that voice to be sounded must be taken up. To this task over recent years Dr Milne has devoted himself indefatigably, travelling to a myriad of events, networking with key people in Brussels and in Ireland, writing an array of papers, familiarising himself with so many of the issues being addressed by the European institutions. And all of this is not arcane or theoretical work ... European policies affect people on the ground, from farmers to small businesses, in their decisions and their discipleship and therefore the churches must engage with the formulation of those policies. Dr Milne deserves hearty gratitude for being one of those who, in the immortal words of the late President Jacques Delors who died last December, worked tirelessly to give ‘a soul’ to the European project.

One historic ecumenical moment deserving mention is being planned at the time of writing of these few words. In 2022, after a long shared theological journey of discovery, the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church of the Province of Britain and Ireland entered into a special relationship involving interchangeability of ministry by decision of both their Synods. This has been based upon what I think will come to be known as the Armagh Agreement. A liturgical celebration of all that has been achieved together is to take place on March 18, 2024. There will be a single seamless liturgy celebrated partly in St Patrick’s Ballymena and partly in the Moravian church at Gracehill. At the ministry of the Word in Ballymena the archbishop of Armagh will preach;

at the ministry of the Sacrament in Gracehill Bishop Sarah Groves will preside. Commemorative trees will be planted and much fellowship enjoyed. The Armagh agreement brings the Moravian Church (as is already the case with the Methodist Church in Ireland) into a relationship of remarkable closeness to the Church of Ireland in terms particularly of ministry, and this can only be a source of joy and mutual strengthening. The Moravian church may appear to be very small on this island, but we have much to learn from it, not least its cherishing of a non - diocesan yet personal understanding of the historic episcopate which rather echoes some of our own Celtic roots. And, even if they are not quite aware of it, anyone who enjoys a Christingle service is immediately indebted to the Moravian tradition!

Our new enriched relationship is timely at a moment when Bishop Groves is about to take up the presidency of the Irish Council of Churches, and as a result her voice will be added to the membership of the Irish Church Leaders' Group. We wish her well in all she undertakes, and we gratefully congratulate the bishop of Derry and Raphoe on his energetic and imaginative two year presidency of the ICC, which included its historic centenary meeting - a truly memorable event - in 2023 in Limerick.

And at the mention of Limerick, I will as it were set down my pen, and ask you to consider carefully the rich and varied content of the pages that follow.

*Michael Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe*  
The Rt Rev MAJ Burrows,  
Chair

## **ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS**

**Considerations of space allow for only limited coverage of the work of the ecumenical instruments to which the Church of Ireland belongs. Their respective websites (given below) should be consulted for detailed reports. Full particulars of Church of Ireland membership of ecumenical organisations and their remit may be found in the appropriate directory on the Church of Ireland website ([www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org)).**

## **ANGLICAN & ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP**

### *Membership*

*Very Rev Susan Green, Rev Julie Bell, Canon Maurice Elliott, Mr Glenn Moore, Canon Daniel Nuzum, Rev Canon Katharine Poulton (Convenor), Canon Stephen Fielding and Ms Cate Turner (Hon. Secretary)*

The group continues to meet via zoom which is convenient for the scattered membership.

The Very Rev Susan Green and Mr Glen Moore attended the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Ghana. They spoke to the group about their experiences there.

Following publication of the ACC 18 Resolutions, the working group began considering them and plans to conclude this work during 2024.

## *ANGLICAN AFFAIRS*

### *FOUR NATIONS FAITH AND ORDER CONSULTATION*

The Faith and Order Consultation will next meet in May 2025 when the Church of England will be hosting.

### *THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (ICC: [www.churchesinireland.com](http://www.churchesinireland.com))*

*The ICC is an ecumenical Christian body and is a sister organisation of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). The Church of Ireland is a founding member of the ICC, which was established in 1923.*

The 100th annual general meeting of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) was held in St Mary's Cathedral, on 30th March 2023 – the first occasion that the AGM had been held in Limerick.

The AGM was attended by the following Church of Ireland representatives: the Rt Rev Michael Burrows; Very Rev Niall Sloane; Rev Dr Leonard Madden; Canon Dr Kenneth Milne; Dr Catherine Smith; Dr Nicole Gallagher; Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien; Mr David Ritchie; Rev Suzanne Cousins; Ven John Godfrey; Very Rev Susan Green; Ms June Butler; Ms Ros Stevenson; Ms Cate Turner; Mr Joc Sanders; and Mr Glenn Moore. The Church of Ireland's four representatives on the ICC Executive Committee were entitled to attend: the Rt Rev Andrew Forster; Ms Georgina Coptly; Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum; and Dr Bridget Nichols.

The meeting began with a welcome by Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick. The opening address was then given by the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, who spoke of the work of peace and of developing ecumenical relations that has taken place since 1923, and particularly since the signing of the Good Friday agreement, 25 years ago. He concluded by drawing attention to his pectoral cross, which is made of bog oak: the likelihood is that the particular oak tree from which it is carved was growing and flourishing when Columba was in Derry. Derry is a city which is used to being referred to by several names – Londonderry and Stroke City among them – and the work of peace there is ongoing, and shaped by a recognition of the importance of journeying together as the family of God.

Once the business of approving the ICC's minutes, annual report, and accounts, and the appointment of its Executive, was concluded, the Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick, and Killaloe, provided the keynote address, "Serving a 21st century Ireland in peace, reconciliation and justice", in which he set out a series of ten dreams which face the Church in the coming generation. The dream with which he began was one of turning the tide of biblical illiteracy together and to give to those who ask of us a reason for the hope that is in us, and to do so intelligently wherever conversation takes place. Another of the dreams was that of receptive ecumenism – a mutuality of shared positive insight as opposed to suspicion. To adopt and embrace the true possibly is to free us from the tyranny of negative self-definition. For far too long, the Irish churches have defined themselves by looking at others and saying they do that, therefore we don't. However, he noted that receptive ecumenism – walking in parallel – can take us only so far. There is a danger that a journey may become internal and the destination never be reached. the danger of resting in plateau of niceness and feeling that it should be left to others to enter a new place - He challenged the audience to keep the doors open to how the world sees us, and so do our business that those who would like to be our friends are not alienated. He concluded by speaking of a recent conversation class at which he asked the group to suggest a potential 11th commandment, and all of them spoke of environmental concerns. The Bishop suggested that if God were writing on stone now, he would command us to cherish creation and renew the face of the earth.

Mrs Gillian Kingston, of the MCI former ICC president provided the response to the keynote address. reflected on where we have come from, noting that a hundred years ago, the us/them situation was present ecclesially and theologically. She spoke of how, in the 1990s, the revelations of abuse of children and adults that had taken place in many Churches created a shock and revulsion, leading to disillusionment and antagonism towards faith-related matters.

She asked what our vision is for the next hundred years, and used a title of a book published by the Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis, whom many will remember as a long-time editor of the CoI Gazette, which was Vision and Reality. She noted that Scripture has an unchanging place in the life of faith, but what does change is our interpretation of it. For instance, 1 Peter 3 – there are now more slaves on the face of the earth than there have ever been.

She then spoke of the changes in ecumenism and the challenges, bringing up the notion of the "dead mouse gift", which is something that is offered to you with great pride, but which you don't in the least want to take. To avoid offering our ecumenical partners a dead mouse, we must actively engage in conversation with each other about the things that divide us. We cannot ignore these things and leave it to those who come after us. And we must include people of other faiths with us and beside us, so that our ecumenism is as wide as possible. Can we complain that our church pews and chairs are empty, if we're not welcoming and hospitable? She concluded by noting that certain tasks are assigned to us by the circumstances in which we live, but that our constant task is the unfinished and continual work of peace.

Thanks to the Dean of St Mary’s for his generous hospitality, and to all who helped on the day to ensure that this stimulating and thought-provoking event ran smoothly.

Catherine Smith  
March 2023

*IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING (IICM: [www.churchesinireland.com](http://www.churchesinireland.com))*

*The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) was established in 1973 as a forum between ICC's member churches and the Roman Catholic Church. The current Co-Chairs are the Most Rev Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick, and the Rt Rev Andrew Foster, Bishop of Limerick, President of the Irish Council of Churches.*

The thirty-third Irish Inter Church Meeting took place on Thursday 19, October to Friday 20, October in Dromantine Conference Centre, Newry. The theme for the meeting was “Our Reconciling Vision of Hope: Fifty years since the Ballymascanlon Talks.” After a warm welcome from co-chair Bishop Andrew Forster, Dr Ian Ellis set the context for the delegates by discussing the priorities, challenges and achievements of the early years. In honour of the centenary of the Irish Council of Churches and the fiftieth anniversary of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, Dr Ellis was invited to write a book to reflect the history of the churches across the island working together. Dr Ellis used some of the themes highlighted in his book, *Called to be One*, to inspire the delegates through underscoring the influential role churches played in stepping across deep divisions. Dr Ellis challenged delegates to question whether we are doing as much as we can, and if our actions speak louder than our words.

The keynote speaker, Fr Martin Browne, from the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, explored current dynamics in international inter-church relations. Fr Browne shared how recent developments in international ecumenical work have influenced what is happening in the Irish context. Browne argued that on the island of Ireland, the story of ecumenism has been intertwined with the story of the troubles. Although reconciliation is still needed, the relative peace of the past years has made it easier for churches to relate to each other as ecumenical partners. Yet new member churches are less familiar with the history of the troubles and we must be cognisant of that point in relating to them. Browne argues that although reconciliation remains a necessity, the vision for the future must also include unity, and that the verse “that they will all be one” remains behind all our hopes and prayers. Browne stated that the Catholic Church is committed to ecumenical work and he demonstrated this commitment by highlighting an extensive list of initiatives that the Catholic Church is currently involved in.

In the afternoon, a roundtable workshop took place which offered the delegates an opportunity to reflect on their vision for inter-faith relations in Ireland. In the evening, a worship service was conducted giving thanks for the Ballymascanlon Talks and the creation of IICM.

Day two of the conference began with morning prayer led by the Lutheran Church. In the morning session, Rev Dr Donald Watts (Presbyterian Church in Ireland) shared some of the positive accomplishments of IICM and highlighted many of its initiatives over the years. Dr Watts argued that ecumenism means being involved in a dynamic movement rather than a static structure. He shared how a review of IICM led to the development of its vision, purpose and values and how that in turn led to the development of its logo and strapline of “Churches in Ireland - Connecting in Christ” which links the work of IICM and ICC.

A panel consisting of Bishop Sarah Groves (Vice President of ICC), Rev Dr Heather Morris (Secretary of Conference for the Methodist Church in Ireland) and Dr Damian Jackson (IICM joint secretary), explored the current challenges to our vision of a more connected Church in Ireland, and offered opportunities for closer relationships and collaboration. In this session the aspect of hospitality was discussed as a vehicle to building trusting relationships.

The conference ended with a facilitated discussion to examine how we could build upon and strengthen our unity in diversity over the next 20 years. The conference seemed to be well received by the delegates and generated thought-provoking discussion.



*Gina Copty  
October 2023*

*CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI: [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk))*

*Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is an ecumenical organisation. The members include most of the major churches in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. It was formed on 1 September 1990, as the successor to the British Council of Churches, and was formerly known as the Council of Churches of Britain and Ireland.*

Annual General Meeting  
Monday 2nd October 2023  
Online via Zoom

1. 10.00 am Welcome and Opening

Reflection was given by Graham Sparkes drew on Micah and concluded with prayers for the world. Andrew Forster gave a presentation about the anniversary celebrations of ICC including the symposium held in DCU and the launch of Ian Ellis' book. Liz Harris spoke about her interfaith work especially in Sri Lanka. There, the land especially, is the focus of interreligious and interethnic tensions. The aim of her most recent visit was to assess the relevance of current projects.

2. 10.30 am AGM

Special resolutions included that 'Friends of the Holy Land', 'Sports Chaplaincy' and 'Faith in Later Life, were approved as a Class C member (Bodies in Association) of the Company.

3. 11.00 am General Secretary's Report

Nicola Brady expanded on the CTBI strategic plan which outlines priorities that have been identified, in consultation with member churches, for the period 2023 to 2027. It centres on five priority areas of focus: Strengthening ecumenical engagement in Britain and Ireland; Working together for mission and the common good; Healing society's fractures: identities, borders and nationalities; Working for Global Peace and Justice; and Promoting Ethical and Inclusive Leadership. The full document, 'Endurance: Inspired by Hope', is available here: <https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CTBI-Strategic-Plan-2023-2027-FINAL.pdf>

4. 11.45 am Break

5. 12.00 pm Roundtable: Inter Faith Relations and Public Life

Topic: Across the four nations of Britain and Ireland we have witnessed significant changes in the place of religion and public life. Increasingly secularized, our societies are becoming consciously diverse in terms of religious affiliation. Religious pluralism is now a reality for many of our communities with people of non-Christian faith being increasingly visible in public life. Therefore, in light of these developments (including a Hindu Prime Minister for the UK and a Muslim first minister in Scotland) are we now a society at ease with religious diversity or are there still significant challenges to overcome? We shall explore this question through a panel drawn from different faith traditions – Hindu, Jewish and Muslim.

The Jewish speaker said that true interfaith work is about having the courage to explore differences and not just commonalities. This requires a great deal of respect on all sides, but it opens us to the possibility of mutual enrichment.

The Muslim speaker noted that many people are wary of religion while most people are at ease with multiculturalism. This is something for religious people to ponder.

The Hindu speaker encouraged the need to develop places of reciprocal hospitality.

6. 1.00 pm Close

*David White,  
October 2023*

*CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC: [www.ceceurope.org](http://www.ceceurope.org))*

*The Conference of European Churches (CEC) was founded in 1959 to promote reconciliation, dialogue and friendship between the churches of Europe at a time of growing Cold War political tensions and divisions.*

*CEC is a fellowship of some 116 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 National Council of Churches and Organisations in Partnership.*

### **Report on General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches**

**Tallinn, Estonia**

**15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

General Assembly website: [www.2023cecassembly.org](http://www.2023cecassembly.org)

#### **The Conference of European Churches (CEC)**

CEC is a fellowship of some 113 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Old Catholic and other reformed churches from countries around Europe, plus 40 National Councils of Churches and partner organisations. It brings together different Christian denominations and of all ages (the main Assembly was preceded by a Youth Assembly) to build bridges between smaller and larger churches and people of all European nations and beyond Europe to provide a valuable platform for dialogue.

CEC priorities are Peace, Justice and Human Rights and it works on many issues. These include dialogue with the European political institutions, peace building initiatives, reconciliation, economic and ecological justice, employment and social issues, bioethics, education for democratic citizenship, migration and asylum and EU policy and legislation. CEC is based in Brussels and is an international non-profit association.

CEC was founded in 1959. It was created as a response to the fragmented and divided Europe of the 1940's and 1950's and the need to surmount political divisions. At this time, a small group of church leaders in Europe, East and West, began to enable churches of Europe to become instruments of peace and understanding. These efforts were formalised when a full-time secretariat was established in April 1968 following CEC's fifth General Assembly in 1967. The Assembly now takes place every five years and this year's Assembly was the 16<sup>th</sup>.

The assembly was held in the beautiful city of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Tallinn is a coastal city that contains one of the most intact medieval walled cities in Europe and yet is surrounded by a flourishing tech industry. The assembly itself met in The Creative Hub. This building was formerly the Tallinn City Central Power Station (1913). After a long hiatus, this stunning industrial complex was renovated and then re-opened in 2015 as an all-purpose creative and events centre. This centre, which cleverly blends the old with the new, was the venue for the main events held during the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2017.

#### **The General Assembly**

The assembly was kindly hosted by the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and The Orthodox Church of Estonia had as its overall theme "Under God's blessing – shaping the future". Interestingly, with a population of 1.3 million, organised religion in a minority in Estonia. In the words of one speaker, '[Estonians] love God but not organised religion as much'.

Ireland was represented by the Rev Helen Freeburn (Presbyterian Church in Ireland) and myself. Dr Nicola Brady (CTBI) was also present.

The timetable for the assembly was extensive and demonstrated strong civic engagement with our host city. The days were interspersed with worship, business sessions, networking, plenaries, talks and workshops.

The war in Ukraine overshadowed nearly all of the proceedings and it was difficult to forget just how close the assembly was meeting to the Russian border – this was highlighted by the fact that a cruise ship was berthed in the harbour (within eye shot of the venue) unable to travel to St Petersburg (a natural stopping point on a tour of this region of the Baltic).

On the first night of the assembly, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church hosted a special dinner at the new Cruise Terminal Building where delegates were generously entertained in beautiful surroundings, including some traditional Estonian folk music. I was seated next to the Irish Ambassador to Estonia (James

Sherry) who hails from county Monaghan and it was interesting to learn more about the country from an Irish perspective.

### **Business Sessions**

These sections contained the usual round of committee business, what was unusual was the significant input from members and the tedious election process that CEC has in place.

### **Speakers**

There were a broad range of speakers from theological, academic and political fields. Among them were the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams; His Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch; German sociologist, Prof. Dr Hartmut Rosa and Belarusian politician, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

A number of the speakers at the assembly spoke about Europe and indeed, the churches in Europe, being at a cross-roads and there were comments such as:

- *Europe needs to be a space of resonance*
- *The Churches should look at what they have, not what has been lost*
  - *Democracy needs ears as well as a voice.*
- *Europe is not the same at the EU and we need to remember this in our discourse*
  - *Churches are here to offer hope.*

### **Ukraine**

As already reported, the situation in Ukraine dominated the proceedings. There was a dedicated plenary which included speakers from church leaders in Ukraine. Speakers shared first hand experiences of the on-going crisis in Ukraine, and I believe this part of the assembly was one of the most profound and solemn. Some insights shared included:

- *Genocide has come to Ukraine*
  - *A just peace cannot be achieved by giving up the truth*
  - *Only respect for rights of minorities makes a country strong*
- *The historic links between Ukraine and Russia make the war even more traumatic*
- *The prevailing narrative in Ukraine is ‘never forgive, never forget’; therefore, the churches have a role to play in talking about reconciliation*

In addition to the latter comment, it was highlighted of the importance of educating the younger generation ‘post-war’ not to harbour hatred but to move towards reconciliation. Perhaps the Northern Ireland experience and the Irish Council of Churches has something beneficial to add to this piece of work?

### **Conclusion**

The Assembly is perhaps a hybrid between an Ecumenical parliament and a Christian convention. Whilst the primary work of the assembly centres around CEC business I felt there was some clever timetabling to keep delegates engaged.

The Assembly was a positive experience as delegates shared ecumenical fellowship and hospitality in witnessing to Christ. It was enriching to worship and witness with diverse Christians across Europe and listen to and learn from their experience. I wish to thank CCUD and the Church of Ireland for allowing me the opportunity to attend.

### **Appendix**

Message from the CEC General Assembly, Tallinn, June 2023

**“Churches engaged in shaping the future of Europe must be imaginative and brave, confident not arrogant, listening not just speaking, trusting not anxious, hopeful not merely optimistic.” Over 300 participants of the 2023 CEC General Assembly, representing CEC Member Churches from across Europe, have come up with the following assembly message, inspiring the church fellowship.**

Christians from across Europe met in Tallinn, Estonia, for the 2023 General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches with the theme: Under God’s Blessing – Shaping the Future. The assembly was reminded

that to be blessed is to be freed from anxiety about our own security or control – liberated from imprisonment within our own history or narrative. It is this notion of blessing that guides the churches of CEC in their vocation in a conflicted world.

The keynote speakers reminded the churches that theology is public, that we Christians must embrace the challenge of contributing to an increasingly secularised political discourse. Churches engaged in shaping the future of Europe must be imaginative and brave, confident not arrogant, listening not just speaking, trusting not anxious, hopeful not merely optimistic.

It is because of this vocation that churches, united in Christ and drawn by the biblical witness, are necessarily challenged about developments on European soil. This compels us to face the challenges of the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, global migration, rising nationalism under a populist banner, challenges to human rights, broader conflicts and outright war. And all these phenomena feed into and from each other: for example, the eco-crisis damages food sustainability for populations which, as a result of conflict over diminishing access to resources, migrate to seek a better life.

In this context, the assembly recognised its obligation under God to hear the appeal of young people whose future increasingly feels to have been betrayed by those who also were young once. We recognise our corporate responsibility for contributing to the eco-crisis and climate injustice which are tied inextricably with economies that seek limitless growth. God’s creation cries out for different priorities.

This assembly has been clear about the following:

- The assembly condemns unequivocally Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine and the devastation of life, territory and international relationships – the violent breakdown of the post-war settlement in which the rule of law was paramount. The assembly heard powerful witness by those directly affected and a strong appeal for prayer and practical accompaniment into the future. The assembly stands alongside victims of violence in this war.
- We are concerned about the role of some churches in promoting this appalling conflict, and regret the impact of this divergence on Christian witness on the continent of Europe. While meeting in Tallinn a new chapter in potential European conflict opened up: nuclear weapons were moved into Belarus where democracy and non-violent resistance itself has been suppressed under the current regime. We deeply regret this move.
- The ongoing blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan continues to bring injustice and suffering to people who find themselves oppressed on account of their contested identity and territory.
- Freedom of religion and belief is under serious threat in some parts of Europe - for example, Christian minorities under attack, sacred sites and places of religious heritage being destroyed, and lands being occupied.
- The human cost of global migration, not least on the borders of Europe is enormous. While we met we were shocked to hear that nearly 500 people had drowned off the coast of Greece. CEC and CCME have called for a day of prayer and vigil on 25 June 2023.

Some of these issues are addressed by CEC under the framework of Pathways to Peace.

CEC was originally set up to create a space in which Europeans of diverse history, polity and ethnicity could meet together because of and despite differences of perspective and experience. That vocation continues to apply today – especially given current real and violent divisions in Europe. Christians are inevitably united in Christ, enriched by diversity, and are called to witness to that unity in expressing (in word and action) their concern for those without power, who suffer injustice at the hands of others. This also means holding to account all who inflict injustice on others.

As some of the political movements of our age continue to withdraw behind the securities of borders and narrowly-defined identity, Christian churches do not have the luxury of walking apart from each other. Our conversations, rooted in mutual love and grace, must characterize our priorities in the years to come. Churches

must heed the call of God in Jesus Christ to be agents of hope, prepared publicly to bear the scars of unjust suffering. This means holding out without fear the reconciling life of resurrection hope in Christ who calls us to take responsibility, under God’s blessing, for shaping the future.

*Niall Sloane,  
June 2023*

*WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC: [www.wcc-coe.org](http://www.wcc-coe.org))*

*The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a worldwide inter-church organization founded in 1948. Its 349 members today include the Assyrian Church of the East, the Oriental Orthodox Churches, most jurisdictions of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, the Old Catholic Church, Anglican Communion, most mainline Protestant churches (such as the Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian and Reformed) and some evangelical Protestant churches (such as the Baptist and Pentecostal).*

The 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Council of Churches is due to be held in 2030.

*MEISSEN (Meissen: [www.europe.anglican.org/ecumenical-information-and-links/agreements-and-partners](http://www.europe.anglican.org/ecumenical-information-and-links/agreements-and-partners))*

*The Church of England’s relations with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) are based on the Meissen Agreement, signed in 1991. The Church of Ireland is an observer at meetings and is currently represented by the Rev Canon Maurice Elliott (Church of Ireland).*

Meissen Commission Meeting 2023  
Church Of England/Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)  
Report of the Celtic Churches Observer  
(Representative: Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (Church of Ireland))

The 33rd Meeting of the Meissen Commission,  
Loccum, near Hannover, 12-15 October

The Meissen Commission exists to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the Church of England (COE) and the Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (EKD), with five members representing a range of sectors from each tradition. The others who attend Commission meetings are observers on behalf of the Anglican/Episcopal Churches in Germany, the German-speaking Churches in Great Britain, and the three Celtic Anglican Provinces.

This year’s meeting was held in the historic setting of the Predigerseminar in Loccum, a short distance outside Hannover. The seminary was originally a monastery dating back to 1163 and, in what is surely an almost unique arrangement, the Lutheran bishop and Meissen Co-chair, Ralf Meister, is the Abbot. With its magnificent architectural fusing of ancient and modern, the facility at Loccum is genuinely impressive and was recently refurbished at a cost in the region of €20 million. The suite of buildings serves a variety of purposes, including formational training for ordinands on completion of their prescribed university course, a pilgrimage/retreat centre, and a diocesan training hub.

In keeping with the current focus on receptive ecumenism, a major aspect of the Meissen Commission’s work is to enable each church simply to learn more about the other. In addition to the reception of reports, the agenda typically allows the host church to invite guest speakers from range of disciplines. This year the programme began with a fascinating discourse concerning ‘Liberal Democracy and its Opponents’ by Professor Philip Manow from the University of Bremen. Dr Manow broached the issue of populism, suggesting that such movements appear increasingly to defy precise categorisation according to the normal rules of social and economic policy - in German they are what he described as ‘rinks und lechts’, a play on leaning simultaneously towards both ‘left’ and ‘right’. He noted how populist groups can be difficult to control for those in authority – governments who may be challenged by them ‘may find it hard to be responsive, yet they still have to be responsible’. The other noteworthy contribution was an address given by Dr Horst Gorski, a theologian based in Hamburg. Gorski introduced the idea that religious belief contains both ‘hot’ and ‘cold’

aspects – in other words, for faith to be real there must on the one hand be an element of ‘passionate’ individual investment, yet it is precisely because of such deeply grounded personal commitment that religious adherence carries the potential to damage both self and others. On a more upbeat note, Gorski also described the church ‘als Schule des Christentums’, ‘as a School of Christianity’. Faith must be nurtured, and the most natural place for this to occur is during the Sunday gathering. Nevertheless, whilst such nurture must include catechetical instruction, the church cannot lose sight of the fact that its teaching of the faith should always seek to be socially practical. As global Anglicanism continues to make its way through the current season of ‘intentional discipleship’, German Lutheranism is traveling in very much the same direction.

Unsurprisingly, the shared stakeholder conversations disclosed many common threads for all the churches – the climate emergency, the war in Ukraine, the consequences for church life of the dramatic rise in living costs across Europe. Of import around all the various contexts is the current reduction in the number of vocations to ordained ministry - the Church of England reported that its quota of students in training was down by approximately 40% - and there continue to be shared concerns in relation to safeguarding and the devastating impact of historical abuse cases. More specifically, the EKD noted that there had been internal tensions between churches of the former West Germany and those in the former East. The presenting issue had to do with church members in East Germany being deeply opposed to Germany’s decision to offer military support to Ukraine on account of their lived experience of Soviet times. For its part the COE voiced concern in relation to its substantial conservative constituency following the General Synod vote to proceed with ‘Living in Love and Faith’, and the EKD was keen to understand the COE’s position vis-à-vis the recent GAFCON meeting in Kigali. One final theme which generated significant discussion arose from a comment in the report of the Scottish Episcopal Church which referenced a project to explore how ‘trauma leads to polarisation’. Even a cursory appraisal of so many aspects of life for the various churches and their respective societies disclosed just how much truth there is in such an assertion.

The Commission ended with agreement as to its future focus and with an update on plans for the next Theological Consultation in February 2024. This will again address the challenge of full interchangeability of ministries between the COE and the EKD. Having failed to make progress with re-visiting historic formularies, the impetus is now towards ‘pragmatic local solutions’. A rigid interpretation of the ‘historic episcopate’, even ‘as locally adapted’, would appear to remain an Achilles’ heel for the COE when it comes to certain ecumenical dialogues.

*Maurice Elliott,  
October 2023*

*REUILLY (Reuilly: <http://strasbourginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Reuilly-Declaration.rtf>)  
The Reuilly Common Statement calls for a closer relationship between the Anglican Churches of Britain & Ireland and the Elgise Réformée (a grouping of four French Protestant Churches, namely the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of France and the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Alsace and Lorraine).  
(Observer: Rev Dr Christine O’Dowd-Smyth (Church of Ireland))*

The next meeting of the Reuilly contact group is due to be held in February 2024 in Leicester.

*COMMUNITY OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EUROPE (CPCE: <https://www.leuenberg.eu/>)  
The CPCE is the umbrella organisation of the protestant churches. 94 lutheran, methodist, reformed and united churches from over thirty countries in Europe and South America belong to it. With that the CPCE represents altogether around 50 million Protestants. The CPCE exists thanks to the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973*

The next General Assembly of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe is due to take place in 2024

*PORVOO ([www.porvoocommunion.org](http://www.porvoocommunion.org))  
The Porvoo Communion of Churches, (with members from the Lutheran Churches in the Nordic and Baltic countries and the Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland and on the Iberian Peninsula).*

*(Archbishop Michael Jackson, Anglican Co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group  
The Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, Church of Ireland Contact Person)*

The Porvoo Communion, which unites the Anglican Churches in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Iberian Peninsula and Lutheran Churches in Nordic countries, the Baltic, and Great Britain, met in October 2023 in Madrid for its Thematic Consultation, ‘Life in the Eucharist’.

The meeting was hosted by Rt Rev Carlos López Lozano, Bishop of Madrid of the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church, and member of the Porvoo Contact Group. Representatives from the Church of the Faroe Islands were warmly welcomed as they attended in order to initiate a process towards becoming members of the Porvoo Communion in the Church’s own right, having previously been connected through the Church of Denmark.

The consultation started with a Eucharist celebrated in the Cathedral of the Redeemer, led by Bishop López Lozano, and the preacher was the Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Anglican co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group.

The participants were introduced to several aspects of the Spanish context in the opening session. Firstly, a paper was given explaining the history and theology behind the Mozarabic eucharistic liturgy used in the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church, and that the participants had experienced the previous evening. Thereafter, the situation of minority churches in a majority Roman Catholic country and the resulting ecumenical landscape were described in several contributions.

Continuing themes in the first session, the effects of secularisation on the eucharistic life in the churches in Spain was discussed in the second session. Anglican and Lutheran perspectives on eucharistic life were also presented, touching on the challenge of relating this to everyday concerns of people inside and outside the church.

On the second day, the question of what it means to live a sacramental life in communion in 21st century secularised Europe was explored from different geographical contexts, with contributors from Portugal, Estonia, Scotland, and Finland, and followed by general discussion. Most member churches of Porvoo reflected that they work in secular contexts, and sharing sacramental life requires meeting our communities where they are, and therefore being open to changing our own sacramental practice. The sacramental communion within Porvoo must inspire common sacramental life and a consequent commitment to the suffering realities of the world, such as the climate crisis, social deprivation, and people living at the margins. In the afternoon, participants witnessed the celebration of the Spanish National Day as they travelled to Toledo to experience the ‘city of three religions’. The Metropolitan Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain (Roman Catholic Church), Most Reverend Monsignor Francisco Cerro Chaves, welcomed the group to Toledo Cathedral, where blessings and messages of friendship were exchanged.

The consultation gave opportunity for interesting discussion and reflection about what the Eucharist means for the life of the churches in the Porvoo, both within their own contexts and together as a communion. Future major gatherings in the Porvoo Communion will include a church leaders’ consultation on environment and eschatology in Sweden in 2024, and a theological conference in Wales in 2025 marking the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, and the Primates’ Meeting in 2026.

The Porvoo Contact Group also discussed transitivity and opportunities regarding recognition of those ministering in Lutheran and Anglican churches outside the Porvoo communion and in particular, North America. The online Spring meeting in 2024 will further discuss the possibility of extending transitivity of ordained ministries.

The Church of Ireland was represented in Madrid by:  
Archbishop Michael Jackson, Anglican Co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group  
The Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, Church of Ireland Contact Person

Work plan for the next three years:

October 2024: Church Leaders' Consultation in Sigtuna, Sweden.

Environment and Eschatology - Hope for Future Generations.

October 2025: Theological Conference in Wales.

The 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed (Council of Nicaea 325)

October 2026: Primates' Meeting – York, England.

The Churches in the Porvoo Communion pray for each other. Every Sunday, dioceses, their bishops, clergy and people are remembered in prayer by congregations, parishes and individuals. The prayer diary for 2024 is found online at: <https://porvoo communion.org/porvoo-prayer-diary/>

*Stephen Fielding  
January 2024*

## **EUROPEAN AFFAIRS WORKING-GROUP**

### *Membership*

*Unconfirmed at time of going to press*

In 1951, in the aftermath of World War II, six nations in Europe came together to sign the Coal and Steel Treaty, to regulate together the production of these industries (then being) chief among the materials essential for waging war. To-day's European Union has its origins in that agreement, and even the EU's strongest supporters are convinced that its considerable growth in membership (which is likely to increase) demands 'reforms', to its constitution if it is to meet satisfactorily the challenges that face Europe to-day.

Our working-group is enabled to study the need for 'reform' and the EU policies through our membership of such bodies as the Institute for International and European Affairs in Dublin and by participating in events arranged by the Brexit Institute at Dublin City University, as well as through ecumenical instruments such as the Conference of European Churches (CEC). These institutions, by their seminars and many other events and publications address the most pressing issues that face the European Union. These have implications not only for the Republic of Ireland as a member state of the EU, but also for Northern Ireland because of its special trading position whereby sharing an external border of the EU with a member state (the Republic) the Windsor Framework gives it access to the common markets of both the EU and the UK.

In the past year we were represented at a number of IIEA and Brexit Institute events, including an address by Mr Peter Burke, T.D., the Republic's Minister of State for European Affairs, who spoke at the IIEA about the possible enlargement of the European Union, pointing out that while enlargement is generally regarded as something to be welcomed, membership bringing with it commitment to democratic and other ethical values, he emphasised its budgetary implications, as many of the present applicants for membership would require considerable financial support. He also spoke of the Irish government's concern that there should continue be a strong Irish presence at official level in the various institutions of the EU.

While Brexit is no longer at the top of the EU's agenda (though the Windsor Framework and its consequences still require considerable discussion between the EU and UK) the process whereby Brexit came about is the subject of The EU response to Brexit: united and effective co-edited by Professor Brigid Laffan, formerly Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies in Florence. She spoke to the IIEA on how the 'withdrawal' negotiations with the United Kingdom had achieved a degree of solidarity on the part of the member states of the Union that had proved invaluable as it faced the challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Migration remains a divisive issue for the member states of the Union (increasingly so it appears in Ireland) and it was the subject of a webinar event at the Brexit Institute at Dublin City University. A similar event focussed on Frontex, the European Border and Coast Agency, which includes a uniformed corps which supports in their management of the Union's external borders the Schengen-related member states that have removed their internal border controls, while also having a concern for the welfare of migrants. Migration could be a major issue at the elections for the European Parliament in 2024, when external 'interference' in



the elections in the individual states is particularly anticipated by misuse of the processes of AI which itself was the subject of two events: a webinar under IIEA auspices led by Professor Michael Woodridge, Professor of Computer Science at Oxford, and a webinar by Zoom at the European Parliament in Brussels, held under the provision of Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty whereby the EU is committed to regular and meaningful contact with elements of civil society, including the churches. The focus of these occasions was on the vast resources at the disposal of forces, sometimes hostile to democratic values, and for which international regulation is badly needed. The EU ‘Group on Ethics’ has already made a statement on the matter and continues to study how this may best be achieved. Notable was the conviction that AI was here to stay, with considerable possibilities for good, and that the use of robots (which is a very controversial aspect of AI) could be of benefit to humanity. But it had to be borne in mind that robots had no capacity for ‘empathy’.

Never far from discussion at many of the events outlined above was an awareness of what was termed ‘slippage’ on the part of some member states where commitment to EU values was a concern. While the European Union has a legal method of imposing sanctions by removing voting rights from member states that are deemed to be ‘slipping’ this procedure has never been invoked, and the suggestion has been aired that a more appropriate way of dealing with the situation where, for instance, democratic values are perceived to be under threat, would be a more extensive use of ‘Qualified Majority Voting’ to a wider area of decision-making so that ‘unanimity’ would no longer be mandated in some areas in which it still obtained.

*Ken Milne,  
December 2023*

## **INTER FAITH WORKING GROUP**

### *Membership*

*Mr Femi Atoyebi, Rev Suzanne Cousins (convenor), Rev Alistair Doyle, Mr David Reynolds, Rev Abigail Sines, Rev Dr Stephen Skuce (Methodist Church in Ireland)*

The work of the committee over the past year, with key points of interest

The Interfaith Working Group (‘IFWG’) continues the practice begun early in the Covid pandemic, of meeting by Zoom and reporting in person or remotely to the subsequent meeting of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue. The Group is pleased to report that it had a productive year since the 2023 General Synod.

First, the updating of the text of the Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue and Events (2007) booklet was completed and approved by the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue and the House of Bishops. The booklet has been redrafted to encourage Church of Ireland parishes and people to view and use positively the everyday dialogue and many opportunities which arise to engage with people of other faiths, as religious demographics in Ireland change. The IFWG expresses gratitude to a number of people who have contributed, advised and proofread the text. The revision includes, amongst other additions, reference to interfaith-related considerations in the contexts of hospital and school chaplaincy work. The working group commends the revised Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue and Events booklet as a fresh and accessible read for anyone in the parishes and dioceses of the Church of Ireland, and the intent is that the booklet is useful also to other churches and denominations. It is hoped also (at the time of writing his report) that the revised booklet will be in print and available on time for the 2024 Interfaith Conference, in May (see below) and General Synod 2024.

Second, the 2023 ‘Dialogue of Friendship’ conference, held in May 2023 in the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, drew a good attendance from a wide range of churches, communities and interest groups. The conference was organised by the IFWG in pleasant and positive partnership with the faith stream of Places of Sanctuary, Ireland. This partnership is important, not least on account of the IFWG with CCUD, having been entrusted, as referred to in last year’s report, with the task of being the Church of Ireland’s voice for Refugees. An introduction to the day was delivered by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, who set a reflective tone and framework for the keynote speaker, the Rev Dr Stephen Skuce (Methodist Church in Ireland). Dr Skuce’s engaging contribution was followed by a Q&A session, and this along with follow-up discussions to the addresses of secondary contributors, helped ensure that a conference was delivered which was lively and stimulating, and that had both theological and spiritual depth and a

practical and humanitarian focus. The latter focus was enabled by the presentation of several moving and gripping case studies from community and church-based projects showcasing the experience, concerns, gifts and skills of refugees and asylum seekers and those who support them (e.g., the Tullamore Presbyterian Church Welcome project).

All-in-all, ‘The Dialogue of Friendship’ conference was felt by members of the working group to have been a worthwhile and enjoyable event and a good foundation on which to build. This year’s conference, due to take place on Saturday 25th May in Wesley House Dublin, is being planned along similar lines, with the (provisional) title, ‘The Dialogue of Friendship: Countering voices of enmity’. The keynote speaker is the Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (Episcopal Church of Scotland) who was honoured in the 2022 Lambeth Awards for her longstanding dedication to the building of interfaith relationships.

The IFWG, also in 2023, organised an online Scriptural Reasoning event in collaboration with the Cork 3 Faiths Forum on the theme of ‘Creativity’. The group plans to hold a similar event, in 2024, not least as a means to meaningful engagement with our Jewish friends and colleagues who are unable to attend Saturday events and the Dialogue of Friendship conference.

#### *Other*

Last year’s report referred to the intention of creating a wider COI Interfaith Forum consisting of a network of diocesan representatives which would meet once or twice per year and would help equip parishes to develop pastoral and theological responses to interfaith challenges, issues and dilemmas arising in an increasingly multi-cultural Ireland. While the envisaged forum is still very much in formation, members of the IFWG, with CCUD, are grateful that the net has been cast by the bishops and that progress is being made.

Historically, the World Council of Churches (WCC) Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation Programme (IRDC) which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, has been significant in helping this group assist the Commission in keeping abreast and engaging with developments in inter faith matters beyond these islands. More recently, due to administrative changes within its office, coupled with the after effects of the pandemic, the flow of initiatives and exchange in communications has waned. We are hopeful that there will be a renewal in this regard in the year ahead.

More positively, we wish to pay tribute to the editorial team of Search Journal which continues to source and supply excellent voices and insightful articles addressing current interfaith and interreligious matters. Independent of but supported by the working group, it is good to be able to report that the Church of Ireland was able to mark and express publicly its support for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2023, with the assistance of the Armagh Diocesan Communications Officer Mr Jonathan Hull, in recording a conversation between the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, Most Rev John McDowell, and HMD Trust Northern Ireland representative, Mrs Shirley Lennon. This took place in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh, and was followed by the symbolic action of lighting of the Holocaust Memorial Day candle, representing the will to keep alive the memory of those who lost their lives in the Holocaust and in other genocides. The theme was ‘Ordinary People’. This year a similar project and conversation was undertaken in Belfast Synagogue, with Rabbi David Kale hosting the party. The theme ‘The Fragility of Freedom’ was addressed and video recordings made, to be published online ahead of the Day (27th January).

*Suzanne Cousins,  
December 2023*

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## **Appendix 1 ~ Annual Church Meetings**

### **Yearly Meeting of Quakers Ireland, the Religious Society of Friends**

The Ireland Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) took place in the Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght, Dublin, from 13th to 16th April with Special Interest Groups meeting online from 9th to 12th April. The theme was: ‘Building Community Together’ drawing on ‘... let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.’ (Hebrews 10:24-25) It was a hybrid meeting.

The Meeting was chaired by Denise C Gabuzda, Clerk along with Assistant Clerks Pleasaunce M Perry and Hugh O’Farrell Walsh. Other churches represented were the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

A few highlights:

War and Peace:

Promoting and preparing for peace is still a crucially important topic for Quakers, especially as the war in Ukraine and other global conflicts continue. Several speakers discussed peace-building carried out by various Quaker and other organisations. As Quakers, they are faced with the dilemma that they hold a variety of views of their Peace Testimony, and pacifism and prayer alone will not stop war.

Quaker Council for European Affairs:

Tracey Martin from this office which is based in Brussels gave a presentation, ‘Working for Justice and Peace in a Time of Climate Crisis’. She contended that the Quakers can work across issue boundaries, that they are values driven with a non-confrontational approach, are independent in that they are not funded by the EU and can be a convener of challenging conversations. The kind of change which they focus on comes under the umbrella of peace. The particular issues are climate crisis, migration, and dialogues for transformation. Their approach is that complex problems can only be solved if people with differing views are able to listen to each other. QCEA, it was claimed, is one of the few organizations in Brussels that can do this kind of work.

Food:

A discussion group with the theme ‘Food for Thought – a Conversation about Food and the Food System’ was facilitated by South Belfast EcoQuakers. Our food system contributes hugely to the planetary climatic and ecological emergencies. We took a journey of learning and discernment, guided by Quaker commitments to simplicity, stewardship, and sustainability.

Public Lecture:

The public lecture was given by Harvey Gillman who reflected on communion and community in a lecture entitled ‘Hospitality and the Pilgrim’. Harvey’s various descriptions of himself as a restless nomad, a poet, a seeker, a finder and a linguist made for an entertaining exploration of the topic. Exiled from his childhood Jewish community in England, he eventually found his way to a Quaker meeting almost forty-five years ago and felt at home. Hospitality for Harvey is a form of testimony, an outward sign of an inward grace, where you offer the home, you have found and welcome others in. Spiritual hospitality is an awareness of the interconnectedness of all things. Our lives and that of the earth are fragile, and we must love and nurture each other.

Other Presentations included:

‘Quaker Connections’ (work in Northern Ireland prisons) by Shane Whelehan, ‘Our Church Communities in the Aftermath of the Pandemic’ by Ruth Garvey–Williams (Vox magazine), ‘Fostering Community through Inter-Church and Inter-faith Encounter’ by James Nelson and ‘The Community of Early Friends’ by Stuart Masters (Woodbrooke).

Some Workshops included:

Art Workshop with John O’Flynn, Reflective Poetry Reading with Colm Heffernon, Life Reflections workshop with Dan Flynn and International folk dancing with Denise Gabuzda.

*David White  
April 2023*

## **Report on the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church 2023**

The General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church took place between 8 and 10 June this year, the dates deliberately chosen to coincide with St Columba's Day. The venue again was St Paul's and St George's Church (popularly known as P's and G's) on York Place in Edinburgh. The General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church has approximately 140 members and so is considerably smaller than our General Synod. While most members attended in person this year, the option of attending online was also availed of by some.

The first day began with an opening Eucharist which was concelebrated by the bishops. The Primus preached, setting the tone for the business of synod, and avoiding the necessity of a presidential address. After the service, the bishops joined the members at round tables and contributed to the discussions in that context. The seating was allocated and at my table for the three days were three lay people, a priest and the Bishop of Edinburgh. This style of seating allowed you to get to know those at your table and it encouraged input from each when we were asked to consider specific items on the agenda in small groups and feed back our responses to the full synod. While the three houses of laity, clergy and bishops vote separately, they sit together throughout the meeting. The results of votes were available almost immediately as members present, and those participating remotely, were asked to register a device which they would then use for all votes. This greatly aided efficiency.

On the first day, some routine administrative matters and elections were dealt with promptly. The report of the investment committee was presented, and it was noted that some shrewd investments in communications companies in the immediate precovid period had yielded generous returns. Some of this income was being allocated towards environmental policy. A motion was passed which stated, 'that this Synod request the Standing Committee to approve the provision of such funding as the Committee considers appropriate, in consultation with the Provincial Environment Group, to support implementation of the Net Zero Action Plan (2023-2030) for the Scottish Episcopal Church.' Day one also included a presentation by the College of Bishops called 'God's Church for Scotland?' The members in their groups were asked to feed back their considered responses to what they had heard, using open ended questions around the Five Marks of Mission. Having considered these overnight, the bishops gave their initial responses the next day and undertook to examine them further as they set their priorities going forward.

Day two started with the report of the Mission Board. Then for the first time, normal business was suspended to allow for an address by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who is currently the Rt Revd Sally Foster-Fulton. This is reflective of the greater degree of cooperation, dialogue and fellowship between both churches in recent years. It was interesting to note that the method of electing bishops is under review. While the proposed changes were accepted, the Scottish Episcopal Church still holds to a model of election by each diocesan synod for their bishop, rather than by an electoral college made up of representatives from the vacant diocese and the wider church. Of particular interest to me was the final part of the day which considered the work of the Liturgy Committee. Sensitivity to the issue of antisemitism in the way scripture passages are handled during Holy Week was referred to at one point, as was the need to be inclusive of and sensitive to the needs of neurodivergent parishioners.

Diocesan commitments at home meant that I could not stay for the full final day of the Synod on the Saturday. However, the first session concerned the important work of the Safeguarding Committee. Like us in the Church of Ireland, the size of the synod is under discussion. A motion was presented and carried, delaying the next review of the formula for diocesan representation and the number of members of the General Synod until the communicant membership statistics are available in 2025. The day concluded with elections to the various committees and boards.

Some closing comments on my experience of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church might be helpful. I was struck by how social the experience was. This is in many ways a reflection of a smaller gathering and a smaller church. At the end of the first day, it is traditional that a dinner is arranged for all members who wish to avail of it. This year we filled the dining room of the Royal Scots Club. The hospitality was generous

and the atmosphere convivial. Some retired bishops were there including the former Primus Bishop David Chillingworth and his wife Alison, who are known to many of us in the Church of Ireland. The importance of such social events to make new connections and renew friendships, cannot be underestimated. When you hear speakers at the rostrum declare their place of residence as Orkney or one of the Western Isles, where congregations are small and scattered, the opportunity to meet other committed Anglicans over several days must be a great source of encouragement. One member commented favourably that the Diocesan Map in the Book of Reports placed Orkney in its correct geographical position, rather than where it can often be found in a box a few miles off the coast north of Aberdeen! Secondly, seating in banquet style around tables rather than in rows facing forward in auditorium style, results in a very different synod experience. While it will not be possible to adapt such an approach given the size of our General Synod, we should not lose sight of the benefits of such seating for smaller meetings of synods and other committees. The overlapping of some of their concerns and agenda items with the work of our General Synod was no surprise. However, the particular emphasis on and importance of environmental policy in their church was palpable at the synod. We have much to learn from them in this area. The rich deposit of work emanating from their Liturgy Committee was also impressive. In conversation over coffee during one of the breaks, I was delighted to meet a member of this committee who had recently been in Belfast engaging with members of our Liturgical Advisory Committee. As I contemplated the links between Ireland and Scotland on St Columba's Day, I gave thanks for the deep roots of connection which we both still treasure to this day.

+Adrian Wilkinson

### **PCI General Assembly**

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland took place at the Assembly Buildings, Belfast, from Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023. On the Wednesday evening the Rt Rev. John Kirkpatrick, the outgoing Moderator gave a brief address on his reflections of his year in office. He talked about the expanding church in Syria and Lebanon. Other memorable occasions included his attendance at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth and the coronation of King Charles.

The new Moderator the Rev Dr Samuel Mawhinney of Adelaide Road, Dublin was elected and installed as the new Moderator. He then introduced his theme for the year 'Confident in Christ' using the quote from Jeremiah 'Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord'. It was decided that, in future, the incoming Moderator will not be installed at the opening meeting. This is to provide them a more specific insight into the work of each council before they take over the Chair of the General Assembly.

For the next 2 days, the business part of the Assembly took place with reports from a number of Councils, questions asked and debates taking place as necessary before the resolutions are passed. Visitors were invited to contribute if they so wished.

There were a number of common issues highlighted that are faced by all churches today, for example; Difficulty for Christians getting Visas from the UK government as they are considered a threat; Changes in society from a Christian culture after the war to a negative culture since 2014; Current shortage of ministers; Churches closing; Churches amalgamating; Cuts to Education Budgets.

Bishop Andrew Forster spoke as chair of ICC, which is in its 100<sup>th</sup> year. He explained that the ICC was formed because of the uncertainty at the time of partition of Ireland. While wishing the assembly every blessing he said that 'The Joy of the Lord is our Strength' as the Churches work together.

Looking outside of Ireland there were also speakers from the Global Church:

- ❖ Malawi- the Church is expanding. Issues they have had to face such as the aftermath of a Cyclone, planting indigenous trees, devaluation of their currency and doubling of prices.
- ❖ Syria and Lebanon – Speaker spoke of the value of partnerships and forward planning.
- ❖ Iran – the speaker gave an insight to what it was like for a Christian from a Muslim background.

The Presbyterian Church in 2022 to 2023 raised £1.5 million to aid their mission partners.

It was a privilege for myself and Archdeacon Elizabeth Cairns to represent the Church of Ireland at the Presbyterian Assembly and we would like to offer our sincere thanks for the warm welcome and the hospitality we received.

Vivian Sutor  
June 2023

**THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION (CFM)**

**Report to the General Synod 2024**

**MEMBERSHIP (AS OF JANUARY 2024)**

**ATTENDANCE FIGURE FOR JUNE 2023 – JANUARY 2024**

Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield (1)	House of Bishops / Kilmore
Rev Tim Wright (Hon Chair) (3)	Synod
Rev Colin McConaghie (Hon Secretary) (4)	Synod
Ms Sarah Taylor (Hon Treasurer) (4)	Kilmore and Elphin
Ms Emma Lynch (4)	AMS
Ms Jenny Smyth (2)	AMS
Rev Stephen McElhinney (2)	AMS
Rev Dr Paddy McGlinchey (2)	CITI
Rev Dr Laurence Graham (2)	Methodist Church
Mr Thomas Stevenson (2)	Armagh
Ven Paul Mooney (4)	Cashel
Rev Kingsley Sutton (2)	Cork
Rev Jonathan McFarland (3)	Derry and Raphoe
Rev Andrew Orr (3)	Synod
Rev Isaac Hanna (2)	Synod
Mrs Jill Lester (1)	Connor
Mrs Hazel Speares (1)	Mothers' Union
Mr David Frizelle (2)	Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe
Rev William Jeffrey (3)	Clogher
Rev Henry Blair (0)	AMS (from November 2023)
Mrs Hilary McClay (0)	Bishops' Appeal (from January 2024)

According to the constitution of the Council, each diocese is entitled to nominate a representative and an alternate. Alternates attend when the principal representative is unable to. Some members represent more than one possible constituency.

The Council for Mission met four times from June 2023 to January 2024. These meetings were a combination of in person in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and online via Zoom.

**CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP SINCE GENERAL SYNOD 2023**

After eight years of dedicated service to the Council Mr Derek Neilson stepped down in June 2023. Derek was a wonderful asset to the CFM during his time and served diligently as our treasurer. The Council would like to publicly thank Derek for his service to mission in the Church of Ireland and the CfM over the years.

Ms Lydia Monds stepped down from the Council in March 2023 when she moved from her position in Bishops' Appeal. We have no doubt Lydia will provide a fruitful ministry through her new role in the Church's Ministry of Healing.

Mr Steve Grasham, our CIYD representative, stepped down from the Council in November 2023, having returned to England. We wish Steve and his wife Fran every blessing.

Ms Catherine Hillcox (Little) stepped down from the Council in June 2023 having been an AMS rep. We wish Catherine every blessing for her continued work with the Bible Society Northern Ireland.

Ms Sarah Taylor joined the Council in June 2023 as Kilmore and Elphin rep and Honorary Treasurer.

Rev Henry Blair (SOMA) joined the Council in November 2023 as an AMS rep.

Mrs Hilary McClay (Bishops' Appeal) joined the Council in January 2023.

We are grateful to all of the members who have contributed to the work of the Council for Mission over the years.

We continue to use the Anglican 5 marks of mission to focus our activities, which are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Tell)
  2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers (Teach)
  3. To respond to human need by loving service (Tend)
  4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (Transform)
  5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Treasure)
- (Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)*

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

The aim of the CfM has always been to represent the wide breadth of the Church of Ireland with representation from each Diocese alongside members elected by General Synod and representatives of the Association of Missionary Societies.

There has been a large turn over in membership over the last couple of years with a number of people having served the maximum terms while others have left the diocese or organisation they represented.

We are delighted to have filled a number of the vacancies in 2023 and look forward to new members joining in the coming months. We would encourage those dioceses that aren't currently represented to prayerfully consider nominating someone to represent them on the Council.

### **2023 - A YEAR OF TRANSITION**

In March 2023, thanks to the continued support of the Priorities Fund, we completed the series of videos focusing on the Marks of Mission. These videos highlighted the third and fourth Marks Christian Service (Tend) and Challenging Injustice (Transform). All five videos featured people and projects throughout the Church of Ireland and beyond whose mission, outreach and innovation is making a real difference to their communities and building God's Kingdom.

These videos are available via the Church of Ireland website, and we encourage you to share these videos in your parishes as tools for promoting and encouraging mission.

As one project came to an end it was time for the Council to seek God's guidance as to how we could continue to facilitate and promote mission throughout the Church of Ireland.

Following on from our residential in September 2022 in which we thought and prayed over the future direction of the Council, we began to seek a definitive plan of action in 2023.

As new members were welcomed into the Council new ideas began to emerge and grow. Two primary projects emerged from our discussions, reflections, and prayer:

1. A mission focused podcast
2. A global mission partner project



## **PODCASTS**

In September, Mr Stephen Fletcher the Communications Officer of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe was invited to attend the CfM meeting to discuss Podcasts. Stephen had a background in construction before he trained as a Parish Reader in England and studied for a qualification in media studies. Stephen has worked part time as a freelancer for the BBC in local radio and produces a faith program for Clare FM. He has also produced a number of podcasts both in Ireland and England.

The inspiration behind the project is Matthew 5:16 - “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” The CfM role is to promote mission and inspire mission throughout our church. The podcasts aim to be creative, inspiring and encouraging the listener that they too can be involved.

Following the discussions the CfM appointed Stephen to produce a bi-monthly podcast to focus on why mission matters through telling the stories of individuals or groups connected to the Church of Ireland who are involved in mission both locally and globally.

The Podcast will be called “Mission Matters - A Church of Ireland Council For Mission Podcast.” The name is to reflect both the importance of mission to us as a church and also to make it easily found on a search engine. The podcast will be found via our usual social media as well as being hosted on a podcast platform making it accessible to all.

The Council would like to thank Stephen for all his hard work in helping us get this project up and running. If you have any inspirational missional stories that would make for inspiring listening please let us know.

## **GLOBAL MISSION PARTNER**

As a facilitator of mission, the CfM applied to the Priorities Fund for funding to enable a Global Mission Partner to come to Ireland to work in partnership with local churches and pioneer centres for ministry. The focus of the partnership is to bring a greater understanding of the global mission of the church and to give an insight into how was as a church can better engage with those who have come to settle here from a multitude of countries around the globe.

The CfM established up a sub-committee to assess the type of project and a suitable mission partner. We are currently going through the visa process to facilitate a visit of Rev Arsene Mafurebe, Pastor of St Marc’s Parish, Nyabutusti, Gitega Diocese, Burundi.

Rev Arsene was sponsored by Church of Ireland parishes through his theological degree course at Bujumbura Christian University, Burundi. He was ordained in 2021 and has since been serving as priest in charge of St Marc’s parish.

Rev Arsene has been recommended by his bishop as an able, committed parish priest with a desire to learn and share his experiences of evangelism, pastoral work and church leadership. Burundi is a country with a contested and difficult history of ethnic conflict, endemic poverty, low literacy rates and struggles with the impacts of climate change. The Anglican church in Burundi is a vibrant, fast growing church which takes a lead in many practical development programmes. There is a strong Mothers’ Union, TEE programme and lively youth work. There is a need for discipleship courses and leadership training.

The plan is for a six-week visit based in Republic of Ireland with visits to Northern Ireland (all visa permitting). The CfM wishes to thank Ms Jenny Smyth of CMS Ireland who has been a driving force behind this project. It is the hope of the Council that if deemed a success we can look at future partnerships including the possibility of enabling someone from the Church of Ireland to be involved in a global project overseas.

## **BURSARIES**

Throughout the year the CfM were able to support a number of projects:

- CfM supported a Mission Evening held in the newly formed United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe as they sought to establish a new Diocesan Council for Mission and establish a vision for mission across the Dioceses. The Council donated €200 to this initiative.
- CfM contributed €650 to a Global Mission Partner project in Derryvolgie Parish, Connor Diocese in partnership with SAMS. The project which saw Marcos a volunteer from Chile was entitled “Global Made Local” and aimed to is foster cross-cultural connections and promote missional thinking within the context of a changing Ireland. This project was seen as a fore runner of our Global Mission Partner Project.
- A new bursary in partnership AMS to support ordinands from the Theological Institute who chose to go overseas as part of their placements. CfM has committed €250 per year to this bursary.

## **ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES**

Chair Rev Stephen McElhinney gave a reflection at the recent AMS AGM focusing on Revelation 9:7. The passage gives a picture of the great multitude that no one could count, all standing before the throne. He pointed out that either there is an unbelievably massive throne, or perhaps John didn't think people were particularly skilled at counting. All were robed in white and each held a palm branch. While there are many remarkable aspects of this passage, Stephen was struck by the "gathered" nature of the people. He went on to explain that AMS is all about this very idea. We have always been in the business of gathering people. Our agencies bring people together around specific agency-specific themes, be it geographic or issue-based. But at our core, our mission is to prepare people to gather around the throne and the Lamb. This year, AMS has been doing more gathering.

## **CITI**

We have gathered regularly at CITI and want to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunities it provides to build a sense of community within AMS and to collaborate with structures in the Church of Ireland. AMS also committed to offering global church placements for CITI students as part of their training.

## **Council for Mission**

We have also gathered at the Council for Mission, where we currently have four AMS members serving, Rev Stephen McElhinney (SAMS), Ms Jenny Smith (CMSI), Rev Henry Blair (SOMA) and Ms Emma Lynch (Tearfund Ireland). AMS members have been active contributors to the work of the Council including the upcoming Podcast series and the Local Made Global project facilitating global church placements.

Ms Catherine Hillcox (BSNI) stepped down from her role on Council for Mission in 2023 and is replaced by Rev Henry Blair. We are grateful to Catherine for representing AMS members so well on the Council for Mission.

## **General Synod**

Our gatherings extended to the General Synod in Wexford, where AMS members collaborated to host a stand space. We were delighted to meet with General Synod members once again after the pause due to Covid-19 restrictions in the past few years.

## **Bishops Appeal**

Bishops Appeal entered a new chapter this year with the appointment of a new Education Advisor. The former officer, Ms Lydia Monds, provided much invaluable support and guidance to AMS agencies. AMS members are delighted to welcome Mrs Hilary McClay, a familiar face to many of us. We look forward to working closely with Hilary and her guidance to us as we collaborate.

### **AMS Officers and Membership**

Rev Stephen McElhinney stepped down as Chair of AMS in November 2023 having graciously extended his term during Covid-19 and has been replaced by Ms Jenny Smyth. Ms Catherine Hillcox continues as Treasurer and Ms Emma Lynch as Secretary.

Our discussions about AMS membership continue, helping us maintain clarity about our mission and our membership. There are currently 14 AMS member agencies and societies. This year, we welcomed SOMA. Members' details are listed in the Church of Ireland Directory.

### **Continuing Ministerial Education (CME)**

AMS involvement in Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) remains strong, with our input into the program each year in January. In 2023 the sessions entitled 'The Church and Integral Mission' were provided by Christian Aid (Ms Ruth Cooke) and Church Army (Mr Alan Williamson), which were well received by participating curates.

The friendship, solidarity, and fellowship among AMS members strengthen all our collective efforts, as does our engagement with Council for Mission. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and support. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the name of mission.

**LITURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2024**

**MEMBERSHIP ELECTED 2022**

Chair – Most Rev Michael Jackson

Vice Chair – Ven Ricky Rountree

Very Rev Nigel Dunne (Hon. Secretary)

Very Rev Susan Green

Rev Alan Rufli

Ven Dr Peter Thompson

Rev Canon Peter McDowell

Rev Adrian Dorrian

Rev John McLoughlin

Rev Abigail Sines

Rev Julie Bell

Rev Nigel Pierpoint

Very Rev Lynda Peilow

Mrs Jacqueline Mullen

Mr John Morris

**Co-opted Members:**

Ven Ricky Rountree

Rev Cameron Mack

Rev Dr Michael Kennedy

**Consultants:**

Ms Rachael Murphy

Rev Andrew Neill

Rev Canon Gary Hastings (resigned)

**Church of Ireland Theological Institute Observer:**

Dr Bridget Nichols (2017)

SW

**Church of Ireland Theological Institute Student Observer:**

Mr James Shiels (2023)

**Methodist Church Observer:**

Rev Ruth Patterson (2017)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Since the last Report the Committee has met twice online, at one day meeting and in a residential two-day setting.

The objectives for the coming year will be:

- to continue to assist with the provision of resources for encouraging children's engagement with and participation in worship;
- to provide further prayers and resources for the 18-35 age group;
- to continue making available liturgical resources online and to improve access to them via a dedicated LAC website;
- to review the current Weekday lectionary prior to publication of the 2024/2025 Sunday and Weekday Lectionary;
- to continue developing bi-lingual liturgical resources in collaboration with *Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise*;
- to provide liturgical material as and when requested by other committees of the Synod and wider Church of Ireland organisations.

**REPORT:**

The past year has seen the production of further liturgical resources in online and printed format. Key projects have been:

- Publication in print of the *Collects of the Word*, Years A, B & C in a single volume;
- Provision of liturgical resources in English and Ukrainian (with particular thanks to the Mullingar Union of Parishes and Limerick City Parish and St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick);
- Continued expansion of services marking Celtic Commemorations/Local Saints.

Following consultation with third-level chaplains and significant drafting work at the residential meeting in November 2023 a suite of prayers for use by the 18-35 year old age group is being rolled out on a phased basis on the worship section of the Church of Ireland website.

The publication of the revised *Collects of the Word* for years A, B and C was delayed in 2023 due to some copyright and final proofing issues which arose prior to final publication. The printed edition will be available for purchase in time for General Synod and it is hoped that the revised versions will also be updated on the Church of Ireland website in time for the First Sunday of Advent.

The music and pew editions of the *Church Hymnal* have now been reprinted. It is not intended to reprint the melody edition as there is little demand. Meantime a new resource providing settings of the Canticles has been developed by Ven Peter Thompson and the music sub-committee of the LAC. Quotations for printing have been sought and this resource should soon be available.

The Committee assisted with and welcomed the reprinting of the Irish Language *Book of Common Prayer* by Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (CGNH) in 2023. It was noted that an almost monthly Eucharist in Irish is now being held by CGNH in St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork.

Rev Ken Rue has been compiling and publishing the Sunday and Weekday Lectionary for many years and has now decided to step down. The Committee is most grateful to him for his dedication to this significant annual task and for his attention to detail in producing this vital resource for the Church. The LAC has begun a full review of the current lectionary pattern, with particular focus on the weekday lections with the assistance of Ven Andrew Orr and Rev Martin Steele. It has been noted that the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) is currently reviewing lectionary provisions and may recommend some additional material (e.g. the provision of three sets of readings for Ascension Day). The *Sunday and Weekday Lectionary* will continue to be available online and in printed booklet format.

The Committee noted the changes to sources and procedures for application for funding for publications by the Church in the light of the decline of the Royalties Fund and hopes that the Fund will be rebuilt over time and that priority will be given to the publication of liturgical resources.

The Four Nations Liturgy Group took place in Belfast in May 2023, and the Church of Ireland was represented by the Honorary Secretary and Rev Alan Rufli. In what was a very productive meeting, clearer terms of reference for the Group was agreed (recommending a minimum of one delegate from each nation, but stating a preference for two) and there was significant sharing of ongoing liturgical development and promotion in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales.

The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation met in Seoul in February 2024, and Rev Abigail Sines and Rev Alan Rufli represented the LAC.

Rev Canon Gary Hastings served for several years as a co-opted member of the LAC bringing his Irish language skills to its work. He has now resigned and the committee thank him for his work and wish him well in retirement.

**FUTURE PLANS:**

Our future plans include:

- Provision of a dedicated LAC website;
- Continuing to work with our Children’s Ministry Sub-committee and Rev Julie Bell on the provision of a major new resource to support liturgical ministry with children, including a resource for daily prayer in the home to be used by families;
- The publication (online) of further prayers and resources for the 18-35 age group;
- A full review of the role of Diocesan Liturgical Officers;
- Work on new methods to update dioceses and parishes on available liturgical resources and to promote their use;
- Continue to encourage the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to nominate a new observer.

The Liturgical Advisory Committee is always open to suggestions as to what resources might be needed to support ministry in parishes, chaplaincies, and other ministries both in terms of resources for public worship and for private prayer in the home. The Honorary Secretary can be contacted by email at [honsec.lac@gmail.com](mailto:honsec.lac@gmail.com)

**COMMISSION ON MINISTRY  
REPORT 2024**

**Membership (March 2024)**

***House of Bishops***

The Rt Rev David McClay (Chair)

***General Synod-Clerical***

Ven Elizabeth Cairns

Very Rev Paul Draper

Rev Rob Jones

***General Synod-Lay***

Captain George Newell

VACANT

VACANT

***Director of Theological Institute***

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott

***Central Director of Ordinands***

Very Rev Lynda Peilow

***Co-opted***

Rev Emma Carson

VACANT

VACANT

***Standing Committee***

Ven Barry Forde

***Pensions Board***

Mrs Judith Peters

***The Representative Church Body***

Dr. John Graham

Very Rev Nigel Crossey

***Honorary Secretaries***

Rev Canon Gillian Wharton

**Membership**

Regrettably, there are currently a number of vacancies on the Commission: two for lay members from General Synod and two for co-opted members. It is the hope of the Commission that these will be filled in the near future.

**Report**

The following represent some of the topics that the Commission is currently exploring, and on which it would be glad to hear from members.

**Advent Retreat**

The annual advent retreat organised by the Commission on Ministry jointly with the Church's Ministry of Healing was held 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in Mount St Anne's retreat centre, Portarlinton. The retreat entitled 'Seeing in the Dark' was co-facilitated by the Very Rev Paul Draper, Dean of Lismore and Ms Lydia Monds, Ministry leader at the Church's Ministry of Healing. Ms Judy Peters acted as co-ordinator. The retreat was fully booked with 18 participants.

The sessions were interspersed with times of silence. Each session gave opportunity for reflection either with the use of images and poetry by Dean Draper or by interactive work by Ms Lydia Monds. Feedback from the retreat showed that participants were very happy with both content and hospitality. It is hoped to run the retreat again in 2024.

**Nurturing Vocations**

A vocations retreat was held on 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024, in Dromantine for those 'exploring' ordination in the Church of Ireland. The retreat was led and organised by Ms Judy Peters, Very Rev Lynda Peilow and Bishop David McClay. Rev Dr Sean Doherty, Principal of Trinity College, Bristol was the guest speaker, and he navigated the gathering through discernment, exploration and answering God's call.

There were some practical sessions with input from Dr Katie Heffelfinger CITI on pathways to ordinations, Rev Rob Jones, Pioneer Ministry and from clergy families which included Mr Eddie Hallisey and Ms Brigid Barrett. Rev Julie Bell was the Chaplain, and she used the space and grounds creatively leading prayer and worship.

The retreat, offered the seventeen participants from across the Church of Ireland a deeper understanding of the spiritual, intellectual, and practical aspects of ordained ministry, fostering discernment and

providing a space for reflection. Participants engaged in daily prayer, worship, and informative sessions. There was also time to chat with one another and to reflect. This built a sense of community, and participants left with a network of peers to provide ongoing support and encouragement. Dromantine proved an excellent facility for the event and the feedback has been very good. The participants felt that they were provided with information, formation, and space to enable and equip them on their journey.

### **Clergy Retirement**

At the time of drafting this year's report on the work of the Commission on Ministry, a 24-hour residential course is being planned for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024, for clergy that are approaching retirement or who have retired in recent years. Until Covid-19 this course happened annually and catered for those approaching retirement. Because it was not possible during the years of covid-19 all who retired during that period were also invited.

The venue for the course this year is the Stormont Hotel, Belfast, and eminent speakers including Bishop Ken Good and his wife Mrs Mary Good, Rev Canon Horace McKinley, Ms Julie Bond (RCB Pensions), Ms Hazel Corrigan, and members of the Commission on Ministry will be addressing the event. It is hoped that this course will provide essential information and useful support to those clergy and clergy spouses where a clergyperson has recently retired or are planning to retire soon. Over the 24 hours those recently retired and those about to retire will be able to share useful information with each other as well as helpful advice from the team of speakers.

We as a church are indebted to those clergy who have served us faithfully for many years and the course is intended to help enable clergy and clergy spouses to continue having a fruitful ministry in retirement.

### **Pioneer Ministry**

Pioneer Ministry was officially launched in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin in February 2023. Since then, the Pioneer Ministry leadership team have been travelling around the Church of Ireland sharing the vision at Diocesan Synods, along with other clergy and lay information sessions. A new Pioneer Ministry Council was formally approved at General Synod last year, which has met numerous times to sign off on the formal application process for pioneers in training, and also for the funding process of pioneer projects. This application process went live on the new Pioneer Ministry website, and from December 2023 until the end of March 2024 multiple applications came in from across the Island from a variety of backgrounds and contexts. Interviews were held in each diocese that applied along with the consideration of the applications for pioneer funded projects. Since the launch in Spring 2023, it has been an exciting and important time as everything got going and builds towards the first intake of Church of Ireland pioneers in training, which will happen in the Autumn of 2024.

A more comprehensive report, including an update on the selection of pioneers in training, funded projects, new Pioneer Ministry Hubs and Pioneer Learning Communities, will be given to General Synod from the Pioneer Ministry Council. However, we believe it's important that Pioneer Ministry stays on the agenda with the Commission on Ministry, as it forms a vital part of ministry within the Church of Ireland's response to reach those with little or connection to Church. For more information, please go to [www.pioneerministry.org](http://www.pioneerministry.org) or email the National Director at [rob@pioneerministry.org](mailto:rob@pioneerministry.org).



## CHURCH OF IRELAND MARRIAGE COUNCIL

### REPORT 2024

#### MEMBERSHIP

##### *Appointed by the House of Bishops*

Member of the House of Bishops: Most Rev Pat Storey (Bishop of Meath & Kildare)

##### *Elected by General Synod*

Rev Jonathan Campbell-Smyth (Chairperson)	Rev Emma Rutherford
Rev Canon Nicola Halford (Resigned September 2023)	Rev James Boyd (Resigned November 2023)
Rev Ian Linton	Mrs Patsy Devoy
Ms Dianne Morris (Resigned November 2023)	Mrs Kay Clarke
	Ms Aisling Sheridan (Administrative Secretary)

##### *In Attendance*

##### *Proposed Membership 2024 – 2026*

Most Rev Pat Storey	Rev Emma Rutherford
Vacant (Chairperson)	Mrs Patsy Devoy
Rev Ian Linton	Mrs Kay Clarke
Ms Heather James	Ms Esther Simpson
Rev Carlton Baxter	

#### **New Initiatives**

In 2023, the Council rolled out a new communications strategy designed to raise awareness of its aims. In addition the Council were keen to make church leaders aware of the subsidised counselling services supported by The Child and Family Agency, Túsla. A short video on the Council's counselling and marriage preparation services, featuring some of the counsellors on its panel and couples who have benefitted from its services, was launched at General Synod in Wexford in May 2023 and subsequently shown at most Diocesan Synods throughout the coming year. A new leaflet with information on counselling services was also launched and distributed throughout the island of Ireland. Additional leaflets are available to churches upon request.

#### **Marriage Preparation & Counselling**

The demand for marriage preparation and counselling has been steady over the last year. *Túsla*, the Family Support Agency, has once again given funding towards marriage counselling in the Republic of Ireland. **We would encourage clergy and church leaders to get in touch with the Council to access these funds.** If these funds are not utilised, then there is danger that external funds may not be available in the future. The Council now offers six sessions free of charge to couples, with full details of where counsellors are available on our website [www.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.ireland.anglican.org) .

Most counsellors have been making their services available online since the Covid-19 pandemic. In December the members of the Council met counsellors to help them network and understand more of our aims and objectives. It is planned that these meetings will become regular events to enable counsellors to make the best use of subsidised services. In addition to marriage support, some counsellors are available to lead couples through marriage preparation in collaboration with church leaders.

*The current group of counsellors used is:*

- Mr Brian Griffin (Dublin)
- Ms Dianne Morris (Dublin)
- Ms Shona Rusk (Dublin)
- Ms Helen Groves (Dublin)
- Ms Heather James (South East)
- Ms Sylvia Helen (Cork)
- Mr Shawn Jamieson (South West)
- Ms Lynne Heber (Belfast)
- Ms Ali Knight (Coleraine)
- Care In Crisis (Armagh)
- Christian Guidelines (Down, Fermanagh & Tyrone)

Whilst these counselling services are available, the Council is very much dependent on clergy and those who support couples to refer them to counsellors. The Council therefore encourages General Synod to promote the use of marriage counsellors in their local parish contexts. Copies of the Council's new information leaflet are available at Reception and from [aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org](mailto:aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org).

### **Marriage Council External Funding**

Although *Túsla* have once again provided funding towards marriage counselling, and indeed have allocated an increased grant, we have seen substantial cuts over the years. Whilst this provides a great challenge, no one is ever turned away, even if they cannot afford to contribute to the cost of the counselling session.

### **Retirements**

During the past year, a number of members of the Council have stepped down from their positions. These are Ms Dianne Morris, Rev James Boyd and Rev Canon Nicola Halford. We would like to express our thanks for the contribution that these members have made to the work of the Council.

### **Future Plans**

We hope that having raised awareness of our work in this past year, that the counselling services offered across Ireland would be more widely used.

Plans for 2024 include holding three online seminars of one hour each on the following topics:

- Bereavement – recognising the changes in daily life after a loved one has died;
- Blended families – easing into a new situation;
- Divorce/separation – supporting through the journey.

It is also hoped to offer encouragement for clergy couples in the form of an overnight stay or a relationships retreat.

As always, the Council is here to support local church leaders and couples. We would be delighted to assist anyone who could benefit from our range of services.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON CLERGY TENURE  
REPORT 2024**

**MEMBERS**

The Bishop of Cork (resigned 12 February 2024)	Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (acting Chair)
Rev James Boyd	Miss Irene Knox
Mrs Joan Bruton	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC
Rev Ruth Elmes	Mr Willie Oliver

The Select Committee on Clergy Tenure met on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 by Zoom. An apology was received from the Bishop of Cork. Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston, Honorary Secretary, took the Chair in an acting capacity. It was agreed to hold a physical meeting to discuss the election of a Chair, Terms of Reference and proposed work and agenda of the Select Committee at a future date when the membership could all be in attendance.

## **Appendix Q**

### **Pioneer Ministry Council**

#### **Report to General Synod 2024**

Following the formal launch of Pioneer Ministry in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin in February 2023, the Pioneer Ministry Governing Council was established by General Synod 2023. The Council was established to uphold and advocate for the vision of Pioneer Ministry to reach those with little or no connection to church, to oversee the delivery of its objectives and values, and oversee the processes by which employed pioneers and funded pioneer projects might receive funding and support, subject to the decision of the Pioneer Approvals Committee. As a Governing Body the Council receives reports from and provides support to the Pioneer Leadership Team, established to spearhead the new movement of Pioneer Ministry within the Church.

The Council is greatly encouraged by the actions to date with much activity over the last year , while recognising there is a significant body of work that lies ahead to grow pioneer ministry, develop the role of the Council itself, support the Leadership Team, and mobilise pioneer ministry and pioneers, lay and ordained, volunteers and employed, across the whole church.

From inception the Pioneer Movement has worked towards 5 key objectives, and the report of the Council addresses each of these in turn.

#### **1. Governance and Leadership**

For Pioneer Ministry to be credible, sustainable, and flourish it is, and will be, important to establish, embed and grow a robust governance and leadership structure for Pioneer Ministry. The establishment of the Pioneer Ministry Council and Pioneer Leadership Team are two important building blocks in this leadership and governance structure. The Leadership Team has reported to the Council, the Representative Body, House of Bishops, and the Council will report to Standing Committee, and through this inaugural and future reports, to General Synod. Through transparent and regular communication, the aspiration is that pioneer ministry will be embedded within, owned by, and provide support to, the whole of the Church of Ireland. The updates are also shared via social media and through other forms of traditional media such as diocesan magazines and the Church of Ireland Gazette.

The Council has met on four occasions, and at the time of reporting is overseeing the processes of the Leadership Team through the first iteration of applications for new pioneers and funded pioneer ministries, which have come in from across the island. This process itself is pioneering and the Council will reflect on how processes can be refined and improved for future years.

The National Director, Rev Rob Jones has visited all 11 dioceses throughout the year, meeting with Bishops , attending multiple diocesan synods, clergy and lay gatherings to communicate the vision and begin the process of implementing pioneer ministry in each setting and context.

#### **2. Diocesan Pioneer Ministry Hubs**

The vision for pioneer ministry is that it will be a ‘ground up’ movement. For this to happen, it is vital that within every diocese there is a group, or even a number of groups, of people including the diocesan pioneer ministry advocate appointed by the Bishop, who will champion, support, and advocate for pioneer ministry. These groups will be Pioneer Ministry Hubs. Shaped to serve the needs of each diocese in its own context,

Hubs will grow awareness of pioneer ministry, support pioneer initiatives, enable the training and resourcing of volunteers, network with Hubs from other dioceses, and engage with the national Pioneer Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is currently engaged with numerous dioceses to establish these Hubs, and already is seeing a range of healthy diversity as each diocese, in its own context, shapes hubs around how pioneer ministry might actually work in that diocese.

Hubs across the island are at different stages of development, but it is envisaged that each will grow to play a vital role in some or all of the following ways:

#### *Networking*

- Connect with the Pioneer Leadership Team and in particular the National Director
- Support the pioneer movement across the church through networking with other dioceses and pioneer conferences

#### *Growing Awareness*

- Encourage pioneer learning communities of pioneers within the diocese
- Advocate and champion pioneer ministry across the diocese – its activities, ministries, synods, councils and other bodies

#### *Support, train, resource voluntary pioneers and projects*

- Help deliver training and resources for pioneers at parish level
- Provide support to pioneer initiatives within the diocese

#### *Funded Pioneers and Projects*

- Support the Bishop and diocese with bringing forward proposals for funded pioneer projects and pioneers
- Support the yearly Diocesan Discernment and Selection Process for full time pioneers
- Provide local and contextual diocesan support to any full-time pioneers within the diocese (complementing the support provided by Church Army / CITI and the National Director)

#### *Develop Funding & Resources*

- Look to grow funding and resources for pioneer ministry

Whilst Hubs will play a crucial operational role in each diocese, pioneer ministry is also growing and establishing pioneer new ‘learning communities’. Learning Communities are designed to take small groups in local settings, parish (or even diocesan), through a change process to explore what it means to pioneer in their setting – what is the status quo, what is working, what isn’t, what is right, wrong, or even confusing? These communities will be made up of diverse leaders chosen by the Bishop who are committed to shared peer pioneer learning, mutual support, strategic partnership and praying for each other. A number of learning communities are already up and running studying together the book *‘Pioneering a new future- a practical guide to shaping change and changing the shape of Church’*.

### **3. Identify, Train, Deploy and Support Volunteer and Employed Pioneers**

Much of the focus and energy in this new season has had to focus on the creation of a new selection and training process for employed pioneers.

A selection process has been agreed with the House of Bishops and a new guidebook published which is being implemented through every diocese, as part of a pathway of discernment for those exploring vocation and

calling to reach those with little or no connection with church. A meeting between the Leadership Team and Diocesan Director of Ordinands confirmed how the exploration of vocation to pioneer will sit alongside and complement the exploration of those considering ordained or lay reader ministry within the church. The selection process for pioneers is not to a pathway that will lead to ordination. It is to a period of deployment into a pioneer ministry project and training that will run concurrently from the first day of deployment. It is envisaged that some pioneers may, in the years that follow, discern a call to some form of ordained ministry, and this will be a separate pathway of discernment towards Ordained Local Ministry or some form of transfer into stipendiary ministry according to the appropriate protocols at that time.

To complement the Selection Process for pioneers a process has also been established for the development of pioneer ministry proposals that may seek financial support from the Pioneer Ministry fund established and kept under review by the Representative Body.

As mentioned above a new guide book, accessible both in print and online, provides more information on how pioneers may be discerned, how proposed ministries might receive funding, how recruitment & appointment will work, and what happens once deployment and training begins. At the core of all discernment, development, recruitment and deployment, every new pioneer and every new ministry will be:

- **Missional** – reaching those with little or no connection to church.
- **Contextual** – working within and culturally appropriate to a particular community or locality and context.
- **Ecclesial** – growing a new community of faith over time.
- **Formational** – developing disciples and not just gathering a crowd.

It is envisaged that the first cohort of pioneers to be deployed and trained in new ministries approved for funding will commence in September 2024. The deployment will last for up to 5 years with training delivered part-time, alongside deployment, during the first 3 years.

#### *Training – Certificate in Pioneer Ministry*

An extensive body of work has been undertaken to develop a new training course for the (UK) Level 4 Certificate in Pioneer Ministry. This will be run by our key training partner, Church Army, supported by the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, and validated by Durham University. This is a three-year programme of part-time study focused on formational learning with the core emphasis on evangelism and forming new communities of faith within a pioneering context. The Training Team includes seven teaching staff with a wide range of experience and specialism, from communication skills to pioneering, from biblical studies to contextual evangelism, with training taking place through residential weekends based in both Sheffield and Dublin, as well as online training.

#### *Pioneer Ministry Gathering – Autumn 2024*

Whilst much energy has necessarily been given to the development of this course and the processes for selecting and identifying pioneers and pioneer ministry proposals, the broader aspiration is for pioneering activity to happen at every level of the Church. This cannot be a movement that simply produces a limited number of funded pioneers for a specified period of time. Through the Hubs and Learning Communities the vision is to mobilise people everywhere for pioneer ministry. Learning from one another will be vital and to that end arrangements are being made for a National Pioneer Ministry Gathering in the Autumn of 2024 to encourage, inform, and be inspired for the work of pioneer ministry across the Church.

#### **4. Establish and support new pioneer communities and churches**

The establishment of the Governing Council, Pioneer Hubs and Learning Communities and the first cohort of funded pioneers and pioneer projects all represent new networks and communities committed to reaching those with little or no connection to church. The creation of these new projects or ministries, in part funded by the Pioneer Ministry fund, which will help grow pioneer communities and churches that are missional, contextual, ecclesial and formational. The Council and Leadership Team look forward to supporting these new initiatives

and to working across all dioceses to create new communities of faith contextualised for their setting in the years that lie ahead.

## **5. Integration of Pioneer Ministry into the culture and structures of the Church of Ireland**

Everything that has been reported is evidence, and representative, of a commitment to growing pioneer ministry as a ministry *of* the Church of Ireland. Every diocese, parish, chaplaincy and activity of the church was once something that was planted and new. Pioneer ministry seeks to work within and alongside these expressions of ministry as together we seek to reach those with little or no connection to church.

The Bill for Pioneer Ministry before Synod 2024 seeks to recognise pioneer ministry and pioneer ministries within Chapter V of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. This will enable new ministries to be fully recognised as a part of a diocese or parish, and for those pioneer ministries that need to be self-governing with concomitant obligations relating to charitable registration, financial and property management, and safeguarding, will ensure that the Constitution is the proper Governing Document of the ministry.

### **Summary**

It is clear that much work has been undertaken with plenty more exciting activities and work ahead to further develop and grow pioneer ministry across the Church of Ireland as we all work collectively. The Council is greatly encouraged by the shared will to support and resource Pioneer Ministry across all levels of the church – General and Diocesan Synods, House of Bishops, Representative Body, Standing Committee and the Theological Institute – and expresses its sincere gratitude to everyone, and to the Pioneer Leadership Team as together we seek to reach those with little or no connection with church.

For more information, please go to [www.pioneerministry.org](http://www.pioneerministry.org) or email the National Director, Rev Rob Jones at [rob@pioneerministry.org](mailto:rob@pioneerministry.org).