

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN



**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2019**

CHY 6942 – Registered Charity Number 20014018

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Contents	Pages
Report of the Trustees	2 - 6
Trustees' Responsibilities Statement	7
Independent Auditors Report to the Trustees	8 - 9
Income and Expenditure Account	10
Balance Sheet	11

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Diocese of Elphin includes much of Co. Sligo, most of Co. Roscommon and also part of East Galway and has a Catholic population of almost 90,000. There are thirty seven parishes in the Diocese. This does not represent any change on the previous year. These parishes, together with a number of chaplaincies, are served by sixty seven priests and one transitional deacon. There are also eight permanent deacons whose ministry is largely voluntary.

While the public profile of the parish is associated with the celebration of the Mass and the Sacraments, other key activities include the pastoral care of the sick and bereaved, and to the poor, faith development activities, and a significant engagement with children and their families through the medium of the parish school.

There are a total of eighty seven churches many of which are protected structures. In addition, there are 111 parish primary schools. Under the heading of CHY6942, in addition to the Parishes of the Diocese, there are also included a small number of semi-autonomous agencies, including one Family Life Centre, the Star of the Sea Retreat Centre, the Chaplaincy at Sligo University Hospital, the Lourdes Pilgrimage and a community of Sisters exercising ministry at Diocesan level.

The accounts presented for 2019 are in the form of a consolidation of the income and expenditure of the individual parishes and agencies of the diocese. This is fifth year in which a full audit has taken place. Many new policies and procedures were introduced in 2015 and, as a result of on-going internal management and support, significant progress has again been made in implementing these new best-practice procedures during the year under review.

All parishes operate a system of dual authorisation and many have introduced the practice of providing annual financial reports to parishioners. All parishes have been working towards a greater consistency with respect to controls and reporting mechanisms and most have achieved high levels of compliance. The complexity of the Charity and its significant dependence on volunteers makes us all the more aware of the need for internal audit, not only to protect the Charity itself, but also to protect the volunteers. We welcome the very generous engagement of lay volunteers with the requirements of the Charities Act.

Income

The income of the parishes derives primarily, as can be seen, from the contributions of the faithful in the Sunday collection. Some parishes receive income from the rental of properties and bequests, but this is minimal. Indeed, many parishes see it as part of their mission to support the building of community by making vacant properties available for the use of community groups at a nominal cost. This works well enough if the building is run by a parish committee which is answerable to the parish finance council. On occasion, however, the occupier / user ceases to be accountable to the parish and this can present difficulties, if there is no formal legal agreement in place, as was often the practice in the past. The current Diocesan policy is to ensure that a lease or license is in place to clarify the relationship between the occupier and the parish. There has been resistance to this in some quarters.

Parish income is primarily categorised under two headings as follows:

- a) Income to support the day to day mission of the parishes was €3,107,805 in 2019, reflecting a drop of circa 1% on the previous year. This income is applied to fund the supplies, heat and light, insurances, administrative costs and the maintenance of buildings. This income also provides for the payment of:

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

- a diocesan needs levy to the Diocese of Elphin (CHY 3703), which was calculated as 15% of the operational income of the parish for the year under review. This is intended to cover the costs of Diocesan Administration and the provision of a range of central services for the benefit of all the parishes of the diocese.
 - certain expenses of the priest, including health insurance, motor tax and insurance.
- b) Income collected specifically for the support of the priest(s) of the parish. It includes a single special collection at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and on one weekend in November, together with the offerings which may be made on the occasions of Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals and Stations (the latter being replaced in some parishes by a Harvest collection). This clergy income came to a total of €1,189, 974 in the year under review (an increase of €70k on the previous year). This is a satisfactory outcome for the year.

The annual income for each priest is determined from time to time by the Bishop in consultation with the Council of Priests. The base income amounted to €21,004 per annum for Parish priests and €19,732 for Curates. In parishes where the income designated for the support of the priests does not reach that base level, the balance is made up from the parish account. In parishes where the income exceeds the minimum required for the support of the priests, 40% of the surplus is shared between the priests of the parish and 20% is paid by the priests of that parish to each of the following:

- a) The Elphin Sick Priests and Welfare Fund (known generally as the Sick and Retired Priests Fund), which is reported as a separate charity (CHY 2740).
- b) The Welfare Fund, which provides support for priests who are not in parochial ministry and for continuing professional development of clergy. This fund is consolidated with the accounts of the Diocese of Elphin General Trust Fund (CHY 3703).
- c) The Stewardship Fund, which covers a significant portion of the costs associated with operating the safeguarding service of the diocese. This fund is also consolidated with the accounts of the Diocese of Elphin General Trust Fund (CHY 3703).

NOTE: The use of the word Welfare in the names of two of the funds is a legacy of history but they serve two different purposes.

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The availability of a full audit report allows us to gain a broad overview of the finances of all the parishes and agencies. While some of the parishes carry significant debts, this is related in most cases to planned development or emergency repairs and is being managed in accordance with an agreed plan. Most of the parishes have some level of surplus cash, which is not inconsistent with the need to be in a position to respond to unforeseen costs, particularly in respect of the maintenance of buildings. There is scope for some parishes, out of their surplus, to contribute to new pastoral initiatives or to easing the burden on Parishes which are more heavily burdened. For the twelve month period under review, the consolidated accounts of the Charity, show an operational deficit of €110,324, an improvement on the previous year. They show a net surplus of €444,504 when exceptional income (e.g., donations and bequests and sale of parish properties is taken into account).

The contributions made by parishioners are totally voluntary. It is part of the ethos of the Catholic Church that no individual will be refused access to the ministry or services of the Church because of inability to pay. While there is undoubtedly some decline in regular sacramental practice, it must be said that significant numbers of those who do make use of parish services and facilities do not contribute regularly. Notwithstanding this, the mission of the Church, both to practicing Catholics and to the wider community of the Baptised must continue. Parishes, together with the services they provide, are greatly dependent on the generosity of the minority.

Expenditure:

As might be expected, over one third of the expenditure is in personnel costs. While the majority of this related to the modest income of the clergy, there are significant further personnel costs relating to the provision of lay staff, including parish secretaries and sacristans, together with personnel engaged by the Family Life Centre and the Retreat Centre. It should be acknowledged that these employed staff are backed up in many parishes by volunteers who carry out similar roles. With the reduction in the numbers of clergy, provision will need to be made for more administrative staff in the future, and this will be one substantial draw on the financial reserves of the parishes.

The second largest cost across all of the parishes is the cost of repairs and refurbishment. This comes to a total of €1.37m (a decrease of €259k over the previous year). While much of this is planned refurbishment and one complete renovation of a Church, a certain amount of unplanned expenditure must be budgeted for, given the age of most of the buildings that are in service throughout the diocese. Diocesan policy is to dispose responsibly of property for which there is no use within the foreseeable future, thereby reducing maintenance and insurance costs.

Income and Expenditure

The ordinary income of the consolidated parishes and agencies, excluding funds designated for refurbishment shows a greater deficit for the year under review than for the previous year. The net outcome - taking into account exceptional income and expenditure – shows a surplus which is higher by €280k than the previous year. This, because it is dependent on exceptional income, cannot be predicted to repeat in future years.

The Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin can continue to operate as a going concern. It must be acknowledged, however, that this is largely due to the generosity of a minority of parishioners. The actual contribution rate from parishioners ranges from 10% of families in some urban areas to 40% in some rural communities.

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

Restricted Funds

Annual collections are taken up in all of the parishes for agencies which do not belong to the diocese, but which are associated with the mission of the Church, e.g, Trocaire (the Catholic Agency for Development), Migrants, Peter's Pence (Pontifical Charities) and Holy Places. These collections are transferred directly to the relevant agency via the Elphin Diocesan Office, before the end of the financial year, using an account which is designated for this specific purpose. These monies are not shown as part of the income or expenditure of the parish, since they are restricted funds and never belong to the parish. Much of this income is designated specifically to alleviate poverty and disadvantage.

The total of such restricted funds, in the year under review, amounted to €165,734, reflecting a decrease of circa €65k. This corresponds approximately to the amount collected in 2018 for the World Meeting of Families, which did not arise in 2019. Accordingly, it can be said that the other charitable funds facilitated by the Charity remained at a similar level to 2018.

Assets

The audit report is qualified in relation to the absence of a completed asset register for the Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin. We believe that we have identified all the buildings and lands that are owned by the parishes. The work of ensuring the properties are properly registered and that the trustees are up to date, has proved far more time consuming than was anticipated. We have become aware of some properties in respect of which the trustees were not the Diocesan trustees, have since died and were not replaced. Work is now progressing to ensure that all the buildings and lands of which parishes are the beneficial owners are registered to the Elphin Diocesan Trust, which will avoid this difficulty arising in the future. As many of the properties are quite old and have the status of protected structures, there is often a significant discrepancy between their replacement value for insurance purposes (which may be quite high) and their market value (which may be little or nothing). It has taken some time to identify an appropriate and acceptable means of valuing them as assets. This work is on-going.

Catholic Primary Schools under diocesan patronage have traditionally benefitted from the charitable status of the parish with which they are affiliated. This dates from a time when the Parish Priest was the sole manager of the primary school. These schools, while remaining under the patronage of the bishop, now have their own Boards of Management which are responsible for all the financial operations of the school. The buildings and lands of these schools do, however, form part of the fixed assets of the Diocese. In preparing to submit the new Deed of Governance for this Trust, the Trustees have requested a name change to "The Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin" as distinct from "The Parishes and Schools of the Diocese of Elphin" under which the Charity has been registered.

Most second level schools are not under the patronage of the bishop, but the exceptions are the three diocesan colleges. These, like the primary schools have their own Boards of Management which are responsible for all the financial operations of the school, but the buildings and lands of these schools form part of the fixed assets of the Diocese. The new College at Summerhill Athlone (Coláiste Chiaráin) commenced the construction phase in the year under review. There will be significant costs to the Diocese related to the demolition of a derelict building on the site and the funding of an oratory in the new school. These costs will be reflected in due course in the accounts of the Elphin Diocesan Trust Fund (CHY3703).

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

It is perhaps worth noting at the conclusion of this report that, while the report is presented in late 2020, the activity which it represents all occurred in 2019, before there was any question of the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with the extension granted by the CRA, the report is submitted slightly later than usual, due to the significant logistical challenges posed by the pandemic throughout 2020.

On behalf of the Trustees



Bishop Kevin Doran

Dated this 15th day of December 2020

THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish legislation requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. The Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the entity as at the financial year end date and of the surplus or deficit of the entity for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the entity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the entity keeps adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the entity, enable at any time the assets liabilities, financial position and surplus or deficit of the entity to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Report of the Trustees comply with applicable legislation and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Trustees



Bishop Kevin Doran

Dated this 15th day of December 2020

INDEPENDENT REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

We have audited the financial statements of the Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin for the year ended 31 December 2019, which comprises of the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

This report is made solely to the Trustees of the Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Trustees those matters that we are required to state to them in the audit report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Trustees of the Parishes of the Diocese of Elphin or the Trustees' members as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and otherwise comply with relevant legislation, as required. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the entity's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed, the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the trustees and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the annual report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Basis for Qualified Opinion on Financial Statements

Our opinion on the financial statements is qualified in relation to the fixed assets of the Charity, which are not represented on its Balance Sheet, other than Family Life Centre assets and assets acquired since 2015. The process of identifying all Parish assets, their legal and beneficial ownership and the valuation thereof has not been completed to the extent that fixed assets can be represented, in full, on the Balance Sheet.

It is not possible to quantify the financial effects of this matter, if any.

**INDEPENDENT REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF
ELPHIN**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Qualified Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion on Financial Statements paragraph above, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Charity as at 31 December 2019 and its surplus for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework

Matters on which we are required to report

- We have obtained all the information and explanations, which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- In our opinion the accounting records of the Charity were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.
- In our opinion the information given in the Report of the Trustees is consistent with the financial statements.

Anthony Porter

For and on behalf of:

Porter and Co

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors

Millennium House

Stephen Street

Sligo

Dated this 15th day of December 2020

**THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019**

	2019		2018
	€	€	€
Income:			
Parish Offertory Collections	3,107,805		3,196,295
Collections designated for Renovation of Church Properties	158,185		142,714
Income designated for the support of Clergy	1,189,974		1,120,705
Public and Heritage Grant Assistance	30,162		16,207
Shrines	303,450		299,898
Revenue Commissioner Rebates	414,803		362,699
Investment and rental income	97,029		99,400
Other Parish income	655,375		728,696
Lourdes Pilgrimage income	87,244		78,383
Retreat Centre operating income	170,763		152,293
Family Life Centre operating income	8,789		195,750
	<u>6,223,579</u>		<u>6,393,040</u>
Expenditure:			
Personnel costs	2,049,648	2,106,886	
Repairs, refurbishment and maintenance	1,370,593	1,630,022	
Heat, light and power	613,001	629,707	
Insurances (Parish, VHI, motor)	522,641	516,387	
Altar supplies	190,849	195,677	
Missalettes and newsletters	104,757	103,744	
Lourdes Pilgrimage costs	83,182	91,533	
Retreat Centre operating costs	73,851	68,856	
Family Life Centre operating costs	-	83,802	
Postage and stationery	149,639	141,266	
Telephone	77,003	76,024	
Professional fees	78,906	80,779	
Audit fees	19,434	19,434	
Other overheads	280,407	307,615	
Bank charges	37,747	41,185	(6,092,917)
	<u>5,651,658</u>		
Diocesan Office levies	(480,496)	(403,385)	
Sick Priests Fund contributions	(146,610)	(154,098)	
Welfare Fund contributions	(53,769)	(62,965)	
Stewardship Fund contributions	(59,764)	(66,496)	
Related contributions received	90,277	86,816	(600,128)
	<u>(650,362)</u>		
Other special collections and levies	(47,174)	(47,714)	
Related contributions received	16,307	15,494	(32,220)
	<u>(30,867)</u>		
Administration of Charitable Funds	(165,734)	(229,794)	
Related contributions received	164,718	228,197	(1,597)
	<u>(1,016)</u>		
Net deficit before exceptional income	<u>(110,324)</u>		<u>(333,822)</u>
Donations and bequests	147,722		167,548
Profit on disposal of investments	71,227		22,010
Sale of Parish Properties	335,879		308,182
Net surplus for year	<u>444,504</u>		<u>163,918</u>

**THE PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF ELPHIN
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019**

	2019		2018
	€		€
Fixed assets:			
Property acquired post 2014	208,189		176,388
Family Life Centre assets	38,046		45,713
	<u>246,235</u>		<u>222,101</u>
Current assets:			
Investments	2,024,253		2,117,814
Cash at bank and in hand	8,738,754		8,459,396
Debtors and prepayments	30,167		55,365
	<u>10,793,174</u>		<u>10,632,575</u>
Creditors: (amounts falling due within one year)			
Diocesan Building Fund	219,992	346,737	
Creditors and accruals	257,815	380,204	
	<u>(477,807)</u>		<u>(726,941)</u>
Net current assets	<u>10,315,367</u>		<u>9,905,634</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	10,562,102		10,127,735
Creditors: (amounts falling due after more than one year)			
Government grants	-		(5,000)
Total net assets	<u><u>10,561,602</u></u>		<u><u>10,122,735</u></u>
Accumulated Reserves			
Balance at beginning of year	10,122,735		9,959,979
Surplus for year	444,504		163,918
Adjustment to opening balances	12,399		(1,162)
Transfer of Family Life Centre to independent charitable entity	(18,036)		-
	<u><u>10,561,602</u></u>		<u><u>10,122,735</u></u>