

CHURCH OF IRELAND

GENERAL SYNOD

2026

BOOK OF REPORTS

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* The reports of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC (page 66) and the Church of Ireland Pensions Board (page 104) 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

CHURCH OF IRELAND

THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY

REPORT 2026

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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	Ms Hilary Prentice
	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (Deputy)
Allocations	Canon Graham Richards
Investment	Mr Leslie Ruttle
Property	Ms Helen Arnopp
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

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Library

Braemor Park
Churchtown
Dublin D14 N735
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Email <library@rcbcoi.org>
Web <<https://library.churchofireland.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.

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 there are up to 18 co-opted members. (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 2025. 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	1	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
3	The Rt Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe		
2	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 s/he 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	3	Ven Dr Peter Thompson (2027)	Dublin and	1	Ven David Pierpoint (2027)
	0	Mrs Yvonne McFarland (2025)	Glendalough	1	Ms Ruth Gyves‡ (2028)
	0	Mrs Jane Leighton (2026)		3	Mr Derek Neilson (2026)
Clogher	3	Ven Paul Thompson (2027)	Meath	1	Rev Canon John Clarke§ (2027)
	0	Mr Michael Skuce* (2028)	and	4	Mr Mark Potterton (2028)
	4	Mrs Ethne McCord (2026)	Kildare	4	Mr Timothy Smyth (2026)
Derry and	4	Rev Canon Henry Gilmore (2027)	Cashel,	2	Very Rev Stephen Farrell (2026)
Raphoe	1	Mr Robert Ellis† (2028)	Ferns and	0	Mr William Galloway (2027)
	1	Mr Samuel Hudson (2026)	Ossory	4	Mrs Hazel Corrigan (2028)
Down and	4	Ven Mark Harvey (2027)	Cork, Cloyne	2	Very Rev Nigel Dunne (2026)
Dromore	4	Mrs Diane Ruddock (2028)	and Ross	3	Mr John Buttmer (2027)
	3	Mr Michael Johnston (2026)		3	Ms Helen Arnopp (2028)
Connor	4	Ven Barry Forde (2027)	Tuam,	2	Very Rev Niall Sloane (2026)
	2	Dr Scott Brown (2028)	Limerick	2	Mrs Heather Pope (2027)
	4	Mr Oswyn Paulin (2026)	and Killaloe	1	Mr Paul Schütz (2028)
Kilmore,	4	Very Rev Nigel Crossey (2026)			
Elphin and	2	Ms Sarah Taylor (2027)			
Ardagh	0	Dr Rita Day (2028)			

C Co-opted members (18)

1	Mr Henry Algeo (2027)	2	Mrs Judith Peters¶ (2028)	1	Mrs Wendy Taylor (2026)
1	Ms Julie Beck (2026)	0	Dr Rosemary Peters Gallagher# (2028)	0	Mr Richard Temperley (2027)
2	Mr David Lowe¶ (2028)	4	Ms Hilary Prentice (2027)	0	Ms Nadine Watters** (2028)
3	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (2027)	4	Canon Graham Richards (2027)	1	Mr David Webb# (2028)
3	Mr William Oliver (2026)	0	Mr Adrian Robinson# (2028)		
0	Ms Ade Oluborode# (2028)	0	Mr Leslie Ruttle (2026)		

In attendance: Honorary Secretaries of General Synod

- 4 Rev Canon Gillian Wharton
- 4 Mr Ken Gibson

* elected January 2026 in place of Dr John Graham (retired November 2025)

† elected October 2025 in place of Mr Stanley McFarland (retired October 2025)

‡ elected October 2025 in place of Mr Robert Neill (retired October 2025)

§ elected September 2025 in place of Ven Leslie Stevenson (resigned May 2025)

|| elected October 2025 in place of Mr Roy Benson (retired October 2025)

¶ eligible to attend three meetings maximum due to triennial retirement (re-elected May 2025)

additional co-opted members elected during 2025

** additional co-opted member elected March 2026

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 2028. Membership details together with numbers of meetings held and record of attendances for the year 2025 are shown below.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8 meetings

Ms Hilary Prentice - 8
(Chair)



Ms Hilary Prentice

Most Rev John McDowell	7	Very Rev Nigel Crossey	7
Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson	1	Rev Canon Henry Gilmore	8
Rt Rev Andrew Forster*	2	Very Rev Niall Sloane	5
Canon Graham Richards	8	Mr Henry Algeo	8
Mr Leslie Ruttle	6	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (Deputy Chair)	6
Ms Helen Arnopp	8	Mr Robert Neill†	7
Mr Michael Johnston	8	Mr Oswyn Paulin	8
		Adviser: Mr Henry Saville‡	3
		Honorary Secretary of General Synod in attendance: Rev Canon Gillian Wharton	7

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. During 2025, 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 2025 in place of Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton (retired September 2025)

† retired October 2025 (Mr Adrian Robinson appointed March 2026)

‡ retired May 2025



ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE

3 meetings

Canon Graham Richards - 3
(Chair)

Canon Graham Richards

Rt Rev Andrew Forster	3	Mr Robert Neill*	2
Most Rev John McDowell	3	Mr David Webb†	2

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

4 meetings

Mr Leslie Ruttle - 3
(Chair)

Mr Leslie Ruttle

Mr William Galloway	4	Mrs Wendy Taylor	1
Mr David Lowe	3	Mr Richard Temperley	2
Dr Rosemary Peters Gallagher‡	1	Vacant§	
Adviser: Mr Roy Benson			4

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.

* retired October 2025 (Dr Rosemary Peters Gallagher appointed March 2026)

† appointed September 2025 in place of Ms Helen Arnopp (resigned October 2024)

‡ appointed September 2025 in place of Ms Hilary Prentice (resigned July 2024)

§ due to retirement of Mr Roy Benson (September 2025)

|| appointed adviser September 2025 (formerly a member)

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

5 meetings

Ms Helen Arnopp - 5
(Chair)



Ms Helen Arnopp

Very Rev Nigel Crossey	4	Mrs Jane Leighton	3
Dr Rita Day	3	Mrs Ethne McCord	5
Ven Barry Forde	3	Mr Mark Potterton	4
Mr Samuel Hudson*	0	Mrs Diane Ruddock	5
Adviser: Mr Stanley McFarland†			3

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

Ms Julie Beck	1	Mrs Jane Leighton	0
Mrs Hazel Corrigan	1	Mr William Oliver	2
Rt Rev George Davison‡	1	Mrs Heather Pope	1
Very Rev Stephen Farrell	1	Ven 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.

* appointed December 2025 in place of Mr Stanley McFarland (retired September 2025)

† appointed adviser November 2025 (formerly a member)

‡ elected September 2025 in place of Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton (resigned February 2025)



LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

3 meetings

Mr Oswyn Paulin - 3
(Chair)

Mr Oswyn Paulin

Rt Rev Michael Burrows	3	Very Rev Niall Sloane	3
Mrs Heather Pope	3	Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson	3

Advisers:

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott	0	Canon Dr Kenneth Milne	3
Rev Dr Adrian Empey	1	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	Mr William Prentice
Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton	Mr Andrew Walker
Mrs Judith Peters	The Hon Mr Justice Declan Budd*

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

4 meetings

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC - 4
(Chair)

Mr Lyndon MacCann

Mr Henry Algeo	4	Mr Roy Benson†	4
Ms Julie Beck	4		
Adviser: Mr Henry Saville‡			2

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.

* deceased August 2025 (successor to be appointed)

† retired October 2025 (Ms Nadine Watters appointed March 2026)

‡ retired May 2025

REPORT ON THE YEAR 2025

Mission and strategy of the Representative Church Body

In 2025, the RB Executive Committee conducted a survey of the members of the Representative Body. The results of this survey informed the Executive Committee’s review of its mission, values and strategy for the coming three years, 2026 to 2028 which is available on the Church of Ireland website.

The mission of the Executive Committee is to support the mission and ministry of the Church of Ireland, with the vision to be well structured and resourced to support the current and future needs and ambitions of the Church of Ireland, holding to the values of integrity, knowledge, legal observance, probity, moral standing, ability to control and maintain standards, and with the ownership for resolving conflict.

The ambition of the Executive Committee is that:

- Our representation mirrors the diverse nature of our constituency
- We are configured to encourage, facilitate and include the contribution of RB members
- We have the required mix of skills and experience to reach our potential
- We maintain our sense of belonging amid a broad and dynamic agenda
- We remain connected and relevant

In 2025, the Executive Committee reviewed its strategic priorities, with the status of each confirmed as follows:

Priority	Purpose	Status
Funding of curacies	To provide continuation of stipendiary ministry to parishes	Completed
Chaplaincy	To develop a comprehensive funding strategy for third level chaplaincy	Completed
MindMattersCOI	To promote positive mental health across the Church	Completed
Integrate Pioneer Ministry	To support parishes and dioceses develop new forms of mission	Completed
Property strategy	To optimise the use of physical resources of the church for mission	In progress
	Develop a bespoke campus incorporating CITI, RCB Library and Church House	In progress
	To protect the historical resources of the Church and improve public access	In progress
Committee governance	To support the Executive Committee to provide effective and efficient strategic governance	In progress
Committee succession planning	Ensuring continued collective memory, diversity, and appropriate skills	In progress
Clergy development	To empower clergy to consider CITI training, post ordination CME, peer support, and mentoring	In progress

A priority is determined to be complete when it has been integrated in the ‘business-as-usual’ of the RCB. The Chief Officer reports to the Executive Committee twice yearly on progress in relation to these initiatives.

During 2024, the Irish government enacted the Charities (Amendment) Act 2024. Some of the provisions of this act were commenced during 2025 and others including the requirement for charities to report in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (‘SORP’) have yet to be commenced.

Each year, the Executive Committee reviews compliance with the Charities Regulator’s Charities Governance Code, and we are pleased to report that the Executive Committee determined that the RCB was fully compliant.

Financial markets and Total Return

The income available to the RCB to pay for operational costs and allocations is determined using the Total Return methodology applied to RB General Funds, with certain parish services and diocesan costs subsidised by way of a per cure diocesan contribution. This section of the trustee report provides an overview of the financial markets which impact on the change in the value of General Funds, defines the Total Return withdrawal rate and the diocesan/parish contributions for 2025 and the prior year.

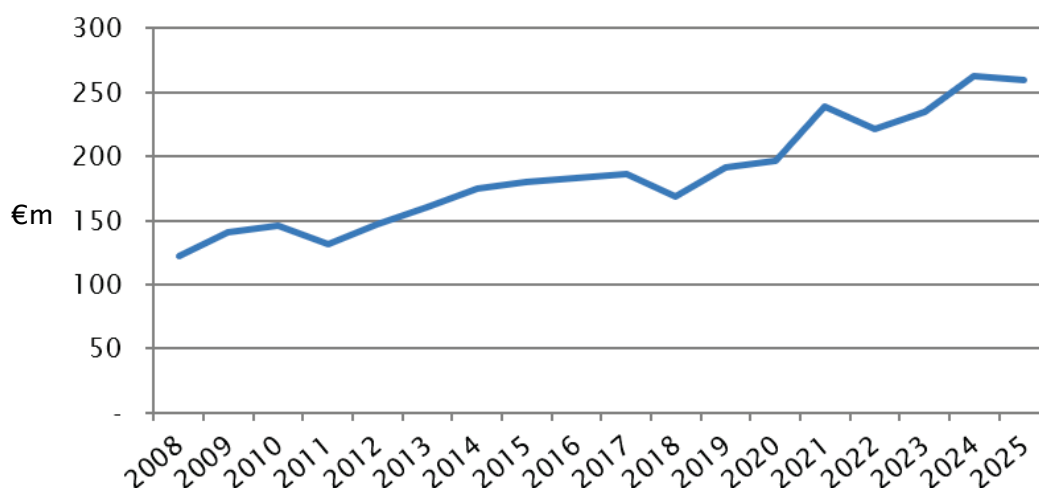
Financial markets

During 2025, global financial markets performed well with double digit returns from the MSCI World Index. European and UK equity markets reversed the previous year's comparative performance outperforming the US markets primarily due to a weakening dollar. European and UK returns were broader based led by strong gains from financial stocks and benefitting from lower interest rates, whereas US market gains were concentrated on technology and communication services sectors with a focus on the development of Artificial Intelligence. From a political perspective, the implementation of US trade tariffs caused significant market volatility with commodities, often considered defensive assets, performing well as gold rose increasing in value by 60% in the year (in USD) and silver by 140%. Bonds and property performed positively but underperformed equities, providing a diversifying portfolio effect for the General Funds and RB General Unit Trusts. At the year end global economic growth forecasts improved and inflationary pressures eased. These factors alongside solid corporate earnings provide a cautious positive outlook for the year ahead.

General Funds

RB General Funds are managed by three external fund managers, who are overseen by the Investment Committee. Two of the fund managers have an equity focus and one a bond focus. General Funds has some legacy direct investments which are managed by the RCB's Investment function.

The value of General Funds invested assets at the year end was €260m (2024: €263m). General Funds with its higher allocation to USD assets (lower exposure to European equities) underperformed its benchmark and was impacted by a weaker USD and a strategy tilt in favour of quality although in prior years it had benefited from an overexposure to US markets. Over the last 5 years, General Funds has an annualised Total Return of 8.5% against its benchmark return of 7.4%.



Total Return

The Total Return methodology seeks to ensure that the withdrawal from General Funds is sustainable in the long-term. The formula used to budget RCB expenditure is:

$$\text{Total Return maximum withdrawal} = 3.9\% \text{ of the previous 5-year average opening General Funds balance}$$

The 3.9% withdrawal rate of RB General Funds was agreed for 2025 and 2026, with the maximum withdrawal rate to be reviewed during 2026 to determine a suitable and sustainable rate for 2027 and beyond.

Diocesan contributions

Parishes and dioceses make contributions towards members' pension funds in the Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes and cover the cost of providing clergy death-in-service protection. The costs of administering these schemes are paid by the RCB. In addition to these clergy costs, dioceses and parishes made the following 'per cure' contributions as percentages of Minimum Approved Stipend (MAS):

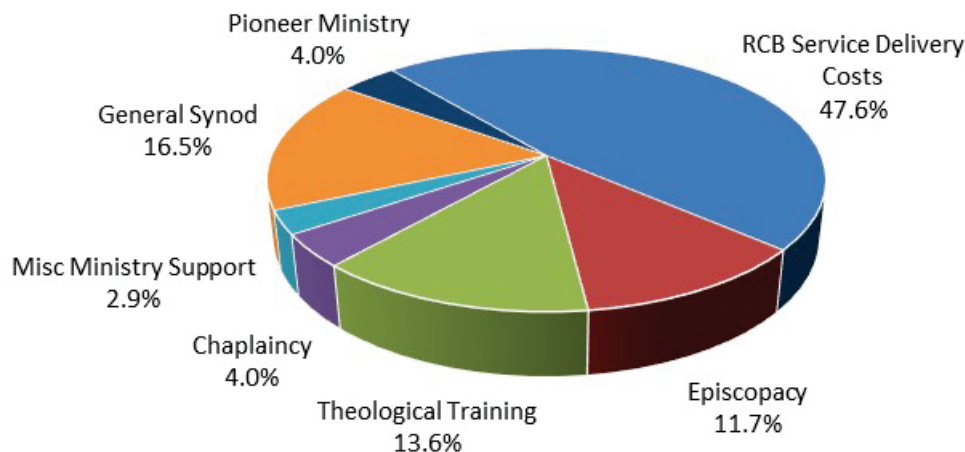
	% MAS	
	2025	2026
Financing of the episcopacy	5.6%	5.8%
Clergy Pensions Fund solvency levy	3.0%	0.8%
Clergy and Ministry Protection Fund	0.5%	2.0%
Safeguarding	0.9%	0.9%

The Clergy Pensions Fund is unlikely to require a solvency levy in 2027, whereas the parish and diocesan contributions towards safeguarding and the financing of the episcopacy are expected to increase in the future due to the increased staffing within the RCB Safeguarding function and the increase in costs of financing the episcopacy.

Expenditure and Allocations

During 2025, budgeted expenditure from General Funds and other central funds was as shown below:

RCB Budgeted Expenditure and Allocations 2025



	2025	2024
RCB service delivery including staff costs	€4.9m	€4.5m
Episcopacy including maintenance of See Houses	€1.2m	€1.1m
Theological Institute including grants and housing	€1.4m	€1.2m
Chaplaincy including Belfast and Dublin	€0.4m	€0.3m
General Synod including CIYD, education and press office	€1.7m	€1.2m
Pioneer Ministry	€0.4m	€0.3m
Misc. Ministry support	€0.3m	€0.1m
Total budgeted expenditure	€10.3m	€8.7m

It should be noted that the above breakdown is derived from the budget expenditure and allocations for the year. It is not intended that this table will reconcile to the SoFA on page 40, which represents actual expenditure.

RCB service delivery

RCB staff are managed by Heads of Departments who form the senior leadership team of the RCB. Heads of Departments manage functions which provide services for parishes and dioceses. RCB staff work from Church House Dublin, the RCB Library and the RCB offices in Belfast. During 2026, the lease on the RCB offices in Belfast will reach the end of its term and the RCB will either seek new offices or extend the existing lease.

The services provided for parishes and dioceses by the staff of the RCB include:

- 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

During 2025, the RCB recruited new roles including additional safeguarding staff, a financial and governance accountant and additional staff in the Property and Trusts Department. The costs of salaries for additional staff and the increased costs of paying professional advisers in relation to safeguarding increased the annual costs of the provision of RCB service delivery.

Theological Institute including grants and housing

During 2025, the Church of Ireland Theological Institute appointed an additional lecturer who joined the staff team for the September 2025 term. The additional teaching staff and the increase in the annual grants for residential students to 25% of MAS for single students and 35% of MAS for married students accounted for the increase in this allocation.

General Synod including CIYD, education and press office

General Synod cost increases include additional committee allocations and funding for Executive Committee financial priorities, much of which was not used during 2025, and salaries for additional Synod Department administration staff.

Pioneer Ministry

In 2022, the RCB approved a request from the Pioneer Ministry Council for a budget to cover the costs of the Pioneer Ministry National Leadership Team and to provide funding for Pioneer Ministry projects. In 2023, the RCB approved the governance and reporting arrangements and a more ambitious budget to establish five Pioneer Ministry projects each year. The RCB provides a grant for approximately half the Pioneer Ministry costs. By the end of 2025, there were nine Pioneer initiatives receiving an RCB grant, and a further five pioneers for whom training costs only are being funded by the RCB. Pioneer initiatives receive grant funding for the first five years. The forecast is that a further five initiatives would begin each year such that by 2029 the RCB will be funding total costs and grants in the region of €1m per year.

Property and trusts

The RCB is trustee for over 4,000 Church of Ireland properties including churches, parish halls, rectories, parish houses, and glebe lands ensuring that title documentation is kept secure, reducing trustee liability and removing the need to have local trustees. During 2025, the RCB received 181 (2024: 189) purchase, disposal, lease and alteration applications which were considered by the Property Committee before recommendation to the Executive Committee.

The RCB administers property grants with a single application form for parishes to complete. Forms received are considered for grant allocations from the Church Fabric and Development Fund, the Marshal Beresford Fund and, where an application indicates that the works will involve energy efficiency measures, a parish may be entitled to an enhanced grant. The Property Department manages the Church of Ireland Flood Relief Scheme. Application forms for RCB managed grants and guidance for parishes in relation to the care of property are available in the Parish Resources section of the Church of Ireland website.

The RCB is trustee for approximately 18,000 trusts entrusted to the RCB by parishes, dioceses and by way of bequest, the RCB is responsible for administering these trusts and managing the distribution of trust income. The RCB's Trusts Manager provides advice to parishes, dioceses and bishops for trusts vested in the RCB.

The Property and Trusts Department is supporting the RCB Campus Review Group, as this workgroup seeks to identify the future needs of Church House, the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and the RCB Library, to be accommodated on a new Church of Ireland campus. On the advice of Mullarkey Pedersen Architects, Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin has been selected as the most suitable site for development. The Architects have provided concept drawings, which have been discussed with staff working in Church House Dublin, the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and the RCB Library.

RB General Unit Trusts

Parishes and dioceses of the Church of Ireland can purchase units in the Sterling RB General Unit Trust (NI) or the Euro RB General Unit Trust (RI). The Unit Trusts are administered by the RCB and the funds are managed by external fund managers with the objective of providing a stable distribution and modest capital growth. The RCB Investment Manager monitors the fund portfolio, reporting to the RB Investment Committee. The RCB issues half-yearly income and valuation statements to unit holders. Quarterly unit prices are available in the Parish Resources section of the Church of Ireland website.

Further information on the RB General Unit Trusts can be found in Appendix A (page 51).

Library and archives

The RCB Library provides the central repository for the Church of Ireland, holding the records and archives for over 1,250 parishes, 20 cathedrals, 30 historical dioceses, the records of church committees, and over 1,100 collections of ecclesiastical manuscripts. In addition to the Library's custodian function, the Library provides both expert guidance to parishes on the maintenance of the records and church plate and provides public access to its library containing over 70,000 books in addition to its historical archive.

Records from 48 parishes, 23 collections of manuscripts, and the personal archive of Bishop Paul Colton were transferred to the Library's safe keeping during the year. In addition, the Library received 25 separate book collections and new publications from 14 authors.

The Library received an allocation from the RCB to purchase books for its collection and to maintain the current reading list for students at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. During 2025, the Library continued various digitisation programmes, completing the digitisation and indexing of the Journals of General Synod 1870-2020, funded by way of a generous grant from the APCK. Library staff delivered two new information leaflets for parishes: *Minding the Church Plate*, providing guidance on the protecting and maintaining parish church plate; and *Keeping the Records Safe: An Information Guide for Parishes*, emphasising the pitfalls for keeping non-current records locally and encouraging their transfer for safekeeping to the Library.

The *Red Book of Ossory* was lent under special conditions to St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny and the Library proactively worked with the Cathedral in producing a replica for permanent display. Further collaboration focused on the Bolton Library collection, which is the subject of a long-term loan agreement with the Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick.

The Chair of the Library and Archives Committee continues to work with the RCB Campus Review Group as it develops plans for expanding the Library's scope within the Church of Ireland centre in Rathmines.

A list of accessions of archives and manuscripts to the Library during 2025 is included as Appendix B (page 60).

Climate change and ESG

The RB Climate Change Policy, which is available on the Church of Ireland website, identifies four strategic headings: energy, transportation, waste, and biodiversity.

During 2025, the RCB issued a climate change survey to Church of Ireland parishes to assess the action taken by parishes to reduce carbon dependency under the four strategic headings. The results of the survey informed an application to Benefact Trust for funding to offer a building energy efficiency competition and grant funding for Church of Ireland parishes. This resulted in the RCB being awarded a strategic grant for £200,000 from Benefact Trust, with the RCB required to provide a further £100,000 in funding. This competition will focus on identifying demonstrator projects which will provide examples and encourage other parishes seeking to reduce their carbon impact. The competition and funding programme will be launched during 2026. The RCB is very grateful to Benefact Trust for providing this generous funding support.

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.

Risk management

The Audit Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee, maintains oversight of the macro and operational risks for the RCB. This oversight includes the review of Church of Ireland and RCB Risk Registers. During 2025, Interpath, the RCB's outsourced internal audit service provider, conducted an audit of the Investment Administration function, the results of which were reported to the Audit Committee and onward to the Executive Committee. A second internal audit looking at the Risk Register processes has started and is expected to be completed during 2026.

Safeguarding

The RCB's Safeguarding function develops safeguarding policy, delivers training, and provides child and vulnerable adult safeguarding advice to parishes and dioceses of the Church of Ireland.

Safeguarding policy is presented to the Safeguarding Board, which recommends policy to the Standing Committee. In 2025 an amalgamated Child Safeguarding policy was approved, and related guidance will be developed during 2026. The management of safeguarding is split between a Manager for Policy, Training and Support, and a Manager for Case Work who is responsible for safeguarding case advice. During the year the RCB appointed new positions of Safeguarding Caseworker based in Northern Ireland and a Safeguarding Administrator based in Dublin.

The Safeguarding function records training provided, advice given and vetting checks on a secure database which facilitates reporting and reporting trends to the Safeguarding Board. During 2026, a Head of Safeguarding is expected to be appointed. The costs of providing the safeguarding service are subsidised by a safeguarding contribution from parishes and dioceses.

Clergy pensions

There are three clergy pension schemes supporting the post-retirement needs of clergy. The defined benefit Clergy Pensions Fund, which was closed in 2013, and the active Clergy Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Schemes (Master Trusts) for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Each year, RCB staff attend the annual Clergy Retirement Conference to make presentations on clergy retirement provision and meet with retiring clergy.

Clergy Pensions Fund

The RB Executive Committee, on behalf of the RCB as Sponsor of the Clergy Pensions Fund, receives regular updates on developments of this clergy pension scheme.

The Clergy Pensions Trustee ('CPF Trustee') is incorporated with five directors who are responsible for scheme strategy, governance and compliance, with the RCB providing company secretarial and administration services. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Trustees of Occupational Pension Schemes and Trust Retirement Annuity Contracts, the CPF Trustee has appointed Lane Clark & Peacock as investment adviser, Mercer as Risk Key Function Holder and Forvis Mazars as Internal Audit Key Function Holder. During the year the RCB supported the Clergy Pensions Fund by providing a €20m contingent asset. The parishes and dioceses of the Church of Ireland provided the Fund with a 0.8% per cure solvency levy.

In 2025, the RCB presented a Bill to General Synod, on the recommendation of the CPF Trustee, to change the provisions of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* amending the basis of calculation of post-Normal Retirement Age pensions. The RCB in conjunction with the CPF Trustee agreed to recommend above-inflation increases in Pensionable Stipend for approval by the Standing Committee of General Synod, and approved the CPF Trustee's decision to make corresponding increases in pensions in payment. The RCB as Registered Administrator of the Fund worked with consultants to implement business continuity provisions to satisfy the requirements of the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA).

At the end of 2025, the Fund had over 800 members, over half of whom were in receipt of a pension. Following a review of scheme solvency and having taken external investment advice, the CPF Trustee de-risked the Fund to 85% inflation-linked bonds. Following this de-risking it is expected that the Fund will no longer require the CPF solvency levy and will be able over the coming years to recommend further increases in Pensionable Stipend to bring it closer to Minimum Approved Stipend levels.

The CPF Trustee Annual Report can be found in Appendix C (page 66).

A report from the Church of Ireland Pensions Board on the Supplemental Fund and other funds administered by the Board on behalf of the RCB can be found in Appendix D (page 104).

Clergy Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Schemes

During 2025, the former Clergy DC Pension Schemes for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were wound up with the final Trustee Annual Reports signed off. Member benefits have been transferred to new Euro and Sterling clergy DC pension Master Trusts with the first governance meetings for both these schemes held before the year end. Details on the scheme performance are made available to scheme members by the trustees of the Master Trusts.

Clergy and parish policies

There are five Dignity in Church Life policies available on the Parish Resources section of the Church of Ireland website:

- Clergy Illness Policy
- Clergy Grievance Procedure
- Prevention of Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Clergy Parental Sabbatical Policy
- Clergy Permanent Health Insurance Policy

During 2025, the Standing Committee of General Synod approved a revised Prevention of Bullying & Harassment Policy. The Standing Committee also approved minor changes to the Clergy Permanent Health Insurance (PHI) Policy, to allow members of a Clergy PHI Panel to know the identity of the applying member of the clergy. The revised Prevention of Bullying & Harassment Policy and the amendments to the Clergy PHI Policy will be presented to General Synod in 2026.

Communications

The staff of the RCB provide guidance to parishes, diocesan secretaries, diocesan communications officers, parish treasurers and members of select vestries.

The Parish Resources section of the Church of Ireland website is constantly reviewed and updated so that it is relevant for parishes of the Church of Ireland.

During 2025, the RCB conducted a review of its website recommending that the Church of Ireland website, the Safeguarding website, the Church of Ireland Youth Department website and the Family and Children Ministry website should be brought together as a single Church of Ireland website. This work which is overseen by the Central Communications Board will continue during 2026.

On behalf of parishes in Northern Ireland, the RCB during 2025 issued a response to a private member's bill seeking regulation of burial grounds in Northern Ireland.

ACC-19

During 2025, the RCB worked with the Anglican Communion Office in planning for the 19th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, which will take place in Belfast between 27 June and 5 July 2026.

Acknowledgements

The membership of the Representative Body and its committees comprises 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, the RCB Library and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. In particular we would like to thank the following staff who retired or left the RCB during 2025: Claire Geoghegan, Access NI Coordinator; Hazel Connor, CITI Office Assistant; Fern Jolley, Trusts Manager; Gail McGrane, Gift Aid/Pensions Administration; Caoimhe Leppard, Project Coordinator and Researcher; Joan Smyth, Property Secretary.

We welcomed the following staff to the RCB: Adam Hobson, Trusts Manager; Amy Gallagher, Gift Aid Administrator; Linto John, Synod Support Officer; Chiara de Raffaele, Safeguarding Administrator; Marcus Reidy, Facilities Manager/Caretaker; Olga Voitenko, Property Officer; Louise Connolly, Systems Accountant; Con Logue, Governance and Compliance Officer; Anthony Russell, Safeguarding Case Officer; and Sarah MacBruithin, Garda Vetting and Access NI Administrator.

Obituary

The Representative Body noted with regret the death of The Hon Mr Justice Declan Budd, a long-standing member and former Chair of the RCB's Legal Advisory Committee.

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2025

The accounts of the Representative Church Body (RCB) commence on page 30.

The Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) of the RCB is shown on page 40. While the RCB operate 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

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 €6.2m (2025: €6.31m), shows a decrease on the prior year of €0.11m. Incoming resources is made up of investment income of €5.51m and other income of €0.69m. Investment income of €5.51m (2024: €5.6m) sees a decrease on the prior year of €0.07m or 1.3%. As noted, General Funds is a Total Return fund which is not biased towards income generation.

Grants and other income of €0.297m includes €0.12m investment income generated from the proceeds of the sale of St Mary's Home to support ministerial training. The RCB received €0.05m under the VAT compensation scheme in 2025 relating to VAT paid in 2024 on goods and services. RCB funds on deposit earned €0.11m in interest (2024: €0.16m) in a less favourable interest rate environment. Subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Trust Fund of €0.17m (2024: €0.15m) is received to support ministerial training costs and Education Patronage.

Resources expended

Expenditure for 2025 shown in the SoFA is analysed in greater detail on page 46 (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 €4.84m shows an increase of €0.32m on the prior year (2024: €4.52m). A simplified analysis of cost of operations can be found on page 20 within the table “Simplified RCB and General Funds Income and Expenditure”.

Payroll and related costs less recharges see an increase on the prior year due to inflationary adjustments and recruitment to vacant and new positions. Central office costs have also increased due to inflationary adjustments and an increase in maintenance and repairs of RB owned properties.

Other operating costs include the provision of legal, taxation, financial and general professional services. In 2025 these costs amounted to €0.53m, a decrease of €0.09m on the prior year. There was a significant drop in costs to support the Clergy DC Pension Schemes which have now transferred into Master Trust arrangements.

The total resources expended which are chargeable against General Funds are €3.98m (2024: €3.67m), an increase of €0.31m on the prior year.

Allocations expended

Allocations expended in the year of €4.71m (2024: €3.89m) show an increase on the prior year by €0.82m, with reductions in some allocations offset by inflationary increases in the allocation required to support the maintenance of the stipendiary ministry and General Synod activities as well as new allocations to support the RB Executive priorities. Total underspent allocations for the year amounted to €0.97m (2024: €0.43m). Underspent allocations were unusually high due to a number of the RB Executive priorities commencing part way through the year and not requiring the full allocation made.

General Funds gains and losses

General Funds results for the year shown in the SoFA sees the total fund value of General Funds decrease by €3.52m (1.3%) to €270.83m (2024: €274.35m). This decrease is accounted for by unrealised losses on year-end revaluation of invested assets of €1.7m, realised gains on the sale of investments of €1.1m and currency losses due to a less favourable sterling year end exchange rate. The impact of global markets on General Funds in 2025 is included in the investment section on page 12.

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 €28.25m (6.9%) to €438.41m (2024: €410.16m). This increase is accounted for by unrealised gains of €24m on year end investment revaluations, realised gains on the sale of invested assets of €0.5m and currency losses due to a less favourable year end currency exchange. Net receipts amounted to €8.18m (2024: €5.6m net receipts).

The 2025 distribution payment to unit holders saw an increase of 0.7 cent in ROI to 13.7 cent per unit and an increase of 0.7 pence in NI to 13.5 pence.

Balance Sheets

The net assets shown in the Balance Sheets (page 41) 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 decreased by €3.52m to €270.83m as detailed above in General Funds. Invested fund assets decreased from €262.05m to €260.05m, an decrease of 0.76%.

Fixed Assets, loans, cash and bank balances, debtors and creditors make up €10.8m of net other assets. Included in the RCB debtors balance are loan facilities of €1.88m, made available to cathedrals and collegiate churches with choral foundations to support with essential costs of operations.

- 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 €28.25m to €438.41m as detailed above in Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds. Invested fund assets increased from €368.46m to €390.98m, an increase of 6.11%. Investment markets performed strongly during 2025 and the tilt in favour of European and UK equities was particularly beneficial as these markets outperformed the US. Cash balances held by the RCB on behalf Parishes, Dioceses and Other Trust Funds are €47.43m at 31 December 2025.

Allocations

Allocations budgeted for 2026 are provided for in 2025 as a reserve and will be drawn down in 2026. The amount provided is €5.83m and is gross of subventions. A detailed table of the 2026 budget is available on page 21. Allocations made during 2025 have been supported by a subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust of €0.17m (2024: €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 2025 with comparatives for 2024. This is based on the traditional income and expenditure model. Analysis under the Total Return model is included in the table on page 21.

Simplified RCB and General Funds (GF) income and expenditure

	2025		2024	
	RCB €'000	GF €'000	RCB €'000	GF €'000
Investment Income		5,508		5,579
Other Income		690		731
Total Income		6,198		6,310
Expenditure				
Payroll (less recharges) and related costs	(2,777)		(2,450)	
Central Office costs	(688)		(556)	
Depreciation	(293)		(305)	
RCB Library Costs	(328)		(309)	
Custodian and investment analysis fees	(82)		(78)	
Professional Fees (general)	(404)		(344)	
Professional Fees (Clergy DC Pension Funds)	(82)		(210)	
Payroll to retired staff	(39)		(63)	
Central Committee Expenses	(57)		(66)	
Audit Fees	(85)		(89)	
Church-wide MindMatters project	(0)		(47)	
Total expenses	(4,835)		(4,517)	
Expenses to be charged to Parish, Diocesan and Other Trust Funds	855		843	
Total expenses to be charged to GF	3,980	(3,980)	3,674	(3,674)
Allocations expended		(4,711)		(3,891)
Total expenditure, allocations and grants		(8,691)		(7,565)
Decrease in resources		(2,493)		(1,255)
Other recognised gains and (losses)				
Investment (losses)/gains		(595)		29,857
Other reserve movements		(434)		122
Net (loss)/gain in funds		(3,522)		28,724
Total funds brought forward		274,349		245,625
Total funds carried forward		270,827		274,349

Note: This table will reconcile to the SoFA (page 40) 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. The RCB reviews the long-term sustainable target returns and the target withdrawal on a regular basis. The next review is due in 2026. For 2025 the long-term target return was 4.0%, with the sustainable withdrawal or spend set at 3.9% (based on the five-year average fund value) to meet cost of operations and allocations in 2025 of €8.4m (2024: €7.28m). The actual withdrawal required to support cost of operations and allocations, net of other income, was below the target withdrawal of 3.9% at 3.72% (2024: 3.6%). On a total return basis 2025 recorded a surplus of €0.40m.

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 2025 with prior year comparison.

	2025 €m	2024 €m
Total Return		
Permitted Total Return withdrawal from invested assets	€8.40m	€7.28m
Other operating income	€0.69m	€0.73m
Profit on disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-
Total incoming resources	€9.09m	€8.01m
Cost of operations and allocations	(€8.69m)	(€7.56m)
Surplus from invested assets	€0.40m	€0.45m

Note: It is not intended that this table will reconcile back to the SoFA on page 40.

Currency translation rates

Year-end sterling balances have been translated into euro a rate of €1 = £0.8717 or £1 = €1.147 (2024: €1 = £0.8275 or £1 = €1.208).

Charities SORP

The Charities SORP (FRS 102) is not currently obligatory in Ireland. The RCB has considered a plan with a view to completing the transition in due course. 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 2026

Allocations provide financial support for Church-wide activities. The detailed allocations analysis for 2026 with 2025 comparisons is provided overleaf. The strategic priorities agreed by the Representative Body during 2024 are included within the various categories. The table shows the net amounts to be allocated after taking into account income from endowment funds, the financing of the episcopacy contribution, the safeguarding contribution and any other sources of funding which offset the costs of financing ministry and other central commitments.

The summary position of 2026 allocations budget is set out below and is net of subventions. Sterling balances have been exchanged at 0.8717 for 2026 budget and 2025 comparisons.

	2026 €	%	2025 €	%
A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry				
• Episcopal costs	1,253,970	23.7	1,211,916	22.4
• Chaplaincy costs	399,880	7.5	420,071	7.8
• Miscellaneous	437,804	8.3	212,470	3.9
B. Pension related costs	-	0.0	-	0.0
C. Training of ordinands	811,384	15.3	1,424,727	26.4
D. General Synod activities	1,728,843	32.7	1,646,901	30.5
E. Miscellaneous	33,208	0.6	56,442	1.0
F. Pioneer Ministry	628,604	11.9	431,399	8.0
	5,293,693		5,403,926	

2026 ALLOCATIONS BUDGET

	2026	2025	2026	2025
A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry	€	€	£	£
Episcopal Stipends and Expenses	1,202,436	1,167,018	1,027,256	985,331
<i>less</i> Episcopal Levy	(517,395)	(495,832)	(531,320)	(513,977)
	685,041	671,186	495,936	471,354
Deans of Residences/University Chaplains	132,185	109,739	154,957	159,628
Chaplaincy	150,000	150,000	-	-
Chaplaincy Support Sundry Projects	(90,000)	(50,000)	-	-
Curacy Funding	137,997	-	294,360	75,000
Curacy Support Stipends Committee	(100,000)	-	(20,000)	-
Queens University Belfast Bursar	-	-	21,476	19,975
C of I in Queen's University, Belfast	-	-	2,000	2,000
C of I in Trinity College, Dublin	3,000	2,000	-	-
Clerical Relief - Children's Allowances	25,000	30,000	25,000	26,000
- Central Church Fund	-	15,000	20,000	20,000
- Discretionary Grants	4,000	4,000	3,000	3,000
Stipends Related Costs	-	20,218	-	-
St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin	1,000	1,000	-	-
	<u>948,223</u>	<u>953,143</u>	<u>996,729</u>	<u>776,957</u>
B. Pension related costs				
Discretionary Grants - Retired Clergy	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
C. Training of Ordinands				
Training of Ordinands	401,884	484,727	-	-
Theological Institute	532,500	1,065,000	-	-
C of I College of Education	(150,000)	(150,000)	-	-
Bishops' Selection Conference	27,000	25,000	-	-
	<u>811,384</u>	<u>1,424,727</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
D. General Synod activities				
General Synod/Standing Committee	809,460	625,708	324,945	274,892
Standing Committee Support Sundry Projects	(38,000)	-	(26,200)	-
Board of Education	37,600	59,881	89,488	94,598
Education Patronage	95,059	115,000	-	-
Patronage Support CICE	(60,000)	(60,000)	-	-
Church of Ireland Youth Department	-	-	170,000	170,000
Safeguarding Officers	11,000	11,000	12,300	12,300
Safeguarding DLPs	140,000	200,000	-	-
Children & Families Ministry	100,884	83,974	-	-
Children & Families Ministry Support Auxiliary Fund	(21,666)	(21,666)	-	-
	<u>1,074,337</u>	<u>1,013,897</u>	<u>570,533</u>	<u>551,790</u>
E. Miscellaneous				
RCB Library	40,000	12,000	15,000	3,000
RCB Library Support Sundry Projects	(25,000)	-	-	-
Regular Sunday Services in Irish	1,000	1,000	-	-
MindMatters Funding	-	40,000	-	-
	<u>16,000</u>	<u>53,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>
F. Pioneer Ministry				
Pioneer Ministry	628,604	431,399	-	-
	<u>628,604</u>	<u>431,399</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>3,478,548</u>	<u>3,876,166</u>	<u>1,582,262</u>	<u>1,331,747</u>

Commentary on 2026 Allocations

A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry – €2,091,654

The total cost of Group A is budgeted at €2,091,654 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 €1,253,970. The episcopal costs are shared on a percentage basis between central Church and dioceses. Dioceses contribute to episcopal costs through the financing of the episcopacy contribution, 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 the cost of see houses.

The total gross episcopal costs are budgeted for 2026 at €2.38m (2025: €2.3m). The episcopal costs, net of financing of the episcopacy contribution, are budgeted at €1.25m or 60% of Group A costs (2025: €1.21m or 66%). The contribution for 2026 is set at 5.8% of MAS (2025: 5.6%). The contribution for 2026 is budgeted to contribute €1.13m or 47.33% (2025: €1.09m or 47.25%) of the total episcopal costs. The cost per cure for 2026 is £2,242 and €2,695 (2025: £2,089 and €2,556). A more detailed breakdown of episcopal costs is shown on page 25.

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 chaplaincies in Belfast (Queens and The Hub), Dublin (TCD and Dublin City Chaplaincy) and Cork. There is an additional allocation to fund new Chaplaincy projects. Total allocation to support third level chaplaincy is budgeted at €0.4m for 2026 (2025: €0.43m). The additional support for curacy which commenced in 2025 has an allocation of €0.35m net of support from the Stipends Fund.

B. Pension related costs – €0

No allocations were requested in 2026 or 2025 to support the supplemental or discretionary funds.

C. Training of ordinands – €811,384

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

The total budgeted for 2026, net of subvention from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust, is €0.8m. This is a significant decrease on 2025 because the allocation represents only a six month grant as part of the transition from academic year reporting to calendar year reporting. Allocations will revert to 12 months in 2027.

The training of ordinands budget includes the cost of student grants, student accommodation, fees paid to Trinity College Dublin and external lecturer fees. The total budgeted costs for 2025/6 of training of ordinands are €401,884 (2024/25: €484,727). For the academic year 2025/26 total student numbers are 11 ordinands in full-time training and 18 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 six months from 1st July to 31st December 2026 is €532,500 (2025/26: €1,065,000).

Extracts from the draft accounts of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute for the 18 months ended 31 December 2025 are included as Appendix E (page 109).

D. General Synod activities – €1,728,843

The General Synod budget of €1,728,843 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 €82k. This reflects an increase in Standing Committee and General Synod costs offset by a number of other increases and decreases in particular in the new categories from the RB Executive priorities which were more accurately budgeted in 2026.

The costs 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 – €33,208

Group E continues to provide allocations to RCB Library and €1,000 is provided for the maintenance of the Irish language as part of regular Church of Ireland worship.

F. Pioneer Ministry – €628,604

The total cost of Group F is €628,604 and represents an allocation to support the Pioneer Ministry National Leadership team costs, part-time administrator, annual national conference and other general expenses as well as training. This allocation is to fund 9 pioneers in funded projects and 14 pioneers with training costs only over the course of 2026.

CLERGY REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Minimum Approved Stipends (MAS) 2026

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 2025 was 3.6%. The Stipends Committee in reviewing Northern Ireland MAS recommended to the Representative Body a 3.6% increase from 1 January 2026.

Republic of Ireland — The Consumer Price Index for the year to 30 June 2025 was 1.8%. The Stipends Committee in reviewing the Republic of Ireland MAS recommended to the Representative Body that a 1.8% increase be applied from 1 January 2026.

The Standing Committee received and agreed a recommendation from the Representative Body that increases of 3.6% in Northern Ireland and 1.8% in the Republic of Ireland be applied to the Minimum Approved Stipend for 2026. Consequently, levels of Minimum Approved Stipend for 2026 are:

	2026	2025
Northern Ireland	£38,653	£37,310
Republic of Ireland	€46,462	€45,640

Episcopal costs

The breakdown of total episcopal costs is summarised as follows:

	Republic of Ireland		Northern Ireland	
	€	€	£	£
	2026	2025	2026	2025
(1) Stipends together with state insurance costs	534,233	524,313	416,313	394,951
(2) Pension costs	81,912	89,912	57,510	62,288
(3) Offices of the Sees expenses	387,937	389,660	281,523	271,204
(4) See Houses and other costs	464,712	429,490	317,713	302,691
Totals (gross)	1,468,794	1,433,375	1,073,059	1,031,134
(5) Less endowment income	(266,358)	(266,358)	(45,803)	(45,803)
Totals (net of income)	1,202,436	1,167,017	1,027,256	985,331

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.
(i.e. 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.
(i.e. property maintenance and other costs that are shared across all the Episcopacies)
- (5) Income from investments and rent of See House lands.
- (6) During 2024 a review of episcopal expenses was undertaken at the request of the Executive Committee by the Head of Finance with oversight from the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Chair of the Stipends Committee. The focus was to ensure that there was adequate central funding provision to allow Bishops and Archbishops to discharge their diocesan and, where applicable, their provincial, national and international obligations. The outcome of this review was reflected in the budgets from 2025.

Locomotory allowances 2026

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 2026 and the locomotory rates for 2026 are as shown below:

Republic of Ireland – Revenue Commissioners approved rates:

Distance bands	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Additional rate	Engine capacity 1201- 1500cc	Additional rate	Engine capacity 1501cc & over	Additional 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 and no changes have been made since then. No changes were proposed for 2026. 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	Additional rate per mile	Additional 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 2025/2026

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 2025	
	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Over 11 attending secondary school	€675	£130
Third level students (up to age 23)	€340	£510
Eligible orphans	€675	£510

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 rates were reviewed by the Stipends Committee in October 2025 and no changes were recommended.

Grants are also available from other sources and a list of such possible sources is available on the Church of Ireland website at <www.churchofireland.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/EducationAssistance.pdf>

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.

Following an analysis of grants and claims made over the previous 5 years, temporary maximum levels were approved by the Executive Committee in June 2025 to be reviewed by the Stipends Committee. At its September meeting the Stipends Committee agreed that the temporary maximum levels be accepted and set as the new maximum grant levels. These rates will continue to be monitored.

The new approved level for an individual relocation grant is limited to 2/3 of actual cost and is subject to a maximum of €5,000 or £3,400 in the case of moves within the island. In the case of moves to the island the maximums are €6,500 and £5,000.

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.

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.)

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.”

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.

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.

Further information is available from Church House Dublin and at <www.churchofireland.org/parish-resources/parish-finance>, under the heading ‘Advice for Treasurers’.

Republic of Ireland

Tax relief is available on donations of €250 or more to approved bodies under Section 848A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, with the tax relief being repaid to the charity.

Further information is available from Church House Dublin and at <www.churchofireland.org/parish-resources/parish-finance>, under the heading ‘Advice for Treasurers’.

Donations, bequests and funds received

A list of funds received by the RCB in 2025 on behalf of parishes, dioceses and special trusts is included as Appendix F (page 111).

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.

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 2026:

	€
A. Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry	
• Episcopal costs	1,253,970
• Chaplaincy costs	399,880
• Miscellaneous	437,804
B. Pension related costs	-
C. Training of ordinands	811,384
D. General Synod activities	1,728,843
E. Miscellaneous	33,208
F. Pioneer Ministry	628,604
	5,293,693

II. Safeguarding

That, in accordance with the Statute Ch III of 2018, the General Synod hereby affirms the decision of the Representative Body that the rate of contribution from each diocese toward Safeguarding in respect of the year 2027 be set at 2.25% of the Minimum Approved Stipend in force at 1 January 2027 multiplied by the sum of the number of cures, including vacant cures, in such diocese at 30 June 2026.

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – PAGE 1

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025

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

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TRUSTEE

- The Representative Church Body

RB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

- Ms HJ Prentice

RB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (*ex officio*)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| - The Archbishop of Armagh | - Mr L Ruttle (Investment Committee) |
| - The Archbishop of Dublin | - Ms H Arnopp (Property Committee) |
| - Canon GC Richards (Allocations Committee) | - Mr M Johnston (Stipends Committee) |

RB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (elected)

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Rt Rev Dr WP Colton (retired 16 September 2025) | - Mr LJW MacCann (Deputy Chair) |
| - Rt Rev AJ Forster (appointed 16 September 2025) | - Mr H Algeo |
| - Rev Canon H Gilmore | - Mr O Paulin |
| - Very Rev N Crossey | - Mr RS Neill (retired 21 October 2025) |
| - Very Rev NJW Sloane | |

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 | Mr D Ritchie |
| - Head of Finance | Ms J Bond |
| - Head of Synod Services and Communications | Mrs J Maxwell |
| - Head of Property and Trusts | Mrs P High |
| - Senior Solicitor | Mr M McWha |

OFFICE: Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin D06 CF67.

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

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

PAGE 4

The Representative Body of the Church of Ireland incorporated under the name of *The Representative Church Body* (RCB) is an incorporated trustee established by royal charter to hold property and financial assets on behalf of the Church. The members of the RB Executive Committee have been designated as the charity trustees of the RCB for the purposes of the Charities Act 2009.

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 2025 for General Funds and for other trust funds are set out in the financial statements. General Funds total funds employed decreased by €3.5m to €270.83m. General Funds with its higher allocation to USD assets (lower exposure to European equities) underperformed its benchmark and was impacted by a weaker USD and a strategy tilt in favour of quality although in prior years it had benefited from an overexposure to US markets. Over the last 5 years, General Funds has an annualised Total Return of 8.5% against its benchmark return of 7.4%.

For 2025 the long-term sustainable target return was 4%, with the target withdrawal or spend set at 3.9% (based on the five-year average fund value) to meet cost of operations and allocations in 2025 of €8.40m (2024: €7.28m). The actual withdrawal required to support cost of operations and allocations, net of other income, was below the target withdrawal of 3.9% at 3.72% (2024: 3.38%). On a total return basis 2025 recorded a surplus of €0.40m. 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 €28.25m to €438.41m. The year 2025 saw markets continue a remarkable rally with double digit returns across major indices both in US and international markets in local currency terms notwithstanding significant volatility over the year. These funds are biased towards dividend paying stocks. Net receipts and withdrawals from these funds amounted to net receipts of €8.18m (2024: net receipts €5.55m). Distribution of income is made biannually from these funds and together with the refund of Gift Aid reclaimed for NI parishes amounted to €14.18m. The 2025 distribution payment to unit holders saw an increase of 0.7 cent in ROI to 13.7 cent per unit and an increase of 0.7 pence in NI to 13.5 pence per unit.

During 2025, the Executive Committee reviewed compliance with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code and determined that the RCB continues to be fully compliant.

Statement of RB Executive Committee's Responsibilities

The RB Executive Committee is responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with the accounting policies of the RCB. In preparing the financial statements the RB Executive Committee 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 RB Executive Committee confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The RB Executive Committee 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.

HJ Prentice
Chair, Executive Committee
10 March 2026

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

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

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

- for the year ended 31 December 2025 have been properly prepared in all material respects, in accordance with the basis of preparation in note (iii) and accounting policies on pages 8 to 10 of the financial statements.

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the balance sheet as at 31 December 2025;
- the statement of financial activities for the year then ended;
- the cash flow statement 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.

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.

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

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 RB 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.

Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit

Responsibilities of the RB Executive Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of RB Executive Committee responsibilities set out on page 4 the RB 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 RB 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 RB Executive Committee 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 RB 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.

This description forms part of our auditors' report.

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

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Use of this report

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the RB 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.



PricewaterhouseCoopers

Chartered Accountants

Place

Date 10 March 2026

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

PAGE 8

The significant accounting policies adopted by the 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 3.17(c) - Financial Statement Presentation (including FRS 100 Application of Financial Reporting Requirements)
- Section 5.5 - Statement of Comprehensive Income and Income Statement
- Section 6 - Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Income and Retained Earnings
- Section 7 - Statement of Cashflows
- Section 28.43 and 28.44 - Employee Benefits
- Section 33 - Related Party Disclosures.

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

PAGE 9

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with FRS 102 requires the use of certain key assumptions concerning the future, and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the end of the financial year. It also requires the RB Executive Committee to exercise judgement in the process of applying the RCB's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or areas where assumptions and estimates have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are disclosed below in note (iv).

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

(iv) **Critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty**

Estimates and judgements made in the process of preparing the entity financial statements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

The RB Executive Committee make estimates and assumptions concerning the future in the process of preparing the entity financial statements. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are addressed below.

• **Valuation of investments**

The valuation of investments, which includes unquoted investments, is based on an independent valuation of the investments, based on the underlying assets values in the financial statements of the quoted and unquoted investment entity. There is a level of estimation involved in these valuations. The RB Executive Committee reviews the individual valuations applied which includes considering subsequent performance of the investments and takes account of advice provided by external investment advisors.

Valuation of investments

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 = £0.8717 (2024 €1 = £0.8275).

- (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 1st 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 1st 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 2026.

- (xiv) **Going concern**

The RCB meets its day-to-day working capital requirements through its bank facilities. The RCB's forecasts and projections, taking account of reasonably possible changes in trading performance, show that the RCB should be able to operate within the level of its current facilities and investment reserves. After making enquiries, the RB Executive Committee has a reasonable expectation that the RCB has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Therefore, these entity financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

- (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

PAGE 11

	Notes	Year ended 31st December 2025			Year ended 31st December 2024		
		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
Incoming resources							
Income from investments		-	5,508	11,465	-	5,579	10,955
Income from property and loans		-	89	-	-	80	-
Deposit Interest		-	111	2,001	-	161	2,224
Tax refund Gift Aid		-	-	1,567	-	-	1,637
Grants and other income		-	297	-	-	340	-
Subvention from other Church funds		-	193	-	-	150	-
		-	6,198	15,033	-	6,310	14,816
Resources expended							
Cost of operations							
Cost of generating funds	5	2,147	-	-	1,985	-	-
Cost of charitable activities	5	1,443	-	-	1,310	-	-
Cost of governance activities	5	720	-	-	605	-	-
Other operating costs	5	525	-	-	617	-	-
RCB costs recovered	5	(4,835)	3,980	855	(4,517)	3,674	843
Net incoming resources before allocations and distributions		-	2,218	14,178	-	2,636	13,973
Allocations, distributions and other charges							
- Allocation expended in year	6a,6b	-	4,711	-	-	3,891	-
- Distributions		-	-	14,178	-	-	13,973
		-	4,711	14,178	-	3,891	13,973
Decrease in resources before recognised gains and losses	4	-	(2,493)	-	-	(1,255)	-
Recognised gains and (losses)							
(Losses)/Gains unrealised on revaluation	4,7	-	(1,723)	23,968	-	25,814	12,947
Gains realised on invested assets	4,7	-	1,128	494	-	4,043	875
Currency movements	4,7	-	(201)	(4,394)	-	348	3,893
Other recognised (losses)	4,11	-	(233)	-	-	(226)	-
Net (losses)/gains in funds		-	(3,522)	20,068	-	28,724	17,715
Total funds brought forward		-	274,349	410,157	-	245,625	386,892
Net receipts	7(c)	-	-	8,183	-	-	5,550
Total funds carried forward		-	270,827	438,408	-	274,349	410,157

Signed: HJ Prentice

H Algeo

Date: 10 March 2026

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND
BALANCE SHEET
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	Notes	As at 31st December 2025			As at 31st December 2024		
		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
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	1	6,562	-	-	6,688	-	-
INVESTMENTS							
Loans		-	1,100	-	-	1,215	-
Invested fund assets	2,3	-	260,048	390,977	-	262,051	368,459
		<u>6,562</u>	<u>261,148</u>	<u>390,977</u>	<u>6,688</u>	<u>263,266</u>	<u>368,459</u>
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors		2,177	318	-	2,482	290	-
Cash on short term deposit	10	-	2,206	47,431	-	3,086	41,698
		<u>2,177</u>	<u>2,524</u>	<u>47,431</u>	<u>2,482</u>	<u>3,376</u>	<u>41,698</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES							
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		(1,584)	-	-	(1,463)	-	-
		<u>(1,584)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,463)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		593	2,524	47,431	1,019	3,376	41,698
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		7,155	263,672	438,408	7,707	266,642	410,157
BALANCE WITH GENERAL FUNDS		<u>(7,155)</u>	<u>7,155</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(7,707)</u>	<u>7,707</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>270,827</u>	<u>438,408</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>274,349</u>	<u>410,157</u>
FUNDS EMPLOYED	4,7(c)	<u>-</u>	<u>270,827</u>	<u>438,408</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>274,349</u>	<u>410,157</u>

Signed: HJ Prentice

H Algeo

Date: 10 March 2026

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND
CASH FLOW STATEMENT
YEAR END 31 DECEMBER 2025
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		2025			2024		
	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
NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE ALLOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS	8	-	2,875	14,178	-	2,888	13,973
ALLOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS							
Allocations expended and distributions		-	(4,711)	(14,178)	-	(3,891)	(13,973)
		-	(1,836)	-	-	(1,003)	-
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS							
Purchase of investments		-	(102,868)	(3,927)	-	(121,459)	(4,795)
Sale of investments including currency movements		-	102,756	1,285	-	115,941	2,084
Gains and losses including currency movements		-	826	(4,348)	-	4,228	302
Other fund charges		-	(382)	-	-	(535)	-
Repayment of glebe, miscellaneous and car loans		-	115	-	-	140	-
Purchase of fixed assets	1	-	(286)	-	-	(337)	-
NET CASH FLOW FROM CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS		-	161	(6,990)	-	(2,022)	(2,409)
FINANCING							
Net cash inflow for specific trusts		-	-	12,698	-	-	6,375
NET CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING		-	-	12,698	-	-	6,375
(DECREASE)/INCREASE IN CASH	9	-	(1,675)	5,708	-	(3,025)	3,966

Signed: HJ Prentice

H Algeo

Date: 10 March 2026

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****PAGE 14****1 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Premises €'000	Furniture and fittings €'000	Office equipment €'000	Total €'000
<u>Cost</u>				
At 1st January 2025	8,662	786	3,018	12,466
Additions	-	64	222	286
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Currency adjustment	(143)	(1)	(8)	(152)
At 31st December 2025	8,519	849	3,232	12,600
<u>Accumulated depreciation</u>				
At 1st January 2025	2,741	598	2,439	5,778
Charge for year	160	23	110	293
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Currency adjustment	(25)	-	(8)	(33)
At 31st December 2025	2,876	621	2,541	6,038
<u>Net book value</u>				
At 31st December 2024	5,921	188	579	6,688
At 31st December 2025	5,643	228	691	6,562

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 2025 are offset by interest rate derivative swaps. The valuation movement of the currency forwards at 31 December 2025 is (€0.04m) (2024: - €0.09m), with a movement of €0k 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

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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 2025.

	2025			Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	2025
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Financial assets at fair value				
Bonds	21,173	45,734	-	66,907
Equity	162,729	-	-	162,729
Externally Managed Funds	-	4,628	-	4,628
Alternatives	-	-	10,016	10,016
Cash	15,768	-	-	15,768
	<u>199,670</u>	<u>50,362</u>	<u>10,016</u>	<u>260,048</u>

	2024			Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	2024
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Financial assets at fair value				
Bonds	16,382	51,086	-	67,468
Equity	160,685	-	-	160,685
Externally Managed Funds	-	4,549	-	4,549
Alternatives	-	-	12,786	12,786
Cash	16,563	-	-	16,563
	<u>193,630</u>	<u>55,635</u>	<u>12,786</u>	<u>262,051</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 €8.8m (2024: €7m). 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 €9.4m (2024: €7.4m) 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 €37k for the year (2024: €28k).

3 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS

	2025	2024
	€'000	€'000
RB General Unit Trusts	390,977	368,435
Cash	-	24
	<u>390,977</u>	<u>368,459</u>

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED****PAGE 16****4 FUNDS EMPLOYED**

	Balance at 1.1.25 €'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 31.12.25 €'000
Capital invested	263,046	(2,493)	3	(118)	559	1,128	(775)	(1,723)	259,627
Property Reserve	4,018	-	(142)	-	-	-	-	-	3,876
Invested assets	267,064	(2,493)	(139)	(118)	559	1,128	(775)	(1,723)	263,503
Net capital invested	267,064	(2,493)	(139)	(118)	559	1,128	(775)	(1,723)	263,503
Designated reserves									
Allocations reserve for following year (Note 6)	5,768	-	(53)	118	-	-	-	-	5,833
Staff pensions reserve	101	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	103
Sundry designated reserves	1,416	-	(9)	-	(19)	-	-	-	1,388
	274,349	(2,493)	(201)	-	542	1,128	(775)	(1,723)	270,827

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

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5 COST OF OPERATIONS

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Cost of generating funds		
Payroll and related costs	1,835	1,715
Less - payroll & other costs recharged	(272)	(260)
	<u>1,563</u>	<u>1,455</u>
External Investment managers and other costs	82	78
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	352	292
Depreciation	150	160
	<u>2,147</u>	<u>1,985</u>
Cost of charitable activities		
Payroll and related costs	1,112	953
Less - payroll costs recharged	(285)	(281)
	<u>827</u>	<u>672</u>
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	202	182
Depreciation	86	100
RCB Library	328	309
Church Wide Mental Health Project	-	47
	<u>1,443</u>	<u>1,310</u>
Cost of governance activities		
Payroll and related costs	625	558
Less - payroll costs recharged	(238)	(235)
	<u>387</u>	<u>323</u>
Office costs, maintenance, insurance, rates & related	134	82
Depreciation	57	45
Audit fees	85	89
Central committee & Episcopal Electoral expenses	57	65
Episcopal electors expenses	-	1
	<u>720</u>	<u>605</u>
Other operating costs		
Professional fees	486	554
Payroll payments to retired staff	39	63
	<u>525</u>	<u>617</u>
Total cost of operations	<u>4,835</u>	<u>4,517</u>

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 (xvi), on page 10 of the financial statements.

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
PAGE 18
6 ALLOCATIONS

	2026 €'000	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
(a) Reserve for following year			
Maintenance of the stipendiary ministry	2,305	1,895	1,527
Training of ordinands	962	1,575	1,302
General Synod activities	1,879	1,729	1,234
Miscellaneous financing	59	56	17
Pioneering Ministry	628	431	241
Reserve for following year (see Note 4)	5,833	5,686	4,321
		2025 €'000	2024 €'000
(b) Expended in year			
Allocation Approved in Year		5,686	4,321
Less - allocations (unexpended)		(975)	(430)
		4,711	3,891

The reserve for 2026 Allocations included in designated reserves in Note 4, is the gross amount committed by General Funds to be spent on wider Church activities in 2026.

7 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS

	Balance at 1.1.25 €'000	Currency translation movements €'000	Capital changes/ movements €'000	Profit on sales €'000	Revaluation movements €'000	Balance at 31.12.25 €'000
(a) INVESTED CAPITAL						
Parish trusts and glebe sales	205,639	(2,428)	(49)	483	12,574	216,219
Diocesan stipend and general funds	42,053	(745)	132	-	2,923	44,363
Diocesan miscellaneous trusts	16,768	(215)	1,106	-	1,155	18,814
Diocesan episcopal funds	10,510	(83)	85	-	689	11,201
	274,970	(3,471)	1,274	483	17,341	290,597
Sundry trusts	86,037	(696)	3,591	11	5,280	94,223
General Synod funds	15,650	(134)	41	-	1,011	16,568
Trusts for retired clergy and spouses	6,066	(93)	1,977	-	336	8,286
	382,723	(4,394)	6,883	494	23,968	409,674

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

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7 PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER TRUST FUNDS (CONTINUED)

(b) PARISH, DIOCESAN AND OTHER FUNDS RESERVES

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Designated		
Diocesan stipend & general funds	7,924	8,726
Parish endowments	390	445
Miscellaneous diocesan trusts	935	917
General Synod trusts	319	302
Other trust funds	13,903	12,804
Clergy pensions & related funds	845	785
Trust creditors	2,072	1,269
	<u>26,388</u>	<u>25,248</u>
Undesignated		
Auxiliary and Sundry Projects Funds	2,346	2,186
	<u>2,346</u>	<u>2,186</u>
Summary - reserves		
Designated	26,388	25,248
Undesignated	2,346	2,186
	<u>28,734</u>	<u>27,434</u>

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

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Capital funds invested	409,674	382,723
Designated and undesignated reserves	28,734	27,434
	<u>438,408</u>	<u>410,157</u>
Net receipts		
Capital receipts (7a)	6,883	2,826
Movement in reserves (7b)	1,300	2,724
	<u>8,183</u>	<u>5,550</u>

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

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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	2025			2024		
		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		-	2,217	14,178	-	2,636	13,973
Other recognised (losses)/gains		(973)	973	-	(512)	512	-
Change in other debtors		305	(28)	-	(63)	77	-
Change in creditors		121	-	-	(94)	-	-
Net amortisation of fixed assets	1	260	-	-	332	-	-
Transfer		287	(287)	-	337	(337)	-
Net cash inflow		-	2,875	14,178	-	2,888	13,973

9 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CASH DURING THE YEAR

	Notes	2025			2024		
		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		-	(1,583)	6,497	-	(3,127)	4,049
Effect of foreign exchange rate changes		-	(92)	(788)	-	102	(83)
(Decrease)/increase in cash		-	(1,675)	5,709	-	(3,025)	3,966
Balance at 1 January		-	19,649	41,722	-	22,674	37,756
Balance at 31 December	10	-	17,974	47,431	-	19,649	41,722

10 ANALYSIS OF CASH BALANCES

Cash on short term deposit	-	2,206	47,431	#	-	3,086	41,698
Cash at bank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash held by investment managers	-	15,768	-	-	-	16,563	24
	-	17,974	47,431		-	19,649	41,722

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

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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 10% at 31 December 2025.

(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

The RB Executive Committee note the escalation of activities in the Middle East area which occurred on the 28th February 2026, and while it is not envisaged that they will have any direct impact on the RCB, there is a risk that investment markets may be impacted in the short to medium term and they will continue to monitor RCB investments closely in this regard.

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

Subsequent to the Balance Sheet date, the RCB has been notified by a Church of Ireland Diocese in Northern Ireland that an individual has made an allegation of historical safeguarding abuse. The RCB has in the past provided financial support to Dioceses in relation to other safeguarding matters which have arisen. While the RCB envisages that it may incur some future costs in assisting the Dioceses, it is too early to provide an estimate of the extent or timing of any 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 10 March 2026.

APPENDIX A
GENERAL UNIT TRUSTS
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND
EXTRACTS FROM INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

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THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)
INVESTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

FUND OBJECTIVE

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

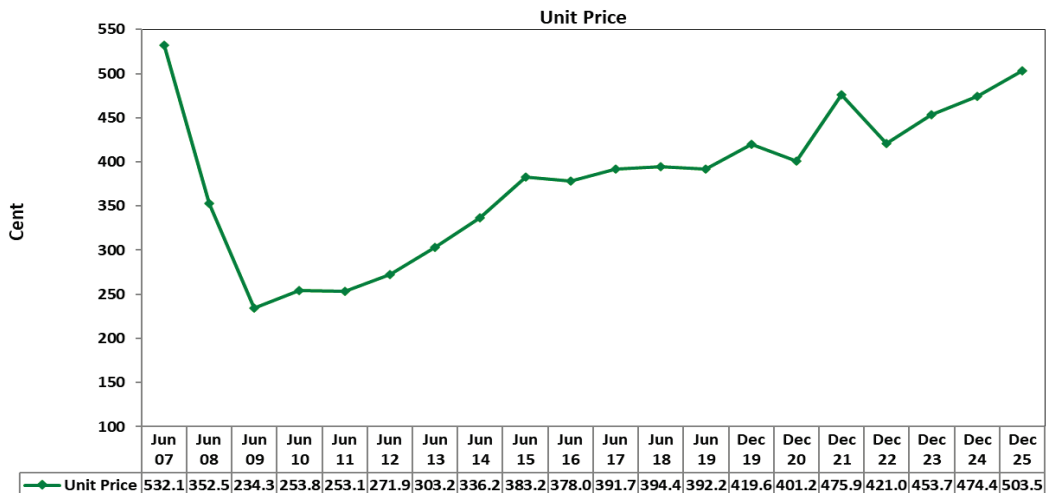
PERFORMANCE

Annualised total returns (capital plus income) %			
Fund	1 year	3 years	5 years
RB General Unit Trust (RI)	10.6	10.1	8.4
RCB Benchmark*	10.0	9.9	7.3
RB General Unit Trust (RI) Capital	6.1	6.1	4.6
ROI Inflation (CPI)	2.8	2.9	4.5

* 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 2025, the Fund had a total return (capital and income) of 10.6% slightly ahead of the benchmark at 10.0%. Outperformance on both the Fixed Income and Equity side helped as did the underweight position in global equities in favour of Europe. The Investment Committee, as part of its oversight and supervisory duties, monitors the various Fund managers' performance against the fund's objectives and Benchmarks.

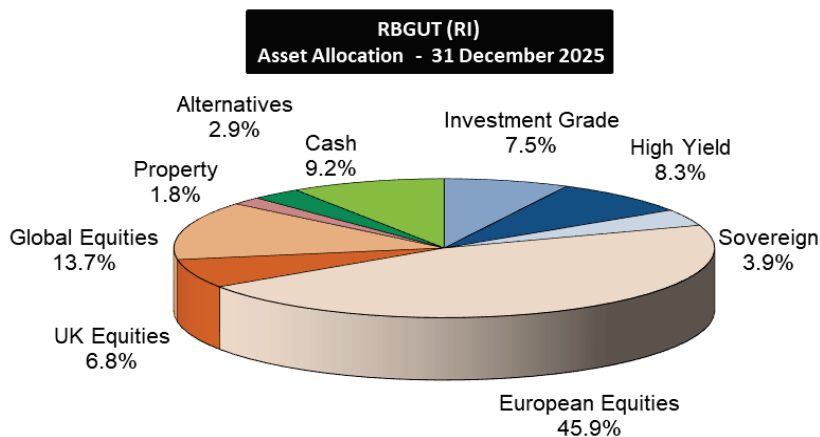
The historic price of a unit is detailed in the below chart:



TRUST ASSET COMPOSITION

The market value of the investments, including the value of the capital deposit account was €308.46m.

The investment profile in terms of distribution of the assets (by value) at 31 December 2025 is displayed in the following chart:



THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME DISTRIBUTION TO UNIT HOLDERS

The December distribution was increased to 5.9 cent (from 5.2 cent per unit in 2024) with the June distribution unchanged at 7.8 cent, resulting in a total distribution for the year of 13.7 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 stable and sustainable distribution going forward.

Based on the value of a unit at 31 December 2025 of €5.04, and a full year distribution of 13.7 cent, the distribution yield was 2.72%. (The comparative figures for 31 December 2024 showed a yield of 2.74% based on a unit value then of €4.74 and a full year distribution of 13.0 cent). During the year there was a transfer of €0.94m to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve resulting in a DER of €8.59m or 2.7% of the net asset value of the fund.

There were net inputs of €2.53m to the Fund for the year to 31 December 2025, reflecting new cash of €3.53m from unitholders less redemptions of €1m.

Environmental and Social Governance (ESG)

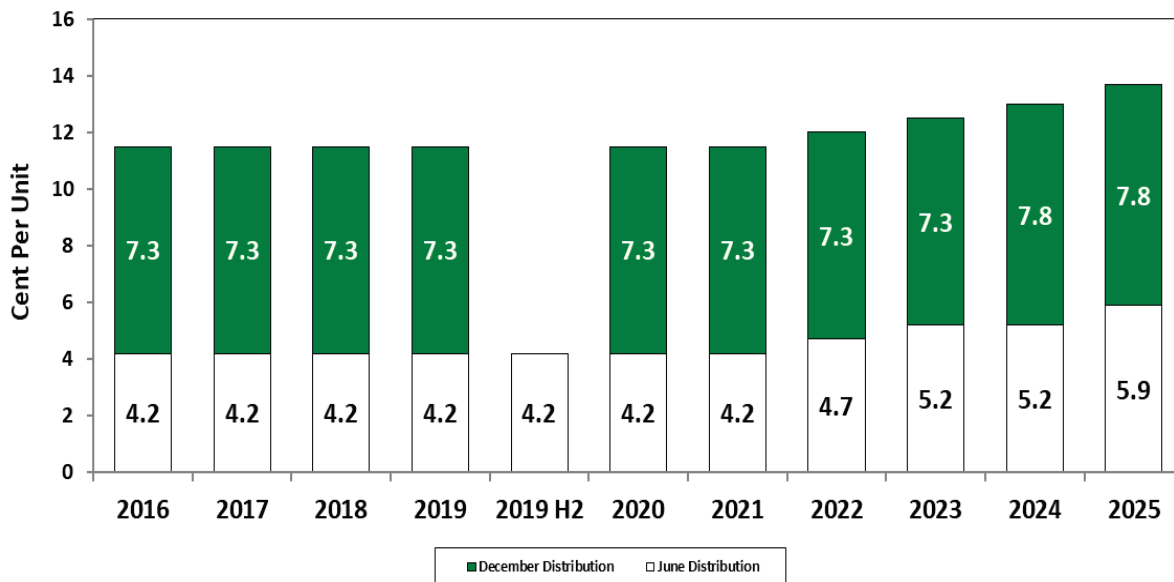
In the reporting period, the Investment Committee monitored and carried out an assessment of exposure to ESG risk. All Fund Managers are compliant with the RCB’s ESG Investment policy and restrictions.

A copy of the ESG investment policy can be found on our website

<<https://www.churchofireland.org/cmsfiles/files/information/resources/ESG-Investment-Policy-2026-FINAL.pdf>>

Income Distributions (2016 – 2025) - Financial Year-End 31 December 2025

(Financial Year-End June 30th 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 2026

THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)
STATEMENT OF TOTAL RETURN

	Year ended 31 December 2025 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2024 €'000
Income	10,024	9,254
Expenses	(132)	(138)
Net income	9,892	9,116
Distributions	(8,949)	(8,408)
Transfer to dividend equalisation reserve	943	708
Net gains on investment activities		
- Net realised gains	7,672	2,450
- Net change in unrealised gains on investments	10,271	10,002
- Net change in currency exchange gains	32	28
Net increase in net assets from investment activities	18,918	13,188
Funds brought forward	295,675	279,437
Funds received	3,530	3,906
Funds withdrawn	(1,278)	(856)
Funds carried forward	316,845	295,675

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: *HJ Prentice*
 RL Ruttle
Date: *10 March 2026*

THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)
BALANCE SHEET

	Year ended 31 December 2025 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2024 €'000
Investments	288,025	271,136
Current assets		
Debtors	29,290	24,886
Cash at bank	2	1
	29,292	24,887
Current liabilities		
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	472	348
	472	348
Net current assets	28,820	24,539
Total assets	316,845	295,675
Trust capital fund	316,845	295,675

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: *HJ Prentice*
 RL Ruttle
Date: *10 March 2026*

THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)

INVESTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

FUND OBJECTIVE

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

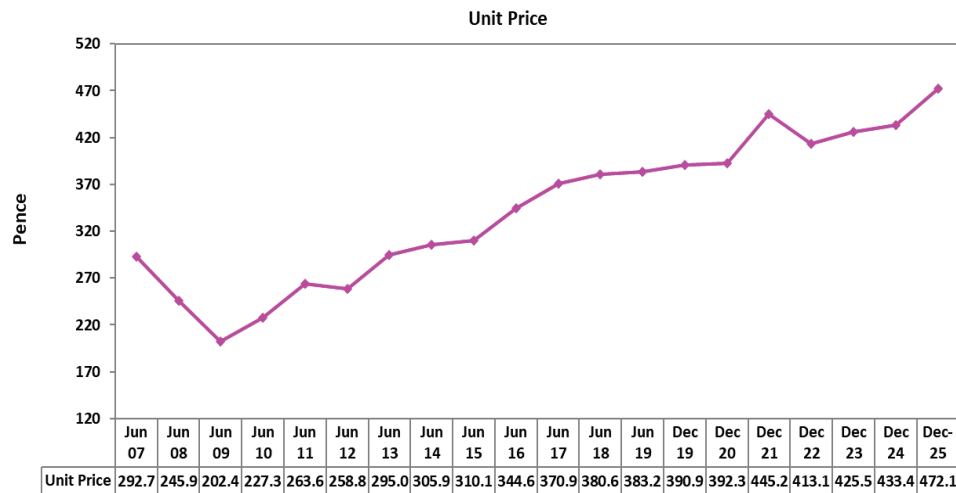
PERFORMANCE

Annualised total returns (capital plus income) %			
Fund	1 year	3 years	5 years
RB General Unit Trust (NI)	13.8	8.6	7.6
RCB Benchmark*	14.3	8.6	6.2
RB General Unit Trust (NI) Capital	8.9	4.6	3.8
UK Inflation (CPI)	3.4	4.4	4.9

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

In 2025, the Fund had a total return (capital and income) of 13.8% slightly behind benchmark at 14.3%. European equities outperformed in GBP terms which was a positive as was the underweight exposure to global equity. The Investment Committee, as part of its oversight and supervisory duties, monitors the various Fund managers' performance against the fund's objectives and Benchmarks.

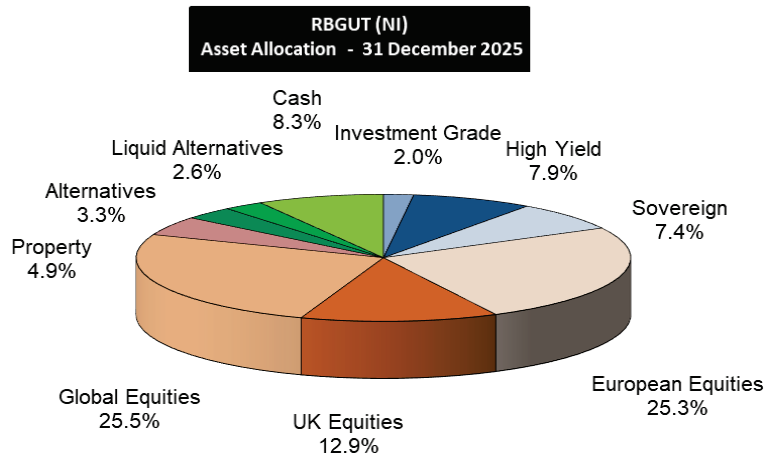
The historic price of a unit is detailed in the below chart.



TRUST ASSET DISTRIBUTION

The market value of the investments, including the value of the capital deposit account was £71.9m.

The investment profile in terms of distribution of the assets (by value) at 31 December 2025 is displayed in the following chart:



THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)
INVESTMENT MANAGER’S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME DISTRIBUTION TO UNIT HOLDERS

The June distribution was unchanged at 7.3 pence with the December distribution increasing to 6.2 pence (from 5.5 pence per unit in 2024), resulting in a total distribution for the year of 13.5 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 stable and sustainable distribution going forward.

Based on the value of a unit at 31 December 2025 of £4.72, and a full year distribution of 13.5 pence, the distribution yield was 2.86%. (The comparative figures for 31 December 2024 showed a yield of 2.95% based on a unit value then of £4.33 and a full year distribution of 12.8 pence). During the year there was a transfer of £0.48m to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve resulting in a DER of £2.68m or 3.6% of the net asset value of the fund.

There were net outputs of £0.36m to the Fund for the year to 31 December 2025, reflecting new cash of £0.29m from unitholders less redemptions of £0.65m.

Environmental and Social Governance (ESG)

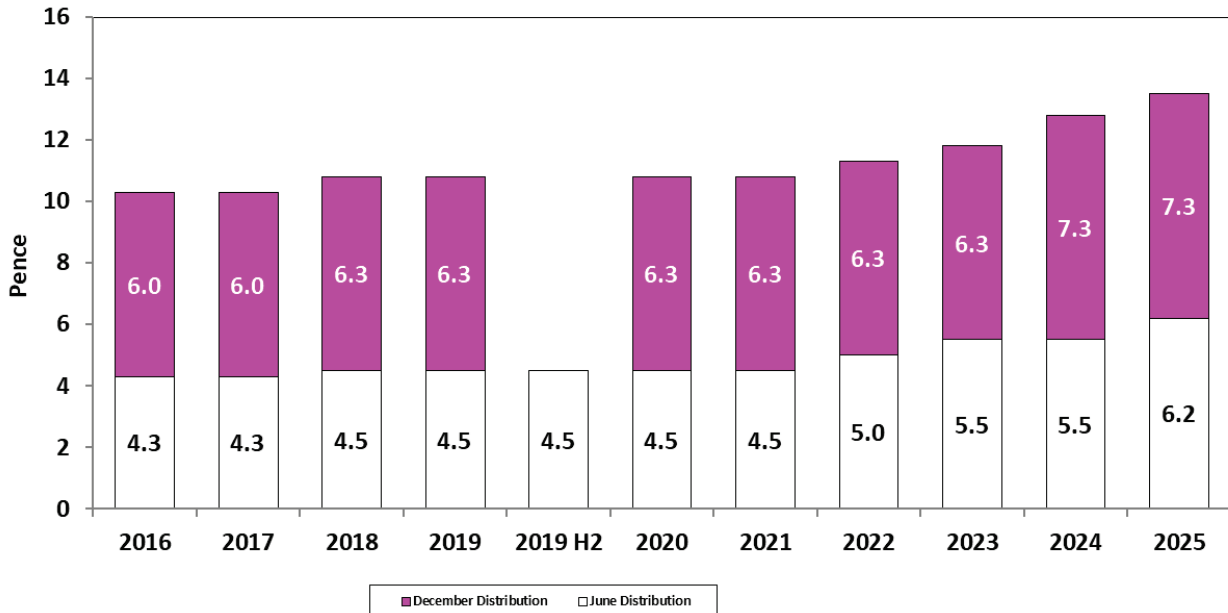
In the reporting period, the Investment Committee monitored and carried out an assessment of exposure to ESG risk. All Fund Managers are compliant with the RCB’s ESG Investment policy and restrictions.

A copy of the ESG investment policy can be found on our website

<<https://www.churchofireland.org/cmsfiles/files/information/resources/ESG-Investment-Policy-2026-FINAL.pdf>>

Income Distributions (2016 – 2025) - Financial Year-End 31 December 2025

(Financial Year-End June 30th 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 2026

THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (*NORTHERN IRELAND*)

STATEMENT OF TOTAL RETURN

	Year ended 31 December 2025 £'000	Year Ended 31 December 2024 £'000
Income	2,709	2,521
Expenses	(32)	(35)
Net Income	2,677	2,486
Distributions	(2,193)	(2,107)
Transfer to dividend equalisation reserve	484	379
Net (losses)/gains on investment activities		
Net realised (losses)/gains	(120)	487
Net realised gains on currency movements	7	3
Net change in unrealised gains on investments	6,282	1,023
Net increase in net assets from investment activities	6,653	1,892
Funds brought forward	68,548	68,072
Funds received	285	482
Funds withdrawn	(912)	(1,898)
Funds carried forward	74,574	68,548

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: *HJ Prentice*
 RL Ruttle
Date: *10 March 2026*

THE RB GENERAL UNIT TRUST (NORTHERN IRELAND)

BALANCE SHEET

	Year ended 31 December 2025 £'000	Year ended 31 December 2024 £'000
Investments	67,322	60,308
Current assets		
Debtors	7,387	8,361
Cash at bank	1	1
	7,388	8,362
Current Liabilities		
Creditors (amounts falling due within 1 year)	136	122
	136	122
Net current assets	7,252	8,240
Total assets	74,574	68,548
Trust capital fund	74,574	68,548

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: HJ Prentice
RL Ruttle
Date: 10 March 2026

APPENDIX B

ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY LIBRARY, 2025

1. Books and Other Printed Sources

The Library received welcome donations of books from Sam Atkinson, George Armstrong, Christina Baxter, Senator Victor Boyhan, Dr David J. Butler, John Budd, the family of the late Revd R. R. Bolton, CITI, the Rt Revd Dr Paul Colton, Revd Canon Maurice Elliott, Revd Martin Hilliard, David Lane, Ven. Gordon Linney, Lyndon McCann, the Very Revd Robert MacCarthy, Revd Cheryl Meban, Niall Moxham, Dr Bridget Nichols, Redmond O'Hanlon, Oswyn Paulin, the Presbyterian Historical Society, Revd Lesley Robinson, Kate Turner (from the library of her late father, Canon Edgar Turner), Mark Walker, Prof. Patricia Walsh, and Mrs Lesley Whiteside.

Additionally the following authors donated copies of their recently published work: Revd Gregory Dunstan, Ruth Gyves Dr Rachel Finnegan, Michael Flaherty, Prof. David F. Forde, Dr David Hayton, James Horan, Bryan Macmahon, the Very Revd John Mann, Dr Miriam Moffitt, Alan Moran, Prof. Brent A. Pitts, Christopher Power and Kevin Quinn.

These and all printed sources may be viewed online on the Library's dedicated catalogue system:
<https://libcat.rcbdub.org/liberty/libraryHome.do>

2. Accessions of Archives and Manuscripts

Note: 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.

Detailed lists of all the Library's archival and manuscript collections is available through this link:
<<https://www.churchofireland.org/about/rcb-library/catalogues>>

ARCHIVES

(i) Parish Records

All parish records are from the relevant local custody, unless otherwise indicated.

Bailieborough (Kilmore)

Register of marriages, 1988-2007; Register of burials, 1915-2006

Ballinrobe & Ballinchalla Union

Miscellaneous loose papers including late 19th century glebe land sale documents and lease map of Ballinrobe Glebe, and accounts, 1892-1948.

Clonmel Union (Lismore)

Clonmel: Vestry minute books, 1880-1997; Register of confirmations, 1981-2008; Register of banns, 1981-1995; Accounts books, 1809-2008; Minute books of the Mother's Union, 1981-1993; Minute books of the Old St Mary's church scheme and related papers, 2005-2000.

Ardfinan: Register of marriages, 1846-1918 and Register of burials, 1877-1944

Fethard: Vestry minute book, 1892-1985; Register of vestrymen, 1870-1903; Register of church members, 1890-1903; Miscellaneous loose papers historical relevance including background to the wills and bequests of Hanah Hunt and Elizabeth Rodgers, the organ project, and printed surveys for various heritage initiatives in Holy Trinity church and town of Fethard, 1948-2017

Cahir: Vestry minute books, 1948-2005; Registers of vestrymen, 1883-1991; Miscellaneous loose papers, 1899-2013.

Derrygrath: Register of marriages, 1849-1928

Inishlounaught (Marlfield): Vestry minute book, 1804-1872; Registers of vestrymen, 1870-1958 and Miscellaneous loose papers, 1985-2018

Kilbenny: Register of burials, 1880-1918; Vestry minute book including register of church members, 1869-1903

Killaloan: Register of baptisms, 1877-1955; Registers of marriages, 1845-1963; Register of burials, 1877-2016; Vestry minute book, 1872-1912 and Register of vestrymen, 1870-1961; Miscellaneous loose papers, 1984-2010

Killamery: Register of marriages, 1845-1864; Vestry minute book, 1853-1871

Kilronan: Registers of marriages, 1848 - 1909

Lisronagh: Register of marriages, 1854-1891

Newchapel: Register of baptisms, 1877-1963; Register of marriages 1850-1946; Register of burials, 1879-1985; Vestry minute book, 1806-1921; Loose extracts and scraps extracted from the vestry minute book recording several banns of marriage for members of the military and others (some stationed at Clonmel), baptisms and burials, 1792; 1812-13; 1834-1841; Register of vestrymen, 1877-2020

Outeragh: Register of marriages, 1863-1886; Registers of vestrymen, 1870-1871

Rathronan: Register of marriages, 1846-1921

Shanrahan (Clogheen): Register of baptisms 1878-1956; Register of marriages, 1847-1956; Register of burials, 1877-1975; Vestry minute books, 1864-1964; Registers of vestrymen, 1871-1969 and Miscellaneous loose papers 1847-1943.

Templetenny: Register of marriages, 1846-1858

Tubrid: Marriage register, 1845-1884; Miscellaneous loose papers, concerning the vesting of the schoolhouse and the chair of the ruined church and churchyard, 1884-2008

Tullameelan: Two account books, 1884-1909 & 1911-1945; Register of vestrymen; 1870-1983 and Miscellaneous loose papers, concerning building repairs and maintenance and parish history 1978 - 2014.

Additionally preachers' books for many of the above parishes have been contaminated with mould and have been sent for specialist conservation and will be catalogued in due course.

Coleraine (Connor)

Combined registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, 1769-1850 including vestry minutes for 1844; Registers of baptisms, including baptisms of children in Coleraine Workhouse, 1842-1877; Registers of marriages, 1845-2004; Registers of burials, 1854-1882; Vestry minute book, 1928-1958; Account book, 1958-1988; Rector's notebook, 1978-1991.

Ballysally: Register of marriages, 1981-2004

Drumgoon Group (Kilmore)

Drumgoon: Combined register of baptisms, marriages and burials, 1825-1915; Register of baptisms, 1802-2023; Register of marriages, 1845-2023; Register of burials, 1915-202; Vestry minute book, 1870-2011; Register of vestrymen, 1870-2011; Account book, 2004-2008; Confirmation register, 1915-2024; Deed of consecration, 1827

Ashfield: Registers of baptisms 1821-2024; Registers of marriages 1845-2020; Register of burials, 1818-1985; Vestry minute books 1870-2013; Register of vestrymen, 1938 – 2017; Account book, 1929-1960; Confirmation register, 1912-2019; Graveyard register, 1818-2009.

Dernakesh: Combined register of baptisms 1837-1990, marriages 1838-1846 & burials 1837-2017; Registers of marriages, 1845-1974

Killesherdony: Combined registers, 1796-1929; Register of baptisms 1864-2021; Register of marriages 1904-2007; Register of burials, 1929-2024, Vestry minute book, 1872-1961; Account book, 1871-1876; Confirmation register, 1950-1924

Duleek (Meath)

Framed black and white photograph of the external view parish church from the east side showing tower and graveyard, by Roy Byrne, 1996

From Canon Roy Byrne, Monkstown, Co. Dublin

Glenageary (Dublin)

Vestry minutes and related correspondence and papers, 2001-2021

Gorey Group (Ferns)

Gorey: Combined registers of baptisms, 1801-1837, marriages 1801-1837 and 'Funerals' [Burials], 1801-1837; Registers of baptisms 1866-2014; Registers of marriages, 1845-2007; Registers of burials, 1867-2014; Vestry minute books including pew registers and cess returns, 1778- 1833-1906; Preachers' books 1977-2015.

Kilnahue (Hollyfort): Combined registers of baptisms, marriages and burials 1817-1878; Registers of baptisms, 1878-2015; Registers of marriages, 1846-1956; Registers of burials, 1877-2013; Register of banns, 1820-1839

Additionally, materials for the parishes of Ballycanew and Leskinfere (together with some preachers' books for Kilnahue) having been contaminated by mould have been sent for specialised conservation and will be catalogued in due course.

Kenmare Group

Kenmare: Vestry minute books, 1923-2019; Account books, 1917-2000; Visitors' books, 1969-2001 and miscellaneous loose papers extracted from the minutes, 2009-2019.

Dromod: Register of marriages, 1957-2002; Vestry minute books, 1959-1999 and miscellaneous loose papers, 1872-1894.

Kilmore/Valentia: Register of marriages, 1997-2000; Register of burials, 1824-1992 and Preachers' book, 1943-2003

Kilnahue (Kilmore)

Vestry minute books, 1925-2022

Leeson Park (Dublin)

Preachers' book, 1990-2025; Miscellaneous loose papers, 1994-2003.

Monkstown (Dublin)

Miscellaneous loose papers, orders of service, newsletters, and photographs, 1883-2023

Mullingar Union (Meath)

Vestry minutes, 2001-2011; Preachers' book, 1979-1992; Materials including correspondence and related items to vestry business; conservation reports and general maintenance of various church buildings and other properties in the parish union, and other records of historical interest, 1981-2012.

Rathfarnham

Loose, minutes, correspondence and accounts, 2000-2005; Miscellaneous loose papers relating to war memorials, general history of the parish and photographs, 20th century onwards.

Rathmichael (Dublin)

Register of baptisms, 1955-2001; Register of vestrymen, in loose folder, 1937-1976; Confirmation registers, 2004-2020; Drawings, plans and illustrations of the Erek Hall, 1990-1992; Materials relating to the Temperance Society, 1915-1934; Dramatic Society, Fete Committee, Thursday Group and the Inter-church pilgrimage with Cabinteely RC parish, late 20th century; Orders of service, 1938-2018; and other extensive miscellaneous papers and photographs relating to a range of parish initiatives, many collated or created by Kathleen Turner, who as well as being parish secretary was a local historian of some note, and a founder member of the Rathmichael Historical Society, 1891-2003.

St Bartholomew's (Dublin)

18 volumes of bound minutes, articles agreement, materials concerning grant applications, invoices from contractors, correspondence and restoration data, reflecting the work of the Restoration Committee and related parties, for an earlier west gable repair, 2007-2008, and then the completion of a new window, commissioned from German stained glass artist, Dr H. Oidtmann, together with the overall restoration of the church building, 2014-2021. Additionally miscellaneous loose papers, 1994-2008.

St Luke's Home - Chapel (Cork)

Preachers' book, 1985-2006

St Paul's (Belfast) (Connor)

Registers of baptisms, 1913-1950; Registers of marriages, 1921-2004; Registers of burials, 1933-2009; Register of vestrymen, 1948-1992

Stradbally/Castleconnell (Killaloe)

Vestry minute books, 1787-1996; Account books 1908-1946

Taney (Dublin)

Christ Church Taney: Orders of Service, 1959-2011; Parish Magazines, 1970-2022; Photographs 1983-2011; Miscellaneous papers relating to the Taney Care Group, organising activities for elderly parishioners, 1985-1995; the Bowling Club, 1995-2006; the Taney Bells Committee (and related Millenium Committee) concerning the fund-raising and promotion of the project to relocate the St George's Bells from the original church to Taney Parish subsequent activities, 1996-2009; the Billiards Club, 2004-2018; the Snooker Club, 2004-2025; Taney Drama Society, with one earlier typescript detailing the origins and activities of the Taney Entertainers, 1950-1991; the Taney Parish Centre Development Group, to devise uses and activities in the new centre. 1992-1994. Minutes, company records plans, drawings, and related materials of the Taney Village Committee and latterly Taney Village Ltd, 1998-2013; Accounts relating to the refurbishment of Christ Church to mark the 200th anniversary of the building of the church, in 2018.

St Nathi's: Materials concerning rights of burial; repair of the boundary wall, and other recent aspects of the church and graveyard history, 1998-2002; Text panels and promotional literature for the "Lighten Our Darkness" exhibition marking the church's contribution to its local community in Dundrum, October 2008.

Tullow (Leighlin)

Letter to the select vestry signed by Winston Churchill acknowledging their condolences on the death of King Edward VII, 229 June 1910.

(ii) Cathedral Records

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

Complete run of the Cathedral Blotter, Calendar and Year Books, 1923-1975; and of the Friends' Newsletters, 1983-2023

St Columb's Cathedral, Derry

Black and white photograph by A&C Photography, of the cathedral interior from the choir stalls facing west down the nave to the organ loft. [Undated, early 20th c.]

From Canon Roy Byrne, Monkstown, Co. Dublin

St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Service sheets and orders of service 2024

From the Very Revd Niall Sloane, Dean of Limerick

(iii) Diocesan Records

Cork, Cloyne & Ross

Episcopal Visitation, signed by Bishop Paul Colton, 2024

Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh

Diocesan Council Minute Book (Elphin & Ardagh), 1953-2015; Diocesan Council Minute Book (Kilmore) 1945-1972; Diocesan Synod Minute Book, 1951-1999; Diocesan Council Attendance Books, 1935-1995; Account books relating to the Bishop Elliotte Scheme, 1946-1975; School Transport ledger, 1941-1951; Diocesan Council Analysis ledgers, Land Bond Accounts ledger (by parish), 1978-1979; Diocesan Council Analysis Books, 1988-1991; Framed photograph of diocesan clergy group at the consecration of Bishop Mayes, Kilmore Cathedral, 1994

Additionally miscellaneous files of recent materials including rural dean's reports; reports and correspondence relating to glebes, the See House, 1994-2014; individual parish group files and Board of Education records including the amendment to the Educational Endowment Acts, 1928-2005.

Tuam, Killala & Achonry

Inspectors' Reports on churches in the rural deanery of Omev, 1976-1980; and undated 'Lists of churches in use, demolished, with burial grounds attached or adjacent and schools, with plots [undated]'. Also survey map of the diocese by Dean W. Spence, during the 1980s.

Presidential addresses to the diocesan synods of Tuam, Killala & Achonry, in typescript format, as compiled by the Diocesan Secretaries, 1986-2024, inclusive and a copy of which was presented to Bishop Michael Burrows by the outgoing diocesan secretary, Mrs Heather Pope.

(iv) Representative Church Body Records

Investment Committee minute books, 1993-2012

(v) General Synod Records

Commission on Episcopal Ministry & Structures minutes and agenda papers, 2011-2016

Commission on Ministry minutes and agenda papers, 1996-2024

Commission For Christian Unity & Dialogue, 2007-2024

General Synod Minute book, 2010 with agendas and papers laid on the table, 1968-2023

Papers relating to Ecumenical and Anglican relationships, 1931-2008.

Standing Committee miscellaneous papers, 2005-2018

From Synod Services, Church of Ireland House

MANUSCRIPTS

Baird, Reverend Canon William Stanley (1933-2021), Warden of the Ministry of Healing, 1971-1979

Sermons, notebooks, some correspondence, addresses to conferences and ordinands concerning aspects of healing and the laying on of hands, 1969-2013

From his son Andrew Baird, Dublin

Board of Education Certificate, Diocese of Dublin, Glendalough & Kildare

Colour certificate for Eillen Woakes [daughter of George and Anna Woakes] of Rathmines parish, dated 1902

From Declan McGinn, DMG Paper Mill Co. Ltd, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

Burchall Asylum Charity, Waterford

Minutes, accounts and miscellaneous loose papers concerning the Burchall Asylum and Burchall Home for the care of elderly ladies in Waterford city, established from a bequest of Mrs Henrietta Burchall, 1900-2007.
From the Dean of Waterford

Cavan Protestant Orphan Society

Account Book detailing various funds, including the Apprentice Fund, 1940-1990
From Kilmore Diocesan Office

Colton, Rt Revd Dr W. Paul, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, 1999-2026

Extensive archive of correspondence, sermons, addresses, working papers as bishop on a wide range of subjects (alphabetically arranged), orders of service and photographs, mostly during his time as bishop but including pre- and post-ordination (1984) materials, 1969-2025.
From Paul Colton, Cork

Community of St John the Evangelist, Dublin, including St Mary's Home

Miscellaneous papers including an agreement concerning the chaplaincy, March 1978; Form for reading the Martyrology, undated, handwritten book of contemplative poetry by Sister Ann Dora [Stevinson]; and various items attributed to Sister Verity Anne, 1978-1999.
From Canon Andrew McCroskery, chaplain

Crossroads (Diocese of Dublin & Glendalough)

Papers, including correspondence, information sheets and promotional fliers, with accounts, including wind-up accounts in 2017 of the young adults group called Crossroads, which originated as an initiative of the Dublin & Glendalough Youth Council for 18+ adults, in 1992 but developed into its own right later. 1992-2008; 2017
From David Thomas, Dublin 8 (former chairperson)

Divinity Hostel

Photograph of ordinands from the class of 1977 and staff of the Divinity Hostel, outside the Fetherstonhaugh House building, Braemor Park, 1977,
Mrs Hilary McCullagh/Trinity College Archives

Earl, Very Revd David (1928-2017) formerly Dean of Ferns, 1979-1994

Extensive collection of sermons from throughout his clerical career, and beyond into retirement, notebooks and press-cuttings, c. 1957-1996
From his son Jonathan Earl, Waterford

Jeremy Hall Charity Limerick

Minute book of the overseers of the charitable trust to manage properties in Nicholas Street and Peter Street, Limerick, being the residue of the bequest of the 17th-century alms house charity in Limerick, 1987-1994
From the Dean of Limerick

Leitrim Protestant Orphan Society

Account Book detailing income and expenditure, 1980-2000
From Kilmore Diocesan Office

Longford Clerical Society

Minute books, 1912-1935
From Kilmore Diocesan Office

Longford Protestant Orphan Society

Account book, 1907-1945
From Kilmore Diocesan Office

Keegan, Ven Donald Leslie (1937-2010) (former Archdeacon of Killaloe & Clonfert)

Small collection of photographs, including his class groups while training for ministry at the Divinity Hostel, Braemor Park, 1965-1968; an earlier copy image of his school class at Greenlanes National School, Clontarf, Dublin, 1947 and his wedding to Janet Hipwell, 19 May 1962.
From his daughter, the Revd Ruth Elmes, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Kennerly, Canon Virginia ('Ginnie') Kennerley

Nine additional sermons preached during 2025, one in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin and eight in various parish churches in the diocese of Dublin. Added to existing archive.

From Canon Ginnie Kennerley, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Kilmore Clerical Society

Minutes and accounts, 1924-1939

From Kilmore Diocesan Office

McClintock, Revd Francis George Le Poer, rector of Drumcar (Armagh) (died 1924)

Letters of Priests Orders for McClintock, to serve in holy orders in the parish of Holywood, signed and sealed by the bishop of Down & Connor. dated 8 June 1879.

From Terry Corcoran, Harold's Cross, Dublin

Middleton Family

Birth and marriage dates of the children of Fanny and William Middleton, married in Clones Church by the Revd J.H. Jameson, 14 June 1843, for the period 1843-1881, as extracted from a family bible, 1843-1881

From Canon Roy Byrne, Monkstown, Co. Dublin

Mothers' Union and Young Wives Group, Diocese of Cork, Cloyne & Ross

Minutes, printed materials, photographs, some service sheets and printed items, and a substantial run of materials for the associated diocesan Young Wives group which ran from 1951 until 1990, as well as a small amount of materials for some of the more active parish branches, 1938-20

From the Revd Eileen Cremin, 2025, Cork

Past Choristers' Association, Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

Minutes, correspondence, and related papers with photographs and orders of services documenting the evolution of the Past Choristers' Association from 2010 but with earlier documentation covering an earlier Past Choristers' & Scholars' Society, and various attempts to formalize the past choristers from the 1980s onwards, 1958; 1988-1994; 2010-2026

From Victor Coe, founding chair and secretary, Dublin

Pearson, Revd Thomas (died 1926), curate of Laragh & Lavey (Kilmore) 1889

Illuminated address presented to the Revd Thomas Pearson B.A. (TCD) outgoing curate in charge of the Union of Laragh & Lavey (Kilmore) on his appointment as curate of St Thomas's, Dublin, in 1889, from the parishioners of the said union. Signed by the churchwardens of both parishes with the secretary/treasurer of the union. Illuminated by J. McConnell, 22 Westmorland Street, Dublin. c. 1889

From Canon Roy Byrne, Monkstown, Co. Dublin

Pike, Revd Andrew (d.1940)

Small collection of 11 sermons, with four daily diaries for the inclusive period 1935-38 and miscellaneous printed materials, of the Revd Andrew Pike who served his entire career in various parishes in the diocese of Cashel, finishing as rector of Clonoulty with Ardmayle from 1922 until his sudden death on 21 December 1940. 1932-1940, undated.

From his grand-daughter, Bridget Pike.

3. Additional Sources of Funding

The following donations contributed towards specific projects and purchases:

Cashel, Ferns and Ossory diocese (€800)

Clogher diocese (€500)

Dublin & Glendalough diocese (€1,000)

Holy Trinity Killiney parish (Dublin) €250

Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland Irish section (€200 towards Huguenot-related publications)

Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh diocese (£300)

Limerick and Killaloe diocese (€500)

Monkstown (Dublin) (€200)

Montgomery Charitable Trust (€4,500)

Canon Graham Richards (€250)

Rosser (Clogher) (£200)

St Mary's Cathedral Limerick (€300)

Sceptre Foundation (€12,100)

Tuam, Killala & Achonry diocese (€500)

APPENDIX C

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

**REPORT ON THE CLERGY PENSIONS FUND
FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

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THE TRUSTEE AND ITS ADVISORS

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

* appointed September 2025 in place of Mr Robert Neill (resigned September 2025)

INTRODUCTION

The Trustee presents its annual report on the operation of the Clergy Pensions Fund for the year ended 31 December 2025. 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

2025 Actuarial position of the Scheme

The solvency of the Scheme is monitored by the Scheme Actuary and a full actuarial valuation is carried out every three years. This compares the value of the assets in the Fund with the actuarially computed value of the liabilities to pay pension and other benefits into the future. The most recent triennial valuation was as at 30 September 2024. This was the first actuarial valuation since the end of the Funding Proposal which concluded on 31 December 2023 having met its objective of restoring the solvency of the Scheme. The 2024 triennial valuation confirmed that the Scheme satisfied the Funding Standard and Funding Standard Reserve at the 2024 valuation date.

During 2025, a rise in the level of interest rates caused a reduction both in the market value of the Fund's assets and in the actuarial value of the Scheme's pension liabilities, with the net result that the actuarial funding position of the Scheme improved during the year. The next formal Actuarial Valuation of the Scheme will be in 2027.

2025 Financial position of the Fund

The annual financial statements of the Fund, starting on page 74, summarise the transactions during the year and net assets of the Fund at the year end only. They do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future.

During the year there was a decrease in Fund assets of €8.81m with a closing value of €207.97m, having met benefit payments of €8.25m together with administrative and other costs of €0.37m.

Contributions to the Fund in the year were €0.66m, being the total value of diocesan pension levies.

The investment return for the year, including income and realised and unrealised investment losses, totalled -€0.85m net of investment management expenses. The return on the Fund's assets in the year was 0.0% against a benchmark return of 3.7%. The Trustee agreed revised investment performance benchmarks to take effect from the first quarter of 2026, reflecting the outcome of a review of strategy and a de-risking of the investment portfolio. During 2025, in light of the improved funding position and following advice from investment advisors Lane Clark & Peacock, the Trustee took the decision to de-risk the Fund's investment portfolio to 85% defensive assets and 15% growth assets. The aim of this de-risking is to protect the ability of the Fund to deliver future benefits. This is achieved by investing the majority of the Fund's assets in inflation-linked bonds, ensuring that the value of the Fund's assets will in future move in line with its liabilities and protecting the Fund against interest rate and inflation sensitivity.

During 2025, discretionary increases to pensions in payment and increases to Pensionable Stipend were agreed to take effect on 1 January 2026. The Standing Committee of General Synod, on the recommendation of the Trustee and the RCB, agreed to reduce the Clergy Pensions Fund solvency levy collected from parishes and dioceses from 3% to 0.8% of Minimum Approved Stipend in 2026.

The contingent secured loan for €20m provided by the RCB (as Sponsor) during 2022 remains in place with an end date of 2028. The original purpose of the loan was to enable the Trustee to pursue a growth strategy to maximise future benefits.

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 93).

A copy of the Actuary's Annual Statement as at 31 December 2025 is included as Annex 3 (page 96).

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 2025 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 90). 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.

It was agreed during 2025 that the following rates of discretionary increase be applied with effect from 1 January 2026:

Pensions payable in Sterling	5% inclusive of any increases required by law
Pensions payable in Euro	4%

The General Synod in 2025 agreed legislation, brought by the RCB on the recommendation of the Trustee, to amend the Trust Deed and Rules (Chapter XIV of the *Constitution*) to ensure that members of the Clergy Pensions Fund who reached Normal Retirement Age before 1 January 2024 who were in not in receipt of pension benefits from the Fund on 1 January 2024 are not in a less beneficial position when they receive a late retirement pension from the Fund because they remained in service in the Church of Ireland after reaching Normal Retirement Age.

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.

The Standing Committee agreed in September 2025, on the recommendation of the RCB and the Trustee, that Pensionable Stipend levels with effect from 1 January 2026 should be increased to £35,060 (2025: £33,390) per annum in Northern Ireland and €43,937 (2025: €42,247) per annum in the Republic 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 5% 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 2026.

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

Deferred pensions

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

Early retirement

With effect from 1 January 2025, the restriction on early retirements that was imposed as part of the Funding Proposal measures was removed, as agreed by the Trustee during 2024.

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) Schemes

As previously reported, the General Synod in 2024 approved the closure and winding up of the Clergy Pensions Fund AVC Schemes in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland following a recommendation from the Trustee and the RCB, who had determined that it was no longer in the interests of Fund members to administer the AVC Schemes as stand-alone schemes.

The final remaining members of the AVC Schemes retired or transferred out of the Schemes during 2025. The wind-up of the Republic of Ireland Scheme was completed with effect from 17 January 2025 and the wind-up of the Northern Ireland Scheme was completed with effect from 15 April 2025.

A report on the AVC Fund for 2025 is contained in the report from the Church of Ireland Pensions Board, set out in Annex 1 to this report (see page 91).

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 22(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 Trustee places on record its gratitude for these three bodies, noting in particular the administrative support and diligence of the staff of the Representative Body. The Statement of the Trustee’s Responsibilities in relation to the financial statements is set out on page 77.

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 89).

Actuarial advice is provided by Mercer Actuarial Services, Dublin.

The Trustee, in conjunction with the RCB in-house investment team, takes overall responsibility for investment strategy in furtherance of the investment objectives for the Fund, using Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM) for the management of a proportion of the Fund (84% at year end 2025 compared to 85% at the end of 2024). Investment management is undertaken by investment managers in accordance with a formal fund management agreement. The Trustee has 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 Forvis Mazars as Internal Audit Key Function Holder.

During the year ended 31 December 2025 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 Scheme and the risks associated with the Scheme and disclose these to members.

The Trustee's Statement of Risk can be found in Annex 4 to this report (page 97). The Trustee has revised the Statement of Risk to reflect the review of investment strategy and de-risking carried out during 2025.

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 achieve a sufficient rate of return to pay benefits without undue volatility. The Fund aims to maintain an appropriate mix of assets to minimise the impact of inflation and interest rate risk with due regard to the scheme liabilities. The Trustee has agreed an asset allocation of 85% de-risked assets and 15% growth assets. De-risked assets are holdings in liability matching asset classes and generally comprise [inflation linked bonds](#), fixed income sovereign bonds, high grade corporate fixed interest bonds and cash. Growth assets are represented by all other asset classes.

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 investment policy for the management of the assets of the Fund is set out in a Statement of Investment Policy Principles (SIPP). A revised SIPP, reflecting the outcome of the 2025 strategy review and de-risking, has been agreed by the Trustee and can be found at Annex 5 (page 99). The investment objectives and strategy are reviewed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the investment advisors and with the advice of the Actuary.

The majority of the fixed income and equity assets of the Clergy Pensions Fund are managed by Irish Life Investment Managers via a bespoke bond portfolio and pooled global equity fund (SFDR article 8). The balance of the Fund is managed by the RCB's in-house investment team and comprises predominantly legacy alternative assets and property for additional diversification.

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.churchofireland.org/about/clergy-pensions 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>).

Copies of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, which constitutes the Trust Deed and Rules, can be obtained at <www.churchofireland.org/about/clergy-pensions> 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 2025

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025

PAGE 2

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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

Auditors

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

Sponsor

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

Actuaries

Mercer Actuarial Services
Charlotte House
Charlemont Street
Dublin 2

Investment Managers

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

Irish Life Investment Managers
Beresford Court
Dublin 1

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 Church of Ireland Clergy Pension Fund

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

In our opinion, Church of Ireland Clergy Pension Fund's financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the scheme during the year ended 31 December 2025 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 available for benefits as at 31 December 2025;
- the fund 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)") 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.

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.

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.

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 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 intends 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.

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.

Other required reporting

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 2025 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.



PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
Dublin
10 March 2026

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).

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with FRS 102 requires the use of certain key assumptions concerning the future, and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the end of the financial year. It also requires the trustees to exercise judgement in the process of applying the company’s accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or areas where assumptions and estimates have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are disclosed below in note (ii).

The format and certain wording of the financial statements have been presented so that, in the opinion of the Trustee, they reflect most appropriately the nature of the Trust’s business as an investment fund.

(ii) Critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

Estimates and judgements made in the process of preparing the entity financial statements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

The Trustee make estimates and assumptions concerning the future in the process of preparing the entity financial statements. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are addressed below.

- Valuation of investments

The valuation of investments, which includes unquoted investments, is based on an independent valuation of the investments, based on the underlying assets values in the financial statements of the quoted and unquoted investment entity. There is a level of estimation involved in these valuations. The Trustee review the individual valuations applied which includes considering subsequent performance of the investments and takes account of advice provided by external investment advisors.

(iii) 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 7 to these financial statements.

(iv) 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.

(v) Going concern

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

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND
ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

PAGE 9

(vi) 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.

(vii) Foreign Currencies

Balances and transactions denominated in foreign currencies have been translated into euro at the rate of exchange ruling at the year end (2025 €1 = £0.8717; 2024 €1 = £0.8275).

(viii) Benefits

The pension benefits are secured by investments held in the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund which is administered 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.

(ix) 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 3% of Minimum Approved Stipend.

(x) 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 10

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2025 €'000	Year ended 31 December 2024 €'000
CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER RECEIPTS			
Contributions	3	658	663
		658	663
BENEFITS AND OTHER PAYMENTS			
Benefits paid	4	8,249	7,986
Administrative expenses	6	371	319
		8,620	8,305
NET WITHDRAWALS		(7,962)	(7,642)
RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS			
Investment Income	5	579	807
Realised and unrealised investment (losses)/gains		(1,225)	16,848
Currency (loss) / gain		(77)	78
Investment management and professional expenses		(128)	(125)
NET RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS		(851)	17,608
NET (DECREASE) / INCREASE IN FUND IN THE YEAR		(8,813)	9,966
BALANCE 1 JANUARY		216,783	206,817
BALANCE 31 DECEMBER		207,970	216,783

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: AM Robinson

A Hood

Date: 10 March 2026

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS****PAGE 11**

	Notes	31 December 2025 €'000	31 December 2024 €'000
INVESTMENT ASSETS	7	205,295	216,080
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors		2,675	703
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		2,675	703
NET ASSETS	11	207,970	216,783

Signed on behalf of the Trustee: AM Robinson

A Hood

Date: 10 March 2026

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****PAGE 12****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 reduced to 3% from 1 January 2024.

The most recent valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 30 September 2024. Based on that valuation the Scheme satisfied the minimum funding standard laid down in Section 44 of the Pensions Act, 1990. The next valuation is due to be completed as at 30 September 2027.

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 the annual Book of Reports presented to the General Synod, along with the actuarial funding certificate and the actuary's annual certificate.

3 CONTRIBUTIONS

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Diocesan levies	652	660
Representative Church Body	-	-
Sundry	6	3
Total	<u>658</u>	<u>663</u>

The value of Northern Ireland contributions in sterling is £0.3m (2024: £0.3m) and was translated to euro at the year end rate of 0.8717 (2024: 0.8275). The value of Republic of Ireland contributions is €0.3m (2024: €0.3m).

4 BENEFITS PAID

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Pensions to retired bishops and clergy	5,830	5,682
Pensions to surviving spouses and orphans	2,030	2,062
Commutation of pensions	304	242
Death Benefits	85	-
Total	<u>8,249</u>	<u>7,986</u>

The cost of Northern Ireland benefits in sterling is £4.1m (2024: £3.7m). This cost excludes administration charges.

The cost of Republic of Ireland benefits in euro is €3.3m (2024: €3.5m). This cost excludes administration charges.

5 ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT INCOME

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Investment income	186	246
Interest	393	560
Miscellaneous trust income	-	1
Securities Lending	-	-
Total	<u>579</u>	<u>807</u>

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
PAGE 13

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.

6 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
RCB Recharges	153	151
Actuarial Costs	98	50
Investment Advisor	62	48
Risk Management	25	17
Internal Audit fees	5	9
Administrator Review	-	18
Audit fees	18	15
Trustee Insurance	10	10
Sundry	-	1
Total	371	319

Investment management fees are borne by the Fund.

7 INVESTMENT ASSETS

	2025		2024	
	Market Value €'000	% of Fund	Market Value €'000	% of Fund
ILIM managed				
Equities				
Europe ex UK	17	0.1%	26,578	12.3%
UK	35	0.1%	28,399	13.1%
World	11,186	5.4%	30,330	14.0%
Bonds				
UK bespoke	89,057	43.4%	48,282	22.3%
European bespoke	66,204	32.2%	11,882	5.5%
European > 10yr	-	0.0%	33,236	15.4%
New World Indexed Euro Corp	5,327	2.5%	5,224	2.4%
	171,826	83.7%	183,931	85.0%
RCB in-house managed				
Property	4,379	2.1%	4,305	2.0%
Bonds and Bond Substitutes	-	0.0%	27	0.1%
Other	10,372	5.1%	11,885	5.5%
Cash on deposit	18,718	9.1%	15,932	7.4%
	33,469	16.3%	32,149	15.0%
	205,295	100.0%	216,080	100.0%

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

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
PAGE 14**8 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

As stated in the accounting policies on page 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 2025.

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 has allowed the Trustee of the Fund to maximise the return on risk assets for the Fund during the year. The Clergy Pensions Fund exited the funding proposal on 31 December 2023. The contingent asset is available to the Fund until 31 December 2028.

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.

Contributions to the scheme are made in accordance with funding arrangements agreed with the Actuary from time to time. The Registered Administrator of the scheme is remunerated on a fee basis.

11 NET ASSETS

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND		
Contributions	314	303
Net benefits and other payments	(4,198)	(3,781)
Net transfer between sub divisions	276	(63)
Net withdrawals	(3,608)	(3,541)
Net returns on investments	(348)	8,630
Balance 1 January	105,934	100,845
Balance 31 December	101,978	105,934
NORTHERN IRELAND		
Contributions	344	359
Net benefits and other payments	(4,421)	(4,524)
Net transfer between sub divisions	(276)	63
Net withdrawals	(4,353)	(4,102)
Net returns on investments	(503)	8,979
Balance 1 January	110,849	105,972
Balance 31 December	105,993	110,849
CONSOLIDATED FUND		
Contributions	658	663
Net benefits and other payments	(8,620)	(8,305)
Net withdrawals	(7,962)	(7,642)
Net returns on investments	(851)	17,608
Balance 1 January	216,783	206,817
Balance 31 December	207,970	216,783

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

PAGE 15

12 POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

The Trustee notes the escalation of activities in the Middle East area which occurred on the 28th February 2026, and while it does not envisage that they will have any direct impact on the Clergy Pension Fund, there is a risk that investment markets may be impacted in the short to medium term and it will continue to monitor investments closely in this regard.

13 APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the Trustee on 10 March 2026.

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 six meetings of the Board in 2025.

Elected by the House of Bishops

The Rt Rev Andrew Forster (3)

Elected by the General Synod

Mr Michael Johnston (6)

Mr Robbie Syme (3)

Very Rev Ruth West (4)

Elected by the Representative Church Body

Rev Canon Henry Gilmore (4)

Mrs Judith Peters (6)

Mrs Heather Pope (5)

Chairperson – Mrs Judith Peters

Vice-Chairperson – Very Rev Ruth West

Honorary Secretary – Mrs Heather Pope

Pensions Administration Manager – Ms Vicki Hastie

Grants Committee

Mrs Judith Peters

Mrs Heather Pope

Very Rev Ruth West

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 D to the Report of the RCB (*Church of Ireland General Synod Reports 2026*, page 104).

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*.

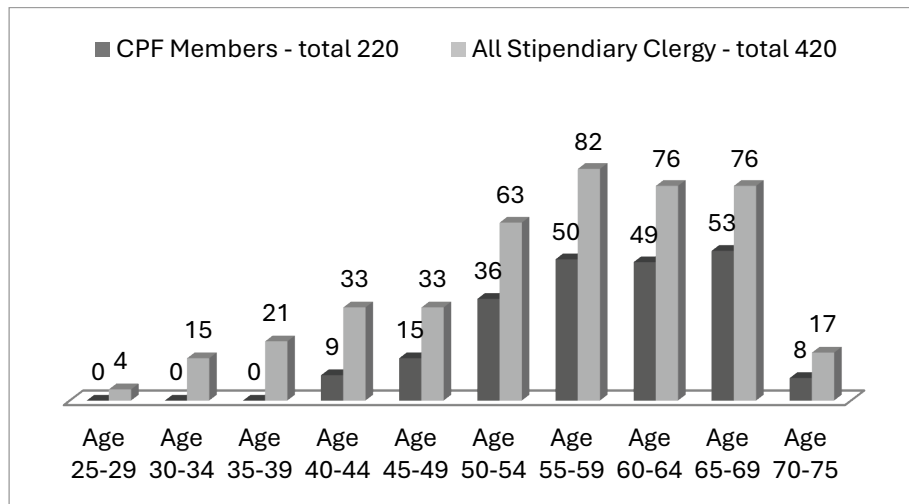
3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FUND

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 2025	234	110	323	147
Leavers with deferred benefits	(2)	2		
Leavers taking benefits elsewhere				
Deaths before retirement		(1)		
New pension arising from PAO				
Retirements on pension	(12)	(11)	23	
Returned to active service				
Deaths on pension			(13)	(8)
New spouses' pensions				11
At 31 December 2025	220	100	333	150

In addition there were five child dependency allowances in payment at 31 December 2025 (5 at 31 December 2024).

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 2025
31 May 1949 and before	65	0
1 June 1949 to 31 May 1954	66	4
1 June 1954 to 31 May 1959	67	27
1 June 1959 and after	68	189

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 2026 are:

	€		£
Clergy	2,664,560	and	2,941,643
Surviving spouses and orphans	868,088	and	1,121,296
	<u>3,532,648</u>	and	<u>4,062,939</u>

The total annualised pensions in payment translated to euro at the year-end exchange rate of 0.8717 are €8,193,585.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS

In accordance with Section 37 of Chapter XIV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland* contributions may be made to the Fund from the Representative Body as deemed appropriate. The Fund exited the Funding Proposal, which had been in place since 2013, on 31st December 2023. No contribution from central funds has been made since that date.

7. LUMP SUM BENEFITS

Under the provisions of the Fund a cash lump sum is payable in a number of eventualities. During 2025, lump sums totalling €136,885 and £219,725 became payable in respect of 14 members as follows:

Paid on retirement (8); deferred pension (5); died within five years following retirement (1).

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 42 members in active service who purchased additional service to 31 May 2013.

10. ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVCS)

A resolution adopted by the General Synod on 11th May 2024 approved the closure of the Church of Ireland Voluntary Contributions Scheme to further contributions from members of the Clergy Pensions Fund (the Fund) and authorised 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.

Standard Life were the provider of the AVC facility. Contributions were invested with them in the "Managed Pension Fund", the "With Profits Pension Fund", the "Euro Global Liquidity Fund" or the "Pension Fixed Interest Fund", as appropriate, of the Tower Pension Series for those contributors who resided in the Republic of Ireland or the Castle Pension Series for those contributors who resided in Northern Ireland.

The Trustee gave notice to Standard Life of their intention to wind up with effect from 30th June 2024.

(i) Active Membership of the AVC Fund as at 31 December 2025

At the end of 2025 there were no members remaining in the Standard Life AVC Schemes.

(ii) AVC Fund Statement of Contributions

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Contributions received	-	1
Less paid on retirement or death	(14)	(50)
Less transfers to Clergy DC Scheme	(9)	(134)
Realised Gain on retirement and transfers to the Clergy DC Scheme	-	-
	<u>(23)</u>	<u>(183)</u>
Balance 1 January	24	207
Currency Translation Adjustment	1	-
Balance 31 December	<u>2</u>	<u>24</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 Limited (now DAC).
2. Under the Scheme members were permitted to make voluntary contributions which were invested with the Standard Life Assurance Company to provide additional benefits within the overall limits allowed by the Revenue authorities. The balance at the year end represents amounts due to The Representative Church Body which have been held as floats in bank accounts. These accounts were closed post year end.
3. AVCs were unaffected by the closure of the Clergy Pensions Fund to future accruals in 2013 and contributions to the scheme continued to be possible until June 2024.
4. An accountant's report has not been provided for these financial statements as the balance of circa €2,000 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.
5. Sterling balances and transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2025 €1 = £0.8717 (2024 €1 = £0.8275).

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: 30/09/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PREVIOUS CERTIFICATE (IF ANY): 30/09/2021

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 €218,254,000.00, 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 €136,467,000.00, 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:** 18/02/2025

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

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

Submission Details

Submission Number: SR3735491 **Submitted Electronically on:** 18/02/2025

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: 30/09/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PREVIOUS CERTIFICATE (IF ANY): 30/09/2021

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 €136,467,000.00,

(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 €218,254,000.00,

(3) €110,218,000.00, 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 €2,625,000.00,

(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 -€330,000.00,

(6) the aggregate of (4) and (5) above amounts to €2,295,000.00, and

(7) the additional resources (as defined in the Act) of the scheme amount to €81,787,000.00, 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.

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:	<u>18/02/2025</u>
Name:	<u>Mr Liam Quigley</u>	Qualification:	<u>FSAI</u>
Name of Actuary's Employer/Firm	<u>Mercer (Ireland) Limited</u>	Scheme Actuary Certificate No.	<u>P044</u>

Submission Details

Submission Number:	SR3735492	Submitted Electronically on:	18/02/2025
Submitted by:	Liam Quigley		

ANNEX 3

ACTUARY'S ANNUAL STATEMENT

MERCER
A MARSH BUSINESS

Church of Ireland Pension Fund Annual Statement

Year ended 31 December 2025

Pensions Authority reference number: PB1667

Actuary's Statement

The last Actuarial Funding Certificate was prepared with an effective date of 30 September 2024. 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 2025. 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.



Liam Quigley

Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland

Certificate number: P044

Date: 19 March 2026

Mercer (Ireland) Limited, trading as Mercer, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Registered Office: Charlotte House, Charlemont Street, Dublin 2. Registered in Ireland No. 28158.
Directors: Sheila Duignan, John Mercer, Mary O'Malley, Patrick Healy and Cara Ryan.

ANNEX 4

STATEMENT OF RISK IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CLERGY PENSIONS FUND (THE “FUND”)

Under the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2006 to 2022, the Trustee is required to describe the condition of the Scheme and the risks associated with the Scheme and disclose these to members.

The Trustee has appointed a Risk Management Key Function Holder (KFH) to support the Trustee in implementing and monitoring risk within the Scheme. The Risk Management Framework and the Risk KFH support the Trustee in its assessment and management of risk.

As part of the framework the Trustee has developed a Risk Register which identifies the key risks of the Scheme, and the directive and preventative controls in place to reduce or mitigate these risks.

The Trustee has carried out a review of the Scheme’s risk profile bearing in mind the Scheme’s objectives, risk appetite as well as the regulatory / resource and other constraints within which it operates. The Trustee’s current views of the risks faced by the Scheme, in particular Trustee appetite and the level of residual risk are summarised in the Risk Register.

Some of the risk categories within the Scheme include:

- Governance and Strategic Risks - An effective governance framework is important for the Trustee in order to manage the risks arising from conflicts of interest in particular, and inappropriate or ineffectual decision making in general.
- Operational Risks - An effective administration function and procedures are key for efficient and effective pension provision, so members’ benefits, contributions and investments are processed in a timely and accurate manner, and their records are kept accurate and up to date. This risk family also includes risks relating to the security and robustness of the Scheme’s operations and financial controls as well as exposure to data breaches and fraud.
- Investment Implementation Risks - Investment implementation is a subset of the investment related risks that focus on the more operational aspects of the Scheme’s assets and investments.
- Market and Economic Risks - Market and Economic risks are a subset of the investment related risks that focus on the more strategic investment risks, the interaction between assets and liabilities as well as the risk of being exposed to the market and economy.
- Funding and Covenant Risks - Funding and Covenant risks consider the approach taken by the scheme to determine the required level of assets and contributions needed to fund benefit payments and maintain solvency. This risk category also considers the covenant risk and in particular the potential reliance on the sponsor and the risks around receiving that support when needed.
- Pension Benefit Risks - Pension benefit risks are those risks that are impacted directly by or can impact directly upon the benefits paid to members, including risks of incorrect understanding of the benefits set out in the Trust Deed and Rules / legislation, and risks that affect the amount or timing of benefit payments such as inflation, longevity and member options.
- Emerging Risks - The Trustee monitors emerging risks through updates from its advisors and Risk Management Key Function Holder, and industry news, as appropriate.

The Scheme has been funded by contributions paid by the Sponsor and members. Actuarial advice was obtained when setting those contributions. However, there is no guarantee that the Scheme will have sufficient funds to pay the benefits promised. It is therefore not impossible that the benefits payable under the Scheme might have to be reduced. If the Scheme is wound up and there is a deficit, the Sponsor may not be under an obligation to fund the deficit or, even if the Sponsor is under such an obligation, they may not be in a position to fund the deficit. 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.

If the Scheme were to wind up and the assets were insufficient to meet benefits due, the law specifies that pensioners have first call on the assets of the Scheme before benefits can be paid to those who have yet to reach normal retirement age. The priority order governing the wind up of a defined benefit Scheme will be followed in such a case.

Apart from the potential for regulatory or legislative change, which is outside the control of the Trustee, the Trustee is satisfied that it is taking all reasonable steps to protect the members from the effects of these risks, including:

- Having a risk management framework which incorporates the KFH risk function as a central element.
- Professional investment managers have been appointed to manage the Scheme's investments; the Scheme holds a range of diversified assets and there is regular monitoring of how these investments are performing.
- An actuarial valuation of the Scheme is carried out at least every three years to assess the financial condition of the Scheme and determine the rate of contributions likely to be required to meet the future liabilities of the Scheme. In addition, an annual review of the solvency position is carried out of the Scheme on the assumption that it is wound up. If the Scheme is found to be insolvent, the Trustee and the Sponsor are required to complete a funding proposal for submission to the Pensions Authority with the objective of returning the Scheme to solvency.
- The Trustee has access to experienced professional advisers and administrators to assist with the proper running of the Scheme.

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 Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee DAC (‘the Trustee’) to govern the management of the Scheme’s assets. It provides an overview of the Trustee’s investment objectives, investment policies, risk measurement and risk management processes.

This document has been provided to Lane Clark & Peacock 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 Trustee is to ensure that the benefits of the Scheme continue to be affordable and that the level of benefits set out in the Trust Deed and Rules can be paid. The investment strategy for the Scheme is reviewed regularly with the assistance of the Scheme’s Investment Advisor. In addition, the Scheme’s Actuary conducts an actuarial review every three years.

The Scheme is a Defined Benefit (‘DB’) scheme which has been closed to accrual of service since 2013. The scheme is mature and relies primarily on its portfolio of investment assets to meet pension payments as they fall due.

The overall investment strategy aims to achieve an acceptable risk-adjusted return by maintaining an appropriate ratio of De-risked to Growth Assets in the investment portfolio, consistent with the Trustee’s Risk Management Policy and the Risk Appetite Statement for Investments. De-risked Assets are holdings in liability matching asset classes and generally can comprise inflation-linked bonds, fixed income sovereign bonds, high grade corporate fixed interest bonds and cash. Growth Assets are represented by all other asset classes.

The minimum funding 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 2024.

Summary of Actuarial Valuation

The Scheme Actuary has provided the Trustee with the Scheme’s triennial actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2024. The valuation showed scheme solvency of 111%, having included provision for the Scheme to increase Pensionable Stipend and pensions-in-payment to the target level of Minimum Approved Stipend and to provide for future inflation based on the Consumer Price Index. The investment value at the valuation date was €218m with accrued liabilities of €196m, based on a discount rate of 3.2%. The conclusion of the actuarial valuation was that the reported solvency provided the Trustee with scope to further de-risk the scheme and to provide above inflation pension increases.

Considering the funding position shown in the actuarial valuation, in 2025 the Trustee moved to de-risk the Scheme’s investments significantly. While the current objective is to operate the Scheme on a prudent ‘run-off’ basis, the Trustee expects to consider the potential for a buy-in or buy-out transaction in the next 1–2 years, subject to market conditions, affordability and Trustee/Sponsor objectives at the relevant time.

Formulating Investment Policy

The Trustee has responsibility for setting and monitoring the investment strategy of the Scheme.

Investment Advisors

The roles of In-House Investment Advisor, Investment Advisor and the RCB Investment Committee are as set out in the Statement of Investment Governance (SIG) for The Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund.

Environmental, Social and Governance Considerations

The majority of investments are in inflation-linked bonds which are outside of the RCB's ESG Investment Policy Statement, however for direct investments the Investment Manager monitors the Fund against the RCB's ESG Investment Policy Statement and reports any non-compliance to the Trustee.

In relation to quoted investments, the Trustee's current implementation approach is to use funds and mandates that meet the requirements of SFDR Article 8.

The Trustee considers ESG factors as financially material investment risks and opportunities and considers them as part of the selection, appointment and ongoing monitoring of investment managers and mandates. Where relevant and practicable, the Trustee also expects investment managers to have appropriate ESG integration, screening (where applicable), engagement and voting policies, and to report to the Trustee on these matters.

The Trustee recognises that the Scheme's investments include both matching assets and risk assets and that the extent to which ESG factors can be reflected may differ by asset class and mandate. The Trustee will apply ESG expectations in a proportionate manner, consistent with the Scheme's investment objectives and risk management framework.

The Trustee's investment advisors report on ESG considerations to the Trustee. The Trustee recognises that ESG policies and classifications may evolve and will keep the approach under review.

Sponsor

In setting the investment policy, the Trustee recognises 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 Trustee in isolation, but also in collaboration with the Sponsor. The SIPP is communicated to the Sponsor for information.

Stewardship and Shareholder Rights Directive (SRD II)

The Trustee supports effective stewardship of invested assets. In relation to quoted equities, the Trustee's shareholder engagement and voting approach is implemented primarily through the appointed investment managers. The Trustee expects investment managers to monitor investee companies on relevant matters (including strategy, financial and non-financial performance and risk, capital structure, and ESG matters), to engage where appropriate, and to exercise voting rights in a manner consistent with the relevant mandate objectives.

The Trustee receives periodic reporting on stewardship (including engagement and voting activity where available) as part of the Scheme's regular investment reporting and will keep this approach under review, including having regard to applicable requirements under the Shareholder Rights Directive.

Risk Measurement

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 Trustee has therefore considered the following as part of its investment risk analysis:

- **Scenario analysis:** The Trustee has considered projected outcomes for a number of different investment strategies.
- **Hedge ratios:** The Trustee monitors the extent to which the Scheme's matching portfolio is aligned to the Scheme's liabilities. The Trustee has restructured the Scheme's assets with the aim of hedging the majority of equity risk, interest rate risk and inflation risk (as measured on an agreed basis). The detailed measurement bases and methodologies may be refined from time to time, with advice from the Investment Advisor and Actuary.
- **Duration of the liabilities:** The duration of the liabilities and the extent and duration of bond investment are key components of volatility.
- **Currency:** The currency denomination of the Scheme's liabilities are considered by the Trustee in determining the currency split of the investment portfolio.

- **Contribution impact:** The Trustee and the Sponsor consider whether contributions would be required to achieve a range of pension outcomes.
- **Quantitative risk assessment:** The Trustee measures and monitors risk using a range of methods, including Value at Risk ('VaR'). VaR and other metrics are reported on by the Investment Advisor as part of its quarterly reporting.
- **Qualitative risk assessment:** The Trustee has 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 Trustee regularly reviews the investment strategy and the risks including considering ESG compliance.

Investment Policy and Asset Allocation

The Trustee, with the assistance of its advisers, has 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 Scheme matures.

The current strategic asset allocation for the Scheme is as follows:

Asset class	Current Allocation (%)	Medium term target Allocation (%)	Long term target Allocation (%)
Matching/De-risked assets	85.0%	85.0%	100.0%
Risk assets	15.0%	15.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table shows the current, medium and long term allocations within which the Trustee believes that the investment objectives can be achieved. The long term allocation describes the split that the Trustee aims to move toward, over the long term, as the Scheme matures further and as Scheme finances and investment conditions permit.

The current composition of the strategic allocation (at the effective date of this SIPP) is summarised below:

Portfolio	Current composition (indicative)
Matching/De-risked assets (current target 85%)	Primarily index-linked government bonds (Europe/Euro and UK/Sterling, reflecting the euro and Sterling liability profile) and cash (up to 10% of total Scheme assets). High grade corporate fixed interest bonds may also be held within De-risked assets, consistent with the Scheme's overall de-risking objective.
Risk assets (current target 15%)	Global equities (c.5%), Alternatives (c.5%), Property (c.2%) and Corporate Bonds (c.3%). The Trustee recognises that Alternatives and Property may be less liquid than other asset classes; liquidity is monitored in the context of expected benefit cashflows and potential future insurer transaction readiness.

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 whilst ensuring the portfolios have adequate diversification in place.

The Trustee monitors currency exposure as part of its regular investment reporting. The Trustee may, from time to time, set limits and/or tolerance ranges for currency exposures (including unhedged foreign currency exposure) to be applied by investment managers. Any such limits will be documented in Investment Management Agreements and/or other agreed documentation and compliance will be monitored.

Rebalancing

The Trustee recognises 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 Trustee intends to avoid ad-hoc revisions to its philosophy and policies in reaction to either speculation or short-term market fluctuations.

Rebalancing is considered as part of the quarterly investment review by the Trustee.

Risk Management

The Trustee ensures that it understands 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 Trustee at regular intervals based on reports independently collected and calculated by the Investment Advisors. The Fund's performance is also reviewed by the Trustee relative to the long-term required return and benchmark.

Benchmarks and target returns

The Trustee monitors performance relative to appropriate benchmarks for each mandate and/or asset class. In particular:

- **Matching/De-risked assets:** the benchmark is a composite based primarily on euro and UK inflation-linked government bond indices and an appropriate cash benchmark (e.g., Euribor 3 month) reflecting the Scheme's cash holding.
- **Equities:** the equity allocation is benchmarked against the MSCI World Index (or successor index as agreed by the Trustee).
- **Other risk assets:** Corporate Bonds, Property and Alternatives are benchmarked against appropriate market indices and/or manager targets, as agreed with the Trustee.

In assessing the matching portfolio, the Trustee recognises that the gross investment return of the matching assets is generally less important than the extent to which movements in the matching assets offset movements in the liabilities and the net impact on the Scheme's funding position. The Trustee therefore considers measures such as hedge ratios and the funding impact of interest rate and inflation movements when monitoring the matching portfolio.

For risk assets, the Trustee's objective is to achieve a positive real return over the medium to long term, consistent with the 'Cautious/Open' Risk Appetite level set by the Trustee. As part of this review, the Trustee has set a target return for the risk asset portfolio of CPI + 3.0% per annum (net of fees) over rolling 5-year periods. This target will be reviewed from time to time.

The Trustee also receives from the Investment Advisor a quarterly assessment of performance, together with an analysis of the factors affecting performance, relative to the Fund's benchmarks.

Risk controls

The Trustee uses a number of measures to control and reduce the risks associated with making investments including the following:

- **Diversification:** The Trustee aims 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 Trustee has an Investment Management Agreement (IMA) or other agreed documentation in place with external investment managers. Compliance with agreements with external investment managers is monitored.
- **Risk versus the liabilities:** The Trustee has adopted an investment strategy that it believes 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 Trustee to provide all of the intended benefits. The Trustee reviews 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 Trustee ensures 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 Trustee measures and monitors risk in the portfolio on a regular basis. Investments are regularly considered as part of Trustee meetings. In addition, the Trustee formally reviews the Scheme's investment strategy in conjunction with actuarial valuations of the Scheme or following any significant change to the Scheme.

The Trustee ensures 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 30 September 2024. Actual experience will differ from the assumptions (perhaps significantly) and consequently, the Trustee 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: 24 February 2026

APPENDIX D

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 2025

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 2025 of not less than:

	Resident in the:	
	United Kingdom	Republic of Ireland
Surviving spouse under 80	£17,536	€21,451
Surviving spouse 80 or over	£18,202	€22,266

On 31 December 2025, pensions were in course of payment to 146 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 2025, 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 Clergy Widows & Orphans Society.

(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 £2,693 if he or she died while holding office in Northern Ireland, or €4,915 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 £6,059 if they died while holding office in Northern Ireland or €7,373 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 £2,020 if they resided in the United Kingdom or €2,458 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 Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, the Friends of the Clergy Corporation and the other charities and funds which provide this help when called upon.

2. GRANTS 2026

Due the unexpended surplus for 2025 and expected dividend income for 2026 it is not necessary to request for an allocation from General Synod to the Fund for 2026.

The unexpended surplus for 2025 and dividend income for 2026 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 2026 as follows:

(I) Minimum Income of Surviving Spouses and Orphans

	Resident in the:	
	United Kingdom	Republic of Ireland
Surviving spouse under 80	£18,167	€21,837
Surviving spouse 80 or over	£18,857	€22,667

It is estimated that the cost of this scheme will be £3,588.

(II) Removal Grants

Northern Ireland	£2,785
Republic of Ireland	€5,053

(III) Immediate Grants to Surviving Spouses

In service:

Northern Ireland	£6,265
Republic of Ireland	€7,579

In retirement:

Northern Ireland	£2,088
Republic of Ireland	€2,527

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 2025
Income and expenditure account

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
INCOME		
Investment Income	57	55
Income from Trusts and Donations	2	2
	<u>59</u>	<u>57</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Augmentation – Surviving Spouses and Orphans	4	4
Grants to Surviving Spouses	24	12
Expenses	3	3
	<u>31</u>	<u>19</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	28	38
Balance 1 January	2,133	1,985
Revaluation movement	89	105
Currency translation adjustment	(6)	5
Balance 31 December	<u>2,244</u>	<u>2,133</u>
FUNDS EMPLOYED		
Investments	2,025	1,935
Cash held with the RCB	219	198
	<u>2,244</u>	<u>2,133</u>

ANALYSIS OF FUND ASSETS AT 31 December 2025

	2025 €'000	2024 €'000
Investments at Valuation		
RB General Unit Trusts	2,025	1,935
	<u>2,025</u>	<u>1,935</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 accountant's report has not been provided for these financial statements, as the balance of €2,244,000 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 2025 was €7,000 and £20,000. During 2025, the Board approved a once-off grant to all surviving spouses and dependants which was paid in April. The total cost of these once off grants was €11,398 and £15,188. Many expressions of thanks and appreciation have been received from the recipients.

Sums were received during the year under the HA Macraith Will Trust, the Rev John Flinn Bequest and the Joseph Dowse Bequest. New trusts were established during 2025 in relation to two of these with the RB Executive agreeing that the sums received be invested and the income arising be applied to the general charitable purposes of the Church of Ireland Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society. It is expected that the third will be invested as soon as formally agreed and income arising be similarly applied.

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 €67,310 plus £95,459 were allocated in 2025. 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.

A new trust was established following a sum received during the year – The Ruth Hilda Trueman Bequest. The RB Executive Committee agreed that the sum received be invested and the income arising be applied to the general charitable purposes of the Housing Assistance Fund.

3. 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 2025, grants totalling €35,650 were paid to 11 retired clergy.

4. Rev Precentor RH Robinson Bequest

The income of this bequest, currently circa €13 per annum, is being allowed to accumulate to provide a reasonable grant level.

5. 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 2025, the total grants paid were €2,131.

6. 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 £17,300 to seven surviving spouses and grants totalling £11,300 to five retired members of the clergy.

The Board would welcome donations and bequests in order to provide a permanent income for this Fund.

7. 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 €31,000 to be paid during 2025.

APPENDIX E

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

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT For the 18 months ended 31 December 2025

	2025 €	2024 €
Income		
Accommodation fees M Th	116,738	63,820
CCTP	67,270	58,534
CME Diocesan Contribution	22,752	22,772
Grant from RB	1,442,500	900,000
Lecturers MTh	10,426	9,663
Legacy	41,809	0
Receipts from Guests & Conferences	298,137	208,095
Reflective Learning	22,173	32,463
Transfer to Full Time & ILA	0	5,425
	2,021,805	1,300,772
Expenditure		
Academic expenses	901,786	551,167
Administration expenses	188,158	121,949
Operating expenses	551,370	330,576
Establishment expenses	347,269	270,747
	1,988,583	1,274,439
Surplus for the year	33,222	26,333
Balance at beginning of the year	26,333	207
Funding adjustment in respect of previous year surplus	(26,333)	(207)
Balance at the end of the year	33,222	26,333

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

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

**BALANCE SHEET
As at 31 December 2025**

	2025 €	2024 €
Current assets		
Sundry debtors	98,354	109,298
Bank deposit accounts	697	694
Bank current accounts	45,038	67,329
Cash on hand	3	20
	144,092	177,341
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	(109,232)	(150,198)
Net current assets	34,860	27,143
Total assets less current liabilities	34,860	27,143
Creditors - amounts falling due after more than one year	(697)	(694)
Net assets	<u>34,163</u>	<u>26,449</u>
Capital and trust funds		
Accumulated surplus	33,222	26,333
Ferrar Memorial Fund for Liturgical Library	38	13
Gregg Memorial Fund for College Library	903	103
	34,163	26,449
	<u><u>34,163</u></u>	<u><u>26,449</u></u>

APPENDIX F**FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY IN 2025
TO BE HELD IN TRUST FOR PARISHES, DIOCESES ETC**

	£	€	
Diocesan Board of Education Rural Redistribution Account		2,439	Additional
Diocesan Board of Education Urban Redistribution Account		1,101	Additional
Desmond Corban Lucas Bequest		498	Additional
Hugh Gore Institute		100,000	Additional
Protestant Aid		400,000	Additional
Ven W P Webb Bequest		2,383	Additional
Garden of Remembrance		6,000	Additional
Parish Misc Donations Fund	25,000		New
Rev Canon John McKegney Bequest	1,000		New
CofI Widows and Orphans Society	100		Additional
Mrs Elizabeth Rishbeth Donation		2,190	New
Sale of Parish Hall		80,000	New
Sale of Rectory		456,664	New
CofI Widows and Orphans Society	13,459		New
Glebe Profit Sale	46,498		Additional
Sale of Wayleave	5,642		New
Parish Trust		37,500	New
Bishop Stearne's Charities	2,500		Additional
Housing Surplus Funds		3,000	New
Church Education Society for Ireland		20,000	Additional
Sale of Church		5,189	Additional
Bequest to parish		100,000	New
Diocesan Board of Education Rural Redistribution Account		3,389	Additional
Diocesan Board of Education Urban Redistribution Account		1,678	Additional
Sale of Church		3,245	Additional
Cathedral General Purpose Fund		100,000	Additional
Property Trust		4,000	Additional
Parish Funds		46,453	Additional
Diocesan Board of Education		240,294	Additional
Bequests to Parish		15,510	Additional
H A Macraith Will Trust	13,460		New
Ruth Hilda Trueman Bequest	5,000		New
Ronald Jones Bequest		1,000,000	New
Cynthia Good Bequest		2,000	Additional
Ven W P Webb Bequest		1,563	Additional
The Ballyrory Trust		127,000	New
The Joe Dowse Bequest		50,000	New
The Joyce Geary Bequest		25,000	New
Sale of Church 80%		51,997	New
Sale of Church 20%		13,246	New
Waterford and Bishop Foy Endowed School		310,000	Additional
Downes Divinity Premium		20,000	Additional
John Flinn Bequest		8,000	New
Parish Investment		50,000	Additional
Diocesan Board of Education Rural Redistribution Account		5,172	Additional
Diocesan Board of Education Urban Redistribution Account		2,559	Additional
Garden of Remembrance		7,000	Additional
Mabel Boles Bequest		605	New
Caroline Smith Bequest		38,000	New
	112,659	3,343,676	

STANDING COMMITTEE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS LAID BEFORE

THE GENERAL SYNOD AT ITS

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION 2026

**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 ADMINISTRATOR – Ms Aisling Sheridan

SYNOD AREA SUPPORT OFFICER – Mr Craig Copley Brown

SYNOD AREA SUPPORT OFFICER – Mr Linto John

ADDITIONAL SYNOD SUPPORT – Ms Anna Berry

OFFICE

Church of Ireland House

Church Avenue

Rathmines

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1. SUMMARY

Some significant matters dealt with by the Standing Committee in the past year were:

- The Establishment of the Wedding Venues Working Group;
- Legislation by Working Group on Clergy Tenure.

2. NAMES AND ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

During the period June 2025–March 2026 (inclusive), 5 meetings were held. The number of meetings attended by each member is placed before his/her name.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

5/5	Rev Canon Gillian Wharton
4/5	Mr Kenneth Gibson
5/5	Ms Hazel Corrigan
5/5	Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston

ELECTED MEMBERS

Armagh	3/5	Rev Gary McMurray
	2/5	Rev Carlton Baxter
	3/5	Ms Caroline Nesbitt
	3/5	Ms Mary Caldwell
Clogher	3/5	Rev Mark Gallagher
	2/5	Ven Paul Thompson
	3/5	Mr Glenn Moore
	1/5	Mr Neville Armstrong
Derry & Raphoe	1/5	Rev Graham Hare
	5/5	Rev Canon Harry Gilmore
	3/5	Mr Robert Ellis
	1/5	Ms Kaye Nesbitt
Down & Dromore	5/5	Rev Mark Lennox
	4/5	Ven Jim Cheshire
	2/5	Mr William Fyffe
	5/5	Mr Andrew Brannigan
Connor	4/5	Rev Peter Jones
	3/5	Rev James Boyd
	4/5	Mr Roy Totten

VACANT

Kilmore,	4/5	Rev Canon Ruth West
Elphin &	3/5	Ven Ian Horner
Ardagh	3/5	Ms Hannah O’Neill
	2/4	Mr Alan Williamson*
Tuam,	4/5	Very Rev Niall Sloane
Limerick &	2/5	Very Rev Lynda Peilow
Killaloe	5/5	Dr Catherine Smith
	2/5	Mr Edward Hardy
Dublin &	4/5	Rev Sean Hanily
Glendalough	4/5	Rev Rob Jones
	3/5	Dr Julie McKinley
	3/5	Mr Lyndon MacCann SC
Meath &	5/5	Rev Philip McKinley
Kildare	3/4	Ven Katharine Poulton (<i>elected June 2025</i>)
	0/5	Dr Harriet Wilkinson
	2/5	Ms Phyllis Roe
Cashel,	2/5	Very Rev Stephen Farrell
Ferns &	2/5	Ven Mark Hayden
Ossory	4/5	Mr Eric Driver
	5/5	Mr Richard Codd
Cork,	3/5	Rev Canon John Ardis
Cloyne &	3/5	Ven Andrew Orr
Ross	5/5	Ms Hilda Connolly
	5/5	Ms Helen Arnopp

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

3/5	Very Rev Kenny Hall	3/5	Rev Canon Aonghus Mayes
3/5	Very Rev Nigel Dunne	2/3	Ms Judith Cairns (<i>elected September 2025</i>)
4/5	Ven Peter Thompson	0/5	Ms Jane Leighton
4/5	Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott		

The Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary of the General Synod are entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Standing Committee.

**Mr Alan Williamson was a co-opted member of the Standing Committee until his election as the Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh Over-45 representative in July 2025, filling the casual vacancy created by the ordination of the Rev Edward Lindsay.*

COMMITTEES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

FINANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr Richard Codd
Ms Kaye Nesbitt
The Honorary Secretaries

LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

His Honour Judge Tom Burgess
His Honour Judge Alastair Devlin
Mr Lyndon MacCann, SC
Mr Oswyn Paulin

Mr William Prentice
Sir Ben Stephens
Mr Andrew Walker
The Honorary Secretaries

PRIORITIES FUND COMMITTEE

Mr Glenn Moore
Rev Peter Ferguson
Ms Hazel Corrigan
Rt Rev George Davison

Ven Andrew Orr
Rev Peter Ferguson
Mr Roy Totten

BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr Richard Codd
Ms Helen Arnopp
Ms Hazel Corrigan
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston

WORLD DEVELOPMENT- BISHOPS' APPEAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Rt Rev Dr Ferran Glenfield (Chair)
Ms Iris Suitor (Hon. Secretary)
Rev Canon John Ardis
Rev Claire Henderson
Mrs Claire Holmes
Rev Canon Jonathan Pierce
Ms Gillian Purser
Rev Faith Sithole
Very Rev Niall Sloane

LAY JUDGES OF THE COURT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

Sir Ben Stephens
His Honour Judge Alastair Devlin
Mr Lyndon MacCann SC
His Honour Judge Tom Burgess
Mr Patrick Good KC
Mr Charles Galloway
Ms Jenny Ebbage
Mr Alex Hoffman
Mr Philip Gilliland
District Judge Rosalie Prytherch

3. APPOINTMENTS/NOMINATIONS

During the period covered by this report, the Standing Committee made the following appointments/nominations:

- The Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott was nominated to attend the Kirchentag in Germany
- The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe was appointed to represent the Church of Ireland at an online meeting of CEC
- The following were appointed to attend the AGM of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting: the Very Rev Niall Sloane, Dr Nicole Gallagher, Ms Cate Turner, the Ven Katharine Poulton, the Rev Susanne Cousins, the Very Rev Abigail Sines, the Very Rev Kenny Hall, the Rev Canon Andrew McCroskrey, the Rev Canon Jane Galbraith, Ms June Butler, Mr David Ritchie, the Rev Dr Ryan Hawk, Ms Gina Coptly, the Rev Philip McKinley, Mr Craig Copley Brown
- Mr Keith Gardiner and the Rev Canon Amanda Adams were appointed to attend the Presbyterian Church in Ireland General Assembly
- The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe and Ms Iris Suitor were appointed to attend the Methodist Church in Ireland Conference
- The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory was appointed to represent the Church of Ireland at the CEC Annual Meeting of European National Councils of Churches in Copenhagen
- Ms Audrey Hobson was appointed as a Church of Ireland Representative on the Secondary Education Committee
- The Bishop of Clogher and Mr Ken Gibson were appointed to attend the General Synod of the Church of Sweden
- The Very Rev Paul Draper was appointed to attend the Governing Body of the Church in Wales
- Dr Catherine Smith, Mr Daniel McDonald, and the Very Rev Diane Matchett were appointed to the Church of Ireland Marriage Council
- The following were appointed to the Wedding Venues Working Group: the Rev Lesley Robinson, the Very Rev Niall Sloane, the Rev Canon Jen McWhirter, the Rev Carlton Baxter, Mr Andrew Brannigan, Dr Ruth Gardiner, Mr Timothy Smyth, Ms Judy Peters, two Honorary Secretaries (Mr Ken Gibson and the Rev Canon Gillian Wharton) and two members of the House of Bishops (the Bishop of Meath and Kildare and the Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh)
- The following were appointed to attend the 2025 Irish Inter-Church Meeting: the Archbishop of Dublin, Mr George Woodman, the Rev Chris MacBruithin, Ms Gina Coptly and Mr Neville Cobbe
- The Rev Chris MacBruithin was nominated as the Church of Ireland Representative to the Conference of European Churches
- The following were appointed to attend the Irish Council of Churches Creation Care Conference: Mr David Brown, the Rev David McComb, Ms Lesley McComb, the Ven Andrew Orr, the Rev Julie Bell and the Rev David White.
- The nomination of Mr Henry Algeo by the Representative Body to the Pioneer Ministry Governing Council was approved by the Standing Committee on behalf of the General Synod
- Ms Kaye Nesbitt was appointed to the Standing Committee Finance and Arrangements Sub-Committee

4. APPENDED MOTIONS

A motion to amend the Standing Orders of the Standing Committee to allow for the election and nomination process to fill co-option casual vacancies via electronic means can be found in Appendix A on page 126.

5. ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE, DCU

The report of the Advisory Council appears as Appendix B on page 126. A report from the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU is also contained in the Board of Education Report.

6. ARMAGH AGREEMENT REFERENCE GROUP

The report of the Armagh Agreement Reference Group can be found in Appendix K on page 158.

7. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

In June 2025, PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed as auditors of the accounts of the Representative Church Body for the financial year 2025.

8. BISHOPS' APPEAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The report of the Bishops' Appeal Advisory Committee can be found in Appendix C on page 130.

9. BOARD FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The report of the Board for Ministry with Children and Families can be found in Appendix D on page 142.

10. CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

The report of the Central Communications Board can be found in Appendix F on page 147.

11. CHARITIES REGISTRATION MONITORING WORKING GROUP

The report of the Central Communications Board can be found in Appendix G on page 152.

12. CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION

The report of the Church and Society Commission can be found in Appendix H on page 153.

13. CHURCH OF IRELAND CENSUS

The results of the 2025 Church of Ireland Census were presented to the Standing Committee at the March 2026 meeting. The thanks of the General Synod must be paid to Mr Jonathan Hull for his assistance in facilitating the census in the online format which has worked so well over the past three years and for his expertise in compiling the resulting data. Figures from the 2025 censuses can be found in Appendix E on page 146.

14. CHURCH RESPONSE TO GAZA AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN CRISES

In the discussion following the report of the Standing Committee at General Synod 2025, it was requested that the Church of Ireland send words of comfort to the people of Gaza and the response to this request was that it would be referred to the House of Bishops and the Standing Committee for consideration. This item was brought to the Standing Committee in June 2025 at which point the

members were presented with a copy of a joint statement by the Archbishop of Armagh and the Archbishop of Dublin on this topic.

15. CIYD GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

At the September 2025 meeting, Ms Hilary Prentice, Chair of the Representative Body Executive Committee, informed the Standing Committee that a Working Group had been formed to look into the governance and reporting structures of CIYD following a review by Pobal into beneficiaries of its Youth Services Grant Scheme.

16. CLERGY PENSIONS FUND – SOLVENCY LEVY

In September 2024, Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer, presented a report on proposed changes to the Clergy Pensions Fund Solvency Levy.

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 2026 be set at the reduced percentage level of 0.8% of the Minimum Approved Stipend in force at 1 January 2026.

17. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

In January 2026, the Standing Committee considered the 2024 Income and Expenditure report for the Complaints Committee as required under Chapter VIII 23 (e). This report is appended as Appendix J on page 151. The appointment of the Complaint Administrator for the purposes of the relevant part of Chapter VIII was approved for another year.

In November 2025, the Honorary Secretaries report noted that the Chair of the Disciplinary Panel had instructed for all Orders and Judgements arising from Disciplinary Tribunals to be published. The Honorary Secretaries noted that concerns had been raised by the RCB GDPR Compliance Officer and the RCB Legal Department as to the resulting implications of this. The matter was further considered by the RB Executive Committee in January 2026 and by the Standing Committee meeting in March 2026 with the matter being referred to the Legal Advisory Committee of the General Synod by the Standing Committee for further consideration.

18. CLERGY PHI POLICY AMENDMENTS

At the March 2026 meeting, the Standing Committee approved amendments to the Clergy PHI policy. These amendments allowed for all three members of the approval panel to know the name of the PHI applicant.

19. CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISABILITY

The report of the Consultative Group on Disability can be found as Appendix I on page 156.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

Two resolutions were passed during the course of the year regarding correspondence from the General Synod. Firstly, a resolution was passed that the Honorary Secretaries write on behalf of the General Synod to the President of Ireland, Ms Catherine Connolly, congratulating her on her election and assuring her of the prayers of the Church of Ireland during her time in office. Secondly, a resolution

was passed that the Honorary Secretaries write on behalf of the General Synod to the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev and Most Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, to send the prayerful good wishes of the Church of Ireland to her as she undertakes her new role.

21. DIGNITY IN CHURCH LIFE POLICIES

At the November 2025 meeting of the Standing Committee, a proposed re-draft of the Dignity in Church Life Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy prepared by the House of Bishops was approved and adopted, having previously been approved by the Representative Body in June 2025.

22. ECO-CONGREGATIONS

In September 2025, the Ven Andrew Orr gave a presentation to the Standing Committee on the work of Eco-Congregations, highlighting how Churches should be at the forefront of the climate movement.

23. GENERAL SYNOD 2027

The Standing Committee passed by resolution at the June 2025 meeting that the General Synod of 2027 will take place in the Armagh City Hotel from 6th-8th May 2027.

24. GENERAL SYNOD/STANDING COMMITTEE FINANCES

At the September 2025 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.

25. 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 2026.

At its meeting of 16th September 2025, 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 2026:

- (a) no stipend shall be less than £38,653 per annum in Northern Ireland or €46,462 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 succeeding Years	85.0% "

26. 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 2026.

At its meeting of 16th September 2025, the Standing Committee heard a presentation by Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer, 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 Executive Committee 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 2026:

- (a) Pensionable Stipend shall be £35,060 per annum in Northern Ireland and €43,937 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% ""

27. PIONEER MINISTRY GOVERNING COUNCIL

In January, the Pioneer Ministry Governing Council presented an interim report on Pioneer Ministry to the Standing Committee, as is required in the PMGC Terms of Reference.

28. PRIORITIES FUND

The accounts of the Priorities Fund and the grants, approved by Standing Committee in March 2026, are contained as Appendix L on page 160.

29. CHURCH OF IRELAND SAFEGUARDING BOARD

At the June 2025 meeting, Dr Niall Moore, Safeguarding Manager for Policy and Training, gave a presentation to the Standing Committee highlighting the work of the Safeguarding Board. In November, the Standing Committee approved the updated Child Safeguarding Policy as well as the Terms of Reference Document for the newly created Safeguarding Case Management Committee.

Slight amendments to the Terms of Reference documents for both the Safeguarding Board and the Case Management Committee were then approved at the March 2026 meeting. (content to be edited to reflect discussion and decision at March meeting).

The full report of the Safeguarding Board appears as Appendix M on page 170.

**30. STANDING COMMITTEE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
FUND ACCOUNTS 2025**

The accounts are contained as Appendix N on page 173.

31. WEDDING VENUES WORKING GROUP

At the General Synod of 2025, a private members' motion was passed asking the Standing Committee to form a Working Group to explore the possibility of Church of Ireland clerics solemnising marriages in venues other than churches. At the June 2025 meeting of the Stading Committee, the Terms of Reference document for this Working Group was approved, with members elected in September 2025.

The report of the Wedding Venues Working Group can be found in Appendix O on page 179.

**32. 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 P on page 181.

33. WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW CLERGY TENURE

The Working Group to Review Clergy Tenure presented its recommendations to the Standing Committee in January 2026. Some slight amendments were suggested at this meeting, and re-drafted proposals were brought before the March 2026 meeting. These proposals were approved and will go before the General Synod of 2026 in the form of three bills. The full report of this Working Group can be found as Appendix Q on page 185.

APPENDIX A

MOTIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO GENERAL SYNOD

CO-OPTION CASUAL VACANCIES ON STANDING COMMITTEE

Proposer:

That Standing Order 6 (4) in the Constitution of the Standing Committee be amended to read:

Any casual vacancy by death, resignation, or otherwise occurring among the co-opted members shall be filled, as soon as conveniently may be, either by an electronic nomination and election process or at a meeting of the Standing Committee by election by the members present.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

Proposer: Lucy Michael - Diocese: Dublin & Glendalough

Seconded: Gillian Purser

CALL FOR PEACE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

Noting the recent statement by Christian Aid as follows, the General Synod adds our support to the calls for peace and for accountability for genocide and apartheid in Gaza and the West Bank. The Christian Aid statement reads:

- Christian Aid's partners and the communities they serve have witnessed Israeli action in Gaza that we believe is genocidal.
- Christian Aid believes, on the basis of what we and our partners have observed over many years, that Israel is implementing a system in the West Bank that meets the definition of apartheid – in that it systematically discriminates against and impoverishes, marginalizes, and traumatises the Palestinian people in their own land.
- We are calling on international governments to uphold the role of the ICJ in reaching a final ruling on the question of genocidal intent in Gaza, and of apartheid in the West Bank, and to promote accountability for all violations of international law, by all parties, as the first step towards a just and lasting peace for all people who live between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea.

COVENANT COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP MOTION

Proposer:

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

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott

Ven Barry Forde

Rev Claire Kakuru

Rev Martin Steele”

MARRIAGE COUNCIL CHANGE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

Proposer:

That the Terms of Reference for the Marriage Council be amended as follows:

“Elected by the General Synod every two years” to be changed to:

“Elected by the General Synod every three years”.

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY & DIALOGUE MEMBERSHIP MOTION

Proposer:

That the following be elected to CCUD for the coming year:

Rev Jane Burns

Very Rev Niall Sloane

Rev Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum

Rev Meurig Williams

Rev Suzanne Cousins

Ms Cate Turner

Very Rev Abi Sines

Rev Canon Kevin O’Brien

Mr Femi Atoyebi

Dr Bridget Nicholls

Rev Dr Ryan Hawk

APPENDIX B

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE, DCU INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE GENERAL SYNOD 2026

MEMBERS

Members are shown with attendance figures for the two meetings held during 2025.

1	Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh	School patron (Chair)
1	Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin	School patron
2	Rev Canon Gillian Wharton	Honorary Secretary and member of the General Synod Board of Education (RI)
2	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 Rachel Fraser	National school principal
2	Ms Carolyn Good	National school principal from a small rural school
2	Ms Sarah Taylor	Member of the RCB with financial or auditing expertise
2	Rev Canon Prof Leslie Francis	External academic expert
2	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.

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 Council met in June and September 2025 by videoconference.

Rev Canon Prof Anne Lodge as Director of the Centre presented an update report to the Council on the academic year 2024/25, including the B.Ed. programme and the work of the Centre in areas including chaplaincy links; schools and community engagement; links with Anglican & Reformed churches; research; and heritage & legacy. The Council was pleased to note the roll-out of new Follow Me programme resources during the year.

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 199.

At its September meeting the Council received figures from the Director on expenditure against budget for the academic year 2024/2025. The Council also considered a request for an allocation of €74,998 from the Church of Ireland College of Education Fund Trust in support of the work of the Centre in respect of the academic year 2025/2026 (2024/2025: €74,757). The Council agreed to recommend the budget request to the RB Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Representative Body in its capacity as Trustee of the Fund Trust. 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. The budget request was approved by the Trustee.

The Council welcomed Ms Rachel Fraser to her first meeting in June 2025 following her appointment as a member in September 2024.

APPENDIX C

BISHOPS' APPEAL REPORT 2026

Membership

Bishops' Appeal Committee

Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield (Chair) (4 meetings)

Mrs Iris Sutor (Hon Sec) (4 meetings)

Rev Canon John Ardis (4 meetings)

Rev Claire Henderson (3 meeting)

Mrs Claire Holmes (4 meetings)

Rev Canon Jono Pierce (3 meetings)

Rev Faith Sithole (3 meetings)

Very Rev Niall Sloane (5 meetings)

Education Advisor

Mrs Hilary McClay

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 in 2025 was our focus on providing grants to 32 projects around the world providing support for health, education, rural development and disaster relief, in addition to our continued response to the Middle East humanitarian crisis.

We established two new seasonal initiatives in 2025 – a Lent initiative **Pancakes & Prayer**, and **Gingerbread & Generosity** during Advent, which encouraged families and young people to engage with the challenges of overseas development as part of our Christian life and discipleship.

In total Bishops' Appeal distributed £158,993 and €272,002 during 2025.

Emergency Appeals

Bishops' Appeal would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who donated so generously to our General Funds, special appeals and supported the ongoing appeal for those impacted by the situation in the Middle East and relief work following the earthquake in Myanmar.

Pancakes & Prayer

Launched in 2025, Pancakes & Prayer is a new Advent initiative between Bishops' Appeal, CIYD and Fields of Life. Young people in the Church of Ireland rose to the challenge to pray for and engage with the stories of school children in two dioceses in South Sudan, the poorest country in the world. With the opportunity of giving something up for Lent, the project provides the opportunity to send donations through Fields of Life that will **feed a child for a year for £4.50/ 5 euro each**. This small sum provides the seeds, the tools and the training to set up school gardens capable of providing every child with a meal during the school day. Through the amazing response of young people in our churches, schools and youth clubs we raised enough money to feed almost 4,000 children for a year – a remarkable number. Thanks to everyone who took part.

In Lent 2026 the focus develops to also provide clean water for schools, so that every child is “Fed and Watered”.

Gingerbread & Generosity

In Advent 2025 Bishops' Appeal partnered with CFM and SAMS to provide an opportunity for children and families to think about those who don't have a safe place to live. Reflecting on the circumstances of Jesus' birth in a borrowed stable, and the family then fleeing to safety in Egypt, there are many layers in the Christmas story which echo the challenge of safety and homelessness that is experienced in our world today.

The project pack provided all sorts of resources for children and families, including worksheets, craft activities, stories and games and a competition to decorate the best gingerbread house, as well as a draft outline for a Sunday service usable during Advent and through to Epiphany.

Those who chose to donate to the "Houses of Hope" appeal as part of the Gingerbread and Generosity campaign, were able to contribute to a project supporting homeless people in Chile, or safe housing for vulnerable young women in Brazil.

General Synod 2025

At General Synod 2025 the Bishops' Appeal invited synod members to take home seeds to plant to remind us that whenever we donate to an appeal, or to general funds, we are effectively planting **Seeds of Hope**. Hundreds of sheets of seeded papers (to plant wildflowers) and pots of sunflower seeds were distributed to members of General Synod to all parts of Ireland.

It was a simple reminder that, rather than feeling overwhelmed by the needs of the world, we are able to do something, however small, that will make a difference and bring hope to people who are living in situations where there isn't much hope around.

Plans for General Synod 2026 remain a closely guarded secret – but please make sure you visit the Bishops' Appeal stand in the Exhibition Area to see what we are up to this year!

Project Grants – a sample of the vital projects around the world funded through donations and legacies

Mothers Cow – Zimbabwe – Christian Aid
Prison Ministry in the Diocese of Cairo – Egypt – CMSI
Support for survivors of abuse – Philippines – International Justice Mission
Church, Community, Children – Cambodia – Tearfund Ireland
WASH schools project – Mozambique – Self Help Africa
Resilient Communities, Hopeful Future – Pakistan – Tearfund
Sowing for the Future – Argentina – SAMS Ireland
Water for Life – Uganda – Fields of Life
Gitega Food Security – Burundi – CMSI
Afghanistan Relief – Afghanistan – Christian Aid

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 people's finances, we have been heartened by those digging deep and giving even when things are difficult. It has enabled us to support vital work in some of the most vulnerable communities worldwide. During 2025 the Bishops' Appeal received several significant legacy gifts. The receipt of legacies is humbly and gratefully received and used in a way that honours the life and memory of those who give.

CMSI Lent Project

Bishops' Appeal was glad to continue to partner with CMSI's Lent Project, providing resources for schools, youth groups and Sunday schools to use during Lent.

General Synod Mission Lunch

Bishops' Appeal is partnering with the Council for Mission to invite members of General Synod to a special Mission Lunch on Friday 8th May, in the Slieve Donard hotel, with the kind approval of the Honorary Secretaries, when we will have the opportunity to hear firsthand from Safa who is the Regional Director of Tearfund in the Middle East. Please come and be inspired and challenged by his stories – as well as enjoying a sandwich lunch together.

Thank You

Bishops' Appeal wishes to thank the RCB Finance Department for their continued support. 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, along with all of the work of keeping our accounts and meeting the increasingly strict charity and audit requirements.

The Bishops' 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. 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.

APPENDIX Ci

BISHOPS' APPEAL ACCOUNTS 2025

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	Year ended 31 December	
	2025	2024
	€	€
INCOME		
Contributions	354,074	347,368
Legacy Funds	721,579	-
Deposit Interest	12,326	13,617
Sterling translation loss/gain	(1,862)	4,952
Tax refunds	10,936	13,359
	<u>1,097,053</u>	<u>379,296</u>
EXPENSES		
Administration Expenses & Salaries	<u>51,057</u>	<u>42,497</u>
	51,057	42,497
OPERATING SURPLUS FOR YEAR	<u>1,045,996</u>	<u>336,799</u>
Grants Paid	454,396	430,137
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<u>591,600</u>	<u>(93,338)</u>

BISHOPS' APPEAL ACCOUNT 2025

BALANCE SHEET

Year ended 31 December

2025

2024

€

€

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at Bank	1,125,073	533,062
Cash held by the RCB	11,948	24,586
Debtors	18,215	5,988
	<u>1,155,236</u>	<u>563,636</u>

Total Net Assets	<u>1,155,236</u>	<u>563,686</u>
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FUNDS EMPLOYED

Balance at 1 January		
	563,636	656,97
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		4
	591,600	
		(93,338)
Balance at 31 December	<u>1,155,236</u>	<u>563,636</u>

BISHOPS' APPEAL CONTRIBUTIONS

		2025		2024	
	Stg£	€			€
ARMAGH	9,873	1,023	16,465	2,544	
CLOGHER	19,939	905	9,630	250	
CONNOR	7,451	-	15,083	-	
DERRY & RAPHOE	16,628	10,056	16,844	4,381	
DOWN & DROMORE	63,991	100	25,950	100	
KILMORE, ELPHIN & ARDAGH	-	3,557	-	4,656	
CASHEL, FERNS & OSSORY	509	27,519	-	34,916	
CORK, CLOYNE & ROSS	-	17,406	-	19,414	
DUBLIN & GLENDALOUGH	-	66,128	-	60,116	
TUAM, LIMERICK & KILLALOE	-	15,773	-	22,504	
MEATH & KILDARE	-	11,866	-	13,129	
OTHER	11,472	50,765	20,635	58,945	
TOTALS	129,863	205,098	104,607	220,955	

TOTALS IN EURO	354 074	347 368
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BISHOPS' APPEAL GRANTS PAID

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	2025 €	2024 €
Disaster Relief	207,970	173,828
Health & Medical	71,979	77,889
Education/Communications	68,189	74,059
Rural Development	<u>106,258</u>	<u>104,361</u>
Totals	454,396	430,137
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY		
Christian Aid	60,429	106,147
Tearfund	115,225	70,000
Fields of Life	54,900	32,248
Gorta – Self Help Africa	30,683	19,388
CMSI	71,372	43,827
Motivation	10,000	12,085
Habitat for humanity Northern Ireland	2,361	18,127
International Justice Mission UK	22,944	12,085
South American Mission Society	11,472	-
Mothers' Union	305	-
Others	<u>74,705</u>	<u>116,230</u>
Totals	<u>454,396</u>	<u>430,137</u>

BISHOPS' APPEAL GRANTS PAID

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

AFRICA - €168,352; Stg £21,493;

Project	Location	Agency
Gitega Food Security Project	Burundi	CMSI
Mothers' Union Literacy Project	Burundi	Mothers' Union
Emergency Response	DRC	CMSI
Education of Church Leaders	Ethiopia	CMSI
Livelihoods and Peace-building	Ethiopia	Tearfund Ireland
Diocese of Cairo Prison Ministry	Egypt	CMSI
Bee Resilient	Kenya	Christian Aid
Focus Malawi	Malawi	Self Help Africa
Survive and Thrive	Malawi	Motivation
WASH in schools	Mozambique	Self Help Africa
Pig Rearing (Poverty Uplift) Project	Rwanda	CMSI
Liloma Project year 1 (CCR Diocese)	Sierra Leone	Christian Aid
Pancakes & Prayer	South Sudan	Fields of Life
Water for Life	Uganda	Fields of Life
Mothers' Cow	Zimbabwe	Christian Aid
Growing Resilience and Eco Enterprise	Uganda	Self Help Africa
I Am Girl	Uganda	Fields of Life
<u>ASIA - €30,115 ; Stg £40,940 ;</u>		
Afghanistan Emergency Appeal	Afghanistan	Christian Aid
Church – Community-Children	Cambodia	Tearfund Ireland
Myanmar Emergency Appeal	Myanmar	Christian Aid
Children's Disability Ministry	Nepal	CMSI
Health Resilience Strengthening Project	Nepal	CMSI
Resilient Communities, Hopeful Future	Pakistan	Tearfund NI
Support for survivors of abuse/exploitation	Philippines	IJM
<u>MIDDLE EAST - €71,020 Stg75,720;</u>		
Middle East Appeal	Gaza & Middle East	Diocese of Jerusalem
Middle East Appeal	Gaza & Middle East	Tearfund
<u>SOUTH AMERICA - Stg£ 20,000;</u>		
Sowing for the Future	Argentina	SAMS

Domestic Abuse Education	Peru	International Justice Mission UK
<i>EUROPE -- €2,515 Stg £840;</i>		
Development Education Lent Resources	Ireland	CMSI
Ukraine Appeal	Ukraine	Habitat For Humanity – Ukraine Appeal

Independent auditors' report to the Advisory Committee of Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

In our opinion, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal's financial statements:

- for the year ended 31 December 2025 have been properly prepared in all material respects, in accordance with the basis of preparation on page 8 and accounting policies on pages 8 and 9 of the financial statements.

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the balance sheet as at 31 December 2025;
- 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.

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.

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 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 entity'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.

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 Advisory 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.

Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit

Responsibilities of the Advisory Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Advisory Committee responsibilities 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 give a true and fair view. The Advisory 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 Advisory Committee 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 Advisory 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.

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 entity save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

The logo for PricewaterhouseCoopers, featuring the company name in a stylized, handwritten-style font.

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants
Ireland
20 March 2026

Appendix D

Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children and Families General Synod Report 2026

www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org

Membership

Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor (Chair)

Children's Ministry Network representatives:

Rev Rebecca Guildea (RI)

Ms Lynn Storey (RI)

Mr David Brown (NI)

Dr Millie Bellew (NI)

Sunday School Society for Ireland representative:

Very Rev Niall Sloane

Board of Education representatives:

Rev Catherine Simpson (NI)

Ms Carolyn Good (RI)

Standing Committee representative:

Rev Canon John Ardis

Liturgical Committee representative:

Rev Julie Bell

Staff:

Dr Peter Hamill (Secretary)

Ms Rachael Murphy (Development Officer)

Vision Statement

The Board for Ministry with Children and Families (CFM) seeks 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. Its vision is that every Church of Ireland parish, no matter how big or small, is equipped to provide vibrant and engaging ministry with children and families.

Communications

Over the past year, we have once again increased the number of people engaging with our resources and training. Our social media presence remains strong, with a healthy number of followers across multiple platforms. Additionally, our website (www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org) continues to experience high engagement, particularly on our resources page and with our online training videos.

Each season, we release a Newsletter that features resource ideas, inspiration, and interesting articles focused on ministry with children and families. You can find the sign-up page for the Newsletter on the homepage of our website.

In September, the Diocesan CFM representatives and DYOs gathered for an overnight stay at Dromantine Centre. There, we were joined by Dr Mark Griffiths, who facilitated discussions based on his latest research on Generation Alpha and his book, "One Generation from Extinction."

The following day, we came together in Newry with representatives from various other churches and organisations, including three bishops! The service celebrated 250 years of ministry with children, young people, and families in the Church of Ireland. It was a lovely, gentle, and joyful gathering where we expressed our gratitude for the legacy of ministry left by the church's pioneers and those who have continued to carry the flame through the generations. Each diocese received a commemorative plaque, which was lit during the National Day of Prayer for young people in November. Both BCFM and CIYD are committed to building on this legacy, ensuring that our ministry remains relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing society.

Resources

Our collection of resources continues to expand, with most items available for free download from our website. A selection of these resources will also be showcased at our stand during General Synod.

In the coming months, we plan to launch an online shop where you can purchase hard copies of resources, such as our Baptism Books, posters, and Bible Buddy Packs. In the meantime, if any parish needs these resources, they can either reach out to their Diocesan CFM Representative or email Rachael at cfm@ireland.anglican.org.

This year, we are excited to launch the Accessible Book of Common Prayer (BCP). This resource is specifically designed for children to help them engage with the most commonly used services, Morning Prayer 2 and Holy Communion 2. However, we also recognise that it will be beneficial for individuals of all ages with additional needs, as well as adults who may find it challenging to navigate these services. In our design, we have ensured that the resource does not have an overtly childish appearance, allowing users of all ages to feel comfortable using it. At the same time, we have incorporated bright and clear design elements to make it visually appealing to children. The printed book includes a pocket on the inside cover for storing a notepad and pencil. Additionally, we have created PowerPoint slides that complement the book's design and icons. These slides will be available for churches to download and customise according to their specific service outlines. At the time of writing this report, we are about to commence printing. Each parish will receive an initial copy for review, followed by additional copies available for purchase from the Church of Ireland online shop. We will also distribute copies at General Synod.

We extend our gratitude to the working group members who supported Rachael during the development of this resource: Rev Andrew Neil, Ms Kirsty McCartney, Ms Joanna Griffin, Ms Lynn Storey, and Rev Rebecca Guildea.

During Advent, we were thrilled to partner with the Church of Ireland's Bishops Appeal and SAMS Ireland to launch "Gingerbread and Generosity," which we hope to establish as an annual fundraising event. This year's theme was "Houses of Hope," raising funds for two projects supported by SAMS Ireland: one is a safe house for young girls at risk of exploitation in Brazil, and the other is a food hub and shelter for homeless families in Chile. Families and churches were encouraged to engage with free downloadable packs that included crafts, games, intergenerational service outlines, and a trail to learn more about the projects while having fun decorating gingerbread houses. Thanks to the generosity of parishes and families across the island of Ireland, we raised just under €5,000.

Training

Throughout the year, we have hosted numerous training events, both in person and online. Rachael offers workshops for clergy and volunteers focused on engaging with children and families in your community, volunteer recruitment and retention, and she is also available for CFM strategy-building support. In the coming year, she plans to provide informal support sessions for rural deaneries that wish to explore ministry with children and families in a local context. If your rural deanery is interested in meeting with Rachael in this way, please email: cfm@ireland.anglican.org.

Our long-awaited national conference, Neartù, which had been postponed, took place over two days in May. On the first day, around 25 people, including Diocesan CFM representatives and nominated volunteers/staff, gathered at the Mount St. Anne's Conference Centre for a time of learning, discussion, and sharing with Rachel Turner, the founder of Parenting for Faith. This was a precious time of growth and honesty, which many of those present found truly beneficial. The following morning, we welcomed around 60 additional participants from across the island—a mix of clergy, volunteers, and staff members. The morning began with worship led by Mr Lawrence Bellew, followed by a keynote address from Ms Rachel Turner. In the afternoon, we held a marketplace featuring organisations such as Love4Life, Legacy, Roots, and CMSIreland, each of which led workshops.

October marked an exciting time of training and encouragement as we spent 24 hours with the talented Mr Bob Hartman, author of many books, including *The Storyteller Bible* and *The Rhyming Bible*, among hundreds of others! This was a writer's retreat designed for a small group of creative individuals who applied for their spots. We gathered at Murlough House, a location where C.S. Lewis is reputed to have written much of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. From our time together, we hope to create a variety of resources over the coming year. Throughout the winter months, we once again held a range of online training workshops. Many of these sessions were recorded and have been added to the training workshop catalogue on our website. This year's topics included: Messy Church with Ms Aike Kennet-Brown, the director of Messy Church UK, and Ms Laura Steerman, CFM officer for Taney parish; Festive Family Ministry with Ms Julie Currie; Christmas reflections with Ms Lydia Monds from The Ministry of Healing; and PACE—a toolkit for Children's Ministry with Ms Lisa Campbell, founder of Wonderful Me.

Finally, we are excited to announce that this year, in partnership with the Children's Ministry Network Britain & Ireland, we will be launching Ministry Essentials. This training programme is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to mission and ministry with children, regardless of your working context. Each module introduces key concepts for the theme and explores how they can be applied to both your practice and your role as a practitioner. The course consists of ten modules and has been produced in partnership with Cliff College and TheologyX. Participants can take the Children's Ministry Essentials programme in its entirety or as standalone modules.

The 10 modules include:

1. The world of the child
2. The developing child
3. Biblical perspectives on children
4. The role of play in faith formation
5. Creating space for children in our church communities
6. Inclusion
7. Participation
8. Contexts of mission and ministry with children
9. Pastoral care
10. Leadership and teamwork

Thanks to the generous support from The Church of Ireland Priorities Fund we will offer 20 free spaces per diocese. More details will be shared via our social media platforms in the coming months.

Children's Ministry Network (Britain and Ireland)

The Church of Ireland is actively involved in the Children's Ministry Network (CMN), which is part of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Dr Peter Hamill currently serves as the Moderator for this group, while Ms Rachael Murphy is an Executive Group member responsible for supporting the logistics of the two annual conferences.

In 2025 we met together at Shallowford Conference centre to focus on the way Churches support families who foster and adopt. It is hoped that discussions held during this event will lead to the development of a

resource and/or additional training module for Ministry Essentials looking at trauma-informed response in church-based ministry with Children and Families.

Appendix 1

Children and Families Ministry Network Members

Development Officer (Chair)	Ms Rachael Murphy
Armagh	Mr David Brown
Clogher	Rev Rebecca Guilda
Derry & Raphoe	Ms Kirsty McCartney
Down & Dromore	Dr Millie Bellew
Connor	Ms Victoria Jackson
Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh	Vacant
Dublin & Glendalough	Rev Cathy Hallissey and Ms Lynn Storey
Meath & Kildare	Rev Yvonne Hutchinson
Cashel, Ferns and Ossory	Ms Carolyn Good
Cork, Cloyne & Ross	Rev Elise Hanley
Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe	Rev Canon Jane Galbraith and Rev Vicki Lynch

Members can be contacted through their respective diocesan offices.

Church of Ireland Census 2025 (and comparison with 2024 & 2023)

	2025	2024	2023
Total number of Parish Groups:	442	449	449
Number of census responses:	440	446	443
Percentage response rate:	99.55%	99.33%	98.66%
Number of churches/worship centres:	1064	1068	1043

Diocese	Attendance Feb date			Attendance June date			Attendance Sep date			Attendance Nov date		
	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023
Armagh	4,656	4,525	4,606	4,722	4,865	4,933	5,071	4,686	4,950	5,006	5,244	5,314
Cashel, Ferns & Ossory	2,219	2,349	2,380	2,451	2,261	2,481	2,703	2,688	2,270	1,965	2,426	2,293
Clogher	3,187	3,003	2,855	2,941	2,983	3,205	3,482	2,946	3,136	2,818	3,038	2,842
Connor	6,436	6,390	6,464	6,561	6,768	6,452	6,747	6,465	6,464	7,136	7,845	7,787
Cork, Cloyne & Ross	1,676	1,661	1,554	1,877	1,597	1,565	1,878	2,025	1,524	1,652	1,510	1,609
Derry & Raphoe	4,464	4,451	4,122	4,826	4,917	4,516	4,791	4,905	4,554	4,475	4,408	4,565
Down & Dromore	9,681	9,668	9,122	10,134	9,625	9,592	10,474	10,042	9,308	10,800	10,153	10,076
Dublin & Glendalough	5,373	5,002	4,844	5,716	5,192	4,773	5,770	5,824	5,619	6,444	5,544	5,489
Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh	1,860	1,955	1,857	2,074	2,011	1,961	2,363	2,009	2,136	2,194	1,993	2,016
Meath & Kildare	1,018	1,091	948	1,067	1,243	1,015	1,367	1,179	1,098	1,113	1,189	1,163
Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe	1,373	1,554	1,365	1,625	1,649	1,716	1,838	1,562	1,511	1,280	1,483	1,403
Totals	41,943	41,649	40,117	43,994	43,111	42,209	46,484	44,331	42,570	44,883	44,833	44,557

Diocese	Baptisms			Weddings			Funerals			Confirmed		
	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023	2025	2024	2023
Armagh	219	203	230	75	76	81	381	410	404	135	180	173
Cashel, Ferns & Ossory	96	100	121	24	29	51	142	120	139	124	134	197
Clogher	156	139	153	52	46	52	277	213	235	111	173	145
Connor	228	240	295	89	78	92	642	705	662	124	115	161
Cork, Cloyne & Ross	67	67	83	18	22	22	88	103	101	89	107	82
Derry & Raphoe	284	264	325	81	84	100	417	421	441	223	232	297
Down & Dromore	273	235	239	96	101	108	798	838	857	187	143	150
Dublin & Glendalough	302	329	327	54	53	51	291	287	278	434	396	473
Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh	86	101	83	40	39	55	96	138	160	85	89	69
Meath & Kildare	43	59	49	18	17	31	73	65	53	57	77	74
Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe	71	44	49	26	18	26	78	89	84	71	76	50
Totals	1,825	1,781	1,954	573	563	669	3,283	3,389	3,414	1,640	1,722	1,871

APPENDIX F

CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

MEMBERSHIP*

Most Rev Pat Storey (<i>Chair</i>) 6/6	House of Bishops
Rev Canon Gillian Wharton 5/6	Honorary Secretary, General Synod
<i>Vacant</i>	Standing Committee
Rev Carlton Baxter (from September 2024) 4/6	Standing Committee
Canon Dr Kenneth Milne 4/6	Chair, Literature Committee
Dr Raymond Refaussé 6/6	Honorary Secretary, Literature Committee
Ms Ruth Gyves (from March 2026)	Representative Body
Very Rev Nigel Dunne 5/6	Representative Body
Rev Alan Ruffli 6/6	Liturgical Advisory Committee
Mr David Ritchie 6/6	Chief Officer, RCB
Mrs Janet Maxwell 6/6	Head of Synod Services & Communications
<i>In attendance</i>	
Mr Peter Cheney 6/6	Press Officer
Mrs Lynn Glanville 6/6	Dublin & Glendalough Communications Officer
Mr Stuart Wilson 5/6	Website & Information Administrator

*Standing Committee may co-opt up to three additional members for gender, regional and other balance.

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 and forward these for approval to the Standing Committee;
- Identify training needs among church communications staff and volunteers, providing training where possible;
- Report annually to the General Synod.

SUMMARY – MAJOR OUTCOMES FOR 2025/26

- The Allocations Committee of the RB continued to relieve financial strain on the Royalties Fund, which has become depleted in recent years, allowing income in the fund to reaccumulate.
- Work to effect a redesign of the Church of Ireland website is ongoing.
- A new approach to broadcast worship has been launched by RTÉ. The CCB welcomes Scratch Films' appointment and also the return of recording in a parish setting. A schedule of services for the period 2026, 2027, and 2028 is under development. A call-out to parishes received a generous response representing many aspects of worship in the Church of Ireland.

GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND & PUBLICATIONS

At the year end, the balances in the General Synod Royalties Fund stood at €165,948 and £12,051 at representing improvements of 17% and 48% respectively on the previous year-end position. The Allocations Committee kindly continues to support various ad hoc printing needs that arise during the course of the year and steps have been taken to provide planned projects within the relevant committee budgets.

CHURCH OF IRELAND GAZETTE

Working Group on Support for *Church of Ireland Gazette*

Very Rev Nigel Dunne

Rev Carlton Baxter

Mrs Janet Maxwell

Mr Peter Cheney

The Church of Ireland Gazette will celebrate its 170th year of publication in 2026. This makes *The Gazette* one of the oldest continuous publications in the UK or Ireland. The CCB congratulates the Board of Church of Ireland Press on this significant achievement. *The Gazette* offers a friendly critique of the life and activities of the Church of Ireland. In recent years, like many printed publications, it has begun to struggle with printing and distribution costs and has received considerable support from the CCB, the Allocations Committee and the Priorities Fund as the Board tries to find a way forward that balances the ongoing desire by some to have a physical magazine, while others are moving to an electronic format.

The CCB would encourage people to try out the on-line version of *The Gazette*. There is considerable advantage in accessing the magazine on your computer or phone in terms of convenience with the added advantage that *The Gazette's* new editor, Mr Clark Brydon posts additional updates to *The Gazette* website, when stories of particular interest emerge. Subscriptions may be obtained at <https://coigazette.ie/subscribe>

SEARCH

The CCB also commends the journal *SEARCH*, which offers readers a valuable series of researched articles in each of the three annual volumes, generally addressing a particular theme within the life of the Church of Ireland in each edition. *SEARCH* offers an in-depth consideration of key areas of church life and is an important contributor to discourse within the Church and beyond.

PRESS OFFICE

In January of 2026, Mr Peter Cheney announced his resignation from the role of Press Officer in order to take up an opportunity with the Anglican Centre in Rome. The Board thanks Mr Cheney for the significant contribution he has made during his tenure as Press Officer, in particular to the development of the website and social media and wishes Mr Cheney all success in this new venture. Mr Stuart Wilson continues to provide support as Website and Information Administrator. The Board also acknowledges the work of the Diocesan Communications Officers (DCOs). During the year, Rev Earl Storey retired as DCO of Meath and Kildare and was replaced by Mrs Jenny Horner. Mrs Horner's previous role in Kilmore Diocese was taken up by Mr David Roe. The Board congratulates all of these on their departures and new positions respectively. Anglewise Communications continues to provide video production support, primarily through the *Inspiring Angles* series on websites and social media.

Inspiring Angles' productions during the year included Rev Stephen McWhirter's charity walk from his parish of Rossory in Clogher to Dublin, and university chaplaincy in Dublin (Rev Canon Paul Arbuthnot and Mr Eric Hughes), also Ms Emma Fawcett speaking about youth work in Dublin and Glendalough, and a selection of interviews from General Synod (e.g. Rev Canon Craig McCauley on growing a local church and Dr Susan Hood on archives), local churches supporting Harmony Hill Primary School in Lisburn and the Cregagh Crafters from East Belfast, an enterprising group that was previously funded by the Mind Matters Project and is going from strength to strength.

Key activities with an external focus included marking VE and VJ Days, the Royal Foundation Service in Armagh Cathedral with the time of 'Together at Christmas', and the 50th anniversary of the episcopal consecration of former Archbishop Robin Eames, which took place in St Columb's Cathedral, Derry, in June 2025. The Archbishop of Armagh made various statements on matters in Northern Ireland during the summer months to call for calm amid tensions, including addressing anti-migrant riots and other incidents such as the effigies in a boat placed on a bonfire in Moygashel. Mrs Lynn Glanville and Mr Peter Cheney

received acknowledgement from the Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice for work undertaken to create a migration and ethnic diversity hub on the Church of Ireland website.

TRAINING

An annual training event is provided for Diocesan Communications Officers, hosted in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. The topics covered this year were Artificial Intelligence and introductions to Mr Brydon as the new editor of *The Church of Ireland Gazette*. In addition, two media training events for church spokespersons took place.

Guidance on copyright and photography is provided to parishes. 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. See: www.canva.com/help/canva-for-nonprofits.

CHURCH OF IRELAND WEBSITE

Working Group on Website Redevelopment

Rev Alan Ruffli
Mr David Ritchie
Mrs Janet Maxwell
Mr Peter Cheney
Mr Stuart Wilson

The current version of the Church of Ireland website has been in place in 2017, and the Board has decided to proceed with its redevelopment, to ensure compatibility with current requirements and to provide the best possible customer service to the Church's membership and other audiences who make use of the website. At the time of writing, the Board was working on proposals that would allow for current website content to be retained and improved and also incorporate content from the Safeguarding and Children and Families Ministry websites. Work on the redevelopment website is progressing, through a working group of the Central Communications Board, with the aim of launching a new website by 2027.

BROADCASTING – RTE

The CCB was pleased to find that restructuring at RTE resulted in a positive change to the delivery of broadcast worship, with the appointment of Scratch Films to return to a model of parish-based services. As outside broadcasts tend to be rather more costly to produce, a plan has been agreed to produce two services on each Sunday when recording will take place.

This means that a live morning service at 11 will be hosted in a parish, which will then act as the host for a second parish in the afternoon, allowing the possibility for a time of meeting and sharing between the two parishes. A call-out for volunteers was sent out in January 2026, and the response from parishes has been more than generous, allowing for a rich and varied programme of broadcast services representing the varied interpretations of worship and liturgy across the island.

The Church of Ireland has 12 televised services every year. The provision for radio worship was unchanged by the new arrangements for televised worship. Streamed daily weekday Masses also continue and www.ChurchServices.tv web streams are still attracting around 20,000 viewers a day after nearly five years and providing much valued spiritual support for the elderly, housebound or hospitalised. Church of Ireland parishes are regularly represented in Sunday morning radio services.

In December 2025, Mr Roger Childs, the head of religious broadcasting at RTE, took voluntary redundancy from his post and was replaced by Mr John McMahon. The Board thanks Mr Childs for the significant contribution that he made during his tenure at RTE, during which time he refreshed the religious broadcasting format and created a series of new programmes that gave voice and insight to the developing religious make-up of the island. Mr Childs was variously a member of and invited guest at the Central

Communications Board. The Board wishes him well in the future and thanks him sincerely for the contribution he has made.

BROADCASTING – BBC

The Church of Ireland benefits from regular opportunities for broadcast worship services provided on BBC Radio Ulster, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 3 throughout the year. Over the course of 2025 and early 2026, these have included Radio 3 Choral Evensong from St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, during the Charles Wood Festival, and Radio Ulster Morning Services including contributions by Bishop Harold and Mrs Liz Miller; Mrs Esther Simpson (lay reader in Down and Dromore on the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed); Canon Simon Doogan; St Columba's Church, Knock (for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity); St George's, High Street, Belfast; and Knockbreda Parish Church (at Christmas). The services with the Nicene Creed and for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity reached national audiences through Radio 4.

Morning Service is a Blackthorn production for BBC Northern Ireland and contact details for the producers are available at www.blackthornproductions.co.uk. The production team for Choral Evensong can be contacted at choral.evensong@bbc.co.uk.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

Canon Dr Kenneth Milne (Chairman)
Rev Canon PK McDowell
Ven RB Rountree
Rev KG Rue
Rev Bernard Treacy OP
Dr Raymond Refaüssé (Honorary Secretary)
Ms Cecelia West
Mr George Woodman
Mrs Janet Maxwell (ex officio)

In attendance: Mr Peter Cheney (Press Officer)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2026 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 2025

Arising out of the Action Plan for 2025:

- The fifteenth & sixteenth booklets in the Braemor Studies series, which seeks to publish the best of the final year dissertations in CITI, were published.
- Supporting the Liturgical Advisory Committee's publication on the canticles

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 2025:

Gregory Dunstan (ed.), *Journal of the General Synod, 2025*

Patrick Little, *The Church of Ireland under the Stuarts* (published by Four Courts Press with support from the General Synod Royalties Fund)

Andrew Neill, *Exploration and Meaning. Considering Faith Formation in Children Aged 6-11*

Cameron Mack, *The Collision of Words. Counter-Formation Through Interactivity with Scripture in Deuteronomy and the Daily Office*

Martin Steele (ed.), *Church of Ireland Sunday and Weekday Readings Advent Sunday 2025 to Eve of Advent Sunday 2026*

Peter A. Thompson, *A Treasure in Clay Jars. Rediscovering the Spirituality of the Canticles*

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 now 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

Tel: +3531 4125 665

GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND

The Committee recommended the following grants, which have been made since the last report:

- €4,500 to support the publication of *Search*.

ACTION PLAN 2026

- Prepare the seventeenth and eighteenth books in the Braemor Studies for publication.
- Support the publication programme of the Liturgical Advisory Committee.
- Support the publication of the Church of Ireland/Moravian Reference Group's 'Armagh Agreement'.
- Support Bishop Richard Clarke's proposed book on the disestablishment revision of the Book of Common Prayer.
- Support the revised on-line edition of Rev Canon Michael Kennedy's BCP Commentaries.
- Support Dr Kevin Moroney's proposed book of essays on Anglican liturgies.

APPENDIX G

CHARITIES REGISTRATION MONITORING WORKING GROUP

MEMBERS

Membership

The Archbishop of Armagh (Chair)

Ms Ashley Brown

Mr Ken Gibson/ Ms Hazel Corrigan

Mr Roy Lawther

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC

Ven Leslie Stevenson

The Working Group has no new issues requiring a report in 2026.

APPENDIX H

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

REPORT 2026

MEMBERSHIP (16)

Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson (Chair)	(5/5)	Mr Keith Gardiner	(3/5)
Most Rev John McDowell		Mrs Zephryn Patton	(3/5)
Mr Neville Armstrong	(5/5)	Mrs June Butler	(2/5)
Rev Jane Burns	(4/5)	Rev Dr Andrew Campbell	(2/5)
Mr Ken Gibson	(4/5)	Mr Steven McQuitty	(2/5)
Dr Michael Trimble	(4/5)	Ms Hannah O'Neill**	(1/1)
Rev Andrew Irwin	(4/5)	Dr Claire Jones	(0/5)
Mr Garrett Casey*	(4/4)	Dr Harriet Wilkinson	(0/5)

Secretary: Mr Craig Copley Brown (RCB staff in attendance)

*From March 2025

**To March 2025

The Church and Society Commission (CASC) is an advisory group, serving the Standing Committee of the General Synod, and engages with legislatures and governments on a variety of issues, including legislation. The mission of CASC is to provide oversight and direction for the Church of Ireland's work, in respect to social theology in action. CASC's views only become representative of the Church of Ireland after being approved by its General Synod.

The Commission submits the following report with appendices referencing its work since the General Synod of May 2025.

Executive Summary

Over the past 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 General 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. The Commission had the opportunity for a one-day residential meeting in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, the first in-person since the Pandemic, which provided a valuable opportunity for members to meet, discuss and plan the future work of CASC.

Membership

The Commission would like to thank all of those who have contributed their time and expertise over the last year towards helping the Commission achieve the work it has, with particular thanks to Ms Hannah O'Neill who stepped down from the Commission this year. We are most grateful for her contribution during her time with the Commission. We welcomed Mr Garrett Casey as a new member of CASC and are grateful for his time and expertise.

Report

Troubles Legacy

At General Synod 2025 the Church and Society Commission presented its work regarding the ‘Legacy of the Troubles’. This included an information leaflet, liturgical resources (compiled by the LAC), and training for curates as part of the CME initiative at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. The Commission acknowledges that for many individuals and communities, the trauma caused by the Troubles is still very raw, and it is hoped that this small initiative might help in bringing comfort, solace and understanding to all those affected, and those who minister to them.

The Commission recognises that there are a number of key groups working in this area and expertise on the matter already exists within and outside the Church. Rather than recreate existing work our goal has been to bring these people and organisations together, including inviting representatives to Synod, to assist us in addressing the challenge faced by the Church.

Assisted Suicide

The Commission continued to monitor the progress of legislation put forward in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom to legalise assisted suicide.

The Church of Ireland’s stance in opposition to any such legislation has been consistent and the Commission has previously engaged with legislators on the matter to voice this opposition. The Commission continues to engage with ongoing consultations and would remind members of its information leaflet on the subject that provides a brief, up-to-date point of reference for those within or outside the Church of Ireland community, highlighting the scriptural beliefs that underpin the Church’s stance alongside, a brief outline of some of the medical, legal, and social arguments that reinforce the stance. The flyer works to convey these arguments concisely while also paying heed to the deep emotional resonance this issue has for so many people.

Homelessness

The compound effects of the ongoing Housing Crisis and increases over recent years in the cost of living has driven a surge in the number of people experiencing homelessness. While a true solution will require a significant commitment to action and investment throughout the Island of Ireland, the Commission chose this past Christmas season to highlight the struggles of those experiencing homelessness in the hope of focusing the spirit of Christian charity into practical action, with guidance for parishes and individuals on steps they can take at a local level to assist those in their community experiencing homelessness.

Responses to Programmes for Government

Since the last report to General Synod, the Commission has released a submission in response to the publication of a Programme for Government for the Republic of Ireland. In responding to the Programme for Government the Commission emphasised the ways in which the Church hopes to assist in creating a better future for all people on the island of Ireland. Similarly, in the case of the Programme for Government in Northern Ireland, the Commission offered its insight, urging action where the programme does not adequately address the actions which will need to be taken, particularly around the area of housing, public investment, and climate stewardship.

Statements and Documents

[Submission on the Republic of Ireland's Programme for Government 2025-30](#)

[Statement on the Northern Ireland Programme for Government](#)

[Healing and Hope – resources on addressing the trauma of the Troubles](#)

[Homelessness - Sharing hope with people without a home this Christmas](#)

[Statement on the death of Sr Stanislaus Kennedy](#)

[CASC responds to RoI Budget 2026](#)

APPENDIX I

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISABILITY

Membership

Rev Natasha Quinn-Thomas (Chair) 5/5
Rev Aaron McAlister 3/5
Ms Rachel Kenny 5/5
Ms Naomi Swatridge 4/5
Ms Hannah Daly (resigned November 2025) 3/3
Mr Simon Malley 4/5

New Members

Following the resignation of two members over the past 18 months, the Group is now seeking expressions of interest in order to appoint some new members. 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.

Planning for the Future

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.

2025 Achievements

- 1) Circulation of recent survey of provision for deaf congregation members to all clergy;
- 2) Preparation of a more comprehensive survey across as many aspects of accessibility as possible, to include physical, sensory and hidden disabilities;
- 3) Preparation of a new leaflet outlining the supports the Group can offer;
- 4) Website update – the Group’s information on www.ireland.anglican.org has not been updated for some time, and it is now being updated as part of a general reworking of the Church of Ireland website. One of the ways the Group is looking at to improve the website is to explore the possibility of using ‘Easy Read’, an accessible format for people with intellectual disabilities.

2026 Plans

- 1) Launch & distribution of an all-island accessibility online survey, followed by analysis of resulting data and a report of recommendations;
- 2) Printing and launch of new leaflets;
- 3) Recommendation that parishes nominate a disability representative who can liaise with the Consultative Group on Disability;
- 4) Continued updating of website.

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. After the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we are starting to make progress on our ideas and plans. We also seek prayerful support in the year ahead as we continue with our first projects.

To get in touch with the group, please contact Ms Aisling Sheridan, Synod Administrator at aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org.

GS Complaints procedure

	2025Total€	2024Total€	2023Total€	2022Total€	2021Total€	2020Total€	2019Total€	2018Total€	2017Total€	2016Total€
Income										
DepositsLess - deposit refund	0	(725)	(692)	0	(1,000)	0	(1,000)	0	(814)	0
Support from General Purpose Fund	692	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net deposits	692	(725)	(692)	0	0	0	(1,000)	0	(814)	0
Costs										
Legal - External Legal -	17,476	19,863	0	0	6,027	0	0	0	0	0
In-House Legal	12,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mediation	0	0	0	0	6,013					
Expert witness costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative and secretarial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Travel & subsistence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catering	0	0	0	0	536					
Sundry	0	0	0	0	316	0	0	0	0	0
Facilities hire	0	0	0	0	758					
	29,476	19,863	0	0	13,650	0	0	0	0	0
	30,168	19,138	(692)	0	13,650	0	(1,000)	0	(814)	0

Costs will be charged to the RCB income and expenditure account in the year the complaint hearing takes place.
There were no bonds (deposits) being held at the 31st December 2025.

APPENDIX K

Report on Behalf of the Armagh Agreement Reference Group To the General Synod of the Church of Ireland 2026 And the Provincial Board of the British Province of the Moravian Church

As a brief introduction to the Armagh Agreement, this document was agreed in 2021, and in 2022, it was accepted by both the General Synod of the Church of Ireland and the Synod of the British Province of the Moravian Church. Among other possibilities for our two churches working even more closely together in the future, the agreement enables the inter-changeability of ordained ministry between our two churches, while recognising the different ways in which deacons and bishops function in each of our churches.

This year (2025), the reference group has met twice.

The present members of the group are:-

Church of Ireland – Rt Rev Michael Burrows (Joint Chair) 2/2

Rev Canon Dr Helene Steed 2/2

Mr Roy Totten 1/2

Rev Dr Robert Cotter 2/2

Moravian Church – Rt Rev Sarah Groves (Joint Chair) 1/2

Rev Michael Newman 0/2 (substituted by Rev Livingstone Thompson) 1/2

Mr Mark Kernohan 1/2

Rev Philip Cooper (Secretary) 2/2

Rev Livingstone Thompson (Moravian Church) attended our meet in October, to represent the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church, due to the fact that Br Michael Newman was not able to attend.

Bishop Sarah Groves gave a presentation about the Moravian Church and Moravian spirituality, at the Church of Ireland Theological Institution, in Dublin, on 27th January. 2025. Bishop Michael Burrows was also present.

There has been a meeting between Moravian ministers, and Church of Ireland members of the clergy situated in the Diocese of Connor. The meeting was held on 21st February, 2025, at the House of Vic-Ryn, in Lisburn. During the meeting, Bishop Sarah Groves and Bishop George Davison discussed with the group the significance of the Armagh Agreement.

Rev Dr Robert Cotter, on behalf of the group, has continued to work on a planned publication that gives an account of the historical background, and the events and discussions, that led to the creation of the Armagh Agreement. This work is nearing completion, and the group is extremely grateful to Robert for the commitment and hard work involved in creating this important and valuable piece of work.

It is hoped that in 2026 a small celebration can be organised in Dublin, with a service in Whitechurch parish church, including the planting of a tree in the nearby Moravian burial ground. The group was planning to hold this celebration in October, 2025, to coincide with its meeting on that day. However, the event was postponed, due to the fact that a number of the members of the group could not attend.

We need to reflect further on the practice and discipline surrounding occasional ‘interchangeability of ministry, e.g. in the area of safeguarding. The group recommend that the Moravian Church’s National Safeguarding Lead and the appropriate safeguarding officers from the Church of Ireland communicate with one another on this matter.

In its future work, the group will look at the following subjects:-

- Mutual participation in ordinations of bishops
- The possibility of sharing theological training in Ireland
- The Moravian Church's relationships with the Methodist Church in Ireland
- Production of a leaflet that explains the agreement and what the two churches can do together
- The possibility of sharing in each other's festivals, patronal celebrations, harvest festivals, anniversary services, Christingle services, etc.

The Armagh Agreement presents our two churches with exciting opportunities for mission and joint work, the Reference Group continues to hope and pray that the agreement will grow and flourish in the years ahead, bearing much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Rev Philip Cooper
January 2026

Application Number	Diocese	Conversion rate Sterling to Euro	€1.20846 / £1		Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Year 1		Recommended Grant Year 2		Total Recommended Grant
			£	€		£	€	£	€	
<u>Outreach Initiatives cont'd</u>										
OI- 18	Connor	St Brigid's Church (Pairsh of Mallusk) Creation of a Youth Club for high school students	£17,970			£5,000	€6,042	£5,000	€6,042	€12,085
OI- 19	Connor	St Paul & St Barnabas, York Street A Mission & Discipleship Hub for North Belfast	£40,000							€0
OI- 20		South Lisburn Community Church Outreach Trip to Romania via Exodus	£6,060							€0
OI- 21	Connor	Lisburn Cathedral Youth Providing better youth facilities in Lisburn Cathedral	£10,000			£6,000	€7,251			€7,251
OI- 22		<i>Duplicate to OI- 23</i>								€0
OI- 23	Down	Seapatriick- Banbridge Parish Outreach initiative using music to connect with the community	£5,500			£3,000	€3,625			€3,625
OI- 24		Shankill Parish Church Lurgan To further develop existin outreach events	£10,000			£7,500	€9,063			€9,063
OI- 25		Glencraig Parish Church Holy Week Art Exhibition	£4,750			£2,500	€3,021			€3,021
OI- 26		Sligo Centre for Mission To start an Outreach for secondary school students		€20,000			€10,000		€5,000	€15,000
OI- 27	Connor	South Lisburn Community Church Duplicate of OI- 20								€0
OI- 28		Lisburn Cathedral Youth Duplicate of OI21								€0
OI- 29	Down	Braniel Community Church Expansion of community garden	£2,600			£2,600	€3,142			€3,142
OI- 30	Down	St Molua's Parish Church To establish and operate a Men's Shed and Community Garden	£32,085			£17,000	€20,544			€20,544
OI- 31	Connor	St Nicholas & All Saints Renovate All Saints' Centre to continue outreach projects	£121,049			£40,000	€48,338			€48,338
OI- 32		Kill o the Grange Parish Outreach to the in poor communities of Uganda		€20,000						€0
OI- 33	Down	St. John's Parish, Lurgan To enhance Messy Church Ministry via new AV system	£2,560			£2,560	€3,094			€3,094
OI-34	Down	Tullycamet Church Develop outreach programme in impoverished area	£10,000			£5,000	€6,042	£3,000	€3,625	€9,668
										continued overleaf ---->

		Conversion rate Sterling to Euro	€1.20846 / £1							
Application Number	Diocese	Applicant & Description of Project		Amount Requested		Recommended Grant Year 1		Recommended Grant Year 2		Total Recommended Grant
				£	€	£	€	£	€	
<u>Outreach Initiatives cont'd</u>										
OI- 35	Down	Castlewella - The Well To set up a community outreach hub in Mainstreet Castlewella		£16,783		£9,000	€10,876	£6,000	€7,251	€18,127
OI- 36	Down	West Winds Community Church Develop a Youth Engagement project in West Winds social housing estate		£20,953		£10,000	€12,085	£5,000	€6,042	€18,127
OI- 37		Towerprogramme No connection with C of I			€1,200					€0
OI- 38	CFO	Lismore Union of Parishes - Pioneer Ministry - Cook Serve Pray Outreach to youth, wider community and those marginalised through addictions			€36,120		€15,000			€15,000
OI- 39	Cork	Kinsale Union of Parishes Updating Multose Church entrance and community hall			€4,500		€750			€750
OI- 40	Raphoe	Killymard Parish - The Mustard seed Further development of the Mustard Seed Outreach Facility			€5,000		€5,000			€5,000
OI- 41	na	Kilkenny Christian Centre - Multidenominational Renovation of Community Resource Centre - The Light House			€50,000		€10,000			€10,000
OI- 42		St Pats Greystones Renovation of Church Community Centre to facilitate outreach to local area			€50,000					€0
										continued overleaf -->

		Conversion rate Sterling to Euro									
Application Number	Diocese	Applicant & Description of Project	€1.20846 / £1		Amount Requested £	€	Recommended Grant Year 1		Recommended Grant Year 2		Total Recommended Grant
			£	€			£	€	£	€	
Christian Education											
CE-1		Board for Ministry with Children and Families				€8,000					€0
CE-1b		Production of a Child-friendly version of the Book of Common Prayer									
		Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue			€10,000		€7,000				€7,000
		Production of video about the work of CCUD									
CE-2	Kilmore	Knockbride Col			€3,200		€3,000				€3,000
		Audio visual equipment for Sunday School and Mother and Todler Group									
CE-3	Derry	St Ninian's Convoy			€800						€0
		Bible Studies for Children									
CE-4	Down	Bright Parish			£24,000		£20,000	€24,169			€24,169
		Provision of a timber building for Sunday School									
CE-5		Church Army - Ireland			€10,000		€4,000				€4,000
		To create three new Irish case studies on pioneering mission									
CE-6	Down	Tullycarnet Church			£2,420		£420	€508			€508
		Bible study groups for people who have recently come to faith.									
CE- 7	Down	Inch Parish Church			£4,340						€0
		Upgrading of Sound System in Parish church for clearer communication									
CE-8	n/A	CIYD			£20,000		£5,000	€6,042	£5,000	€6,042	€12,085
		Designed Merchandise for national youth events									
CE- 9		Alpha Ireland				€8,000		€6,400			€6,400
		'Life on Purpose' video and discussion series for youthwork & Alpha Textbook									
CE-10		Duplicate of CE-9									€0
CE-11	Meath	M&K Diocesan Councils - Pioneer Ministry			€25,000		€7,500				€7,500
		Saints and Scholars -Christian faith education including heritage and arts									
CE-12	KEA	Wilson's Hospital School			€25,000						€0
		To provide sound equipment in Schools Sports Hall									
CE-13	Ferns	Bunclody Union			€8,500						€0
		Development of choir									
											continued overleaf ---->

		Conversion rate Sterling to Euro		€1.20846 / £1											
Application Number		Diocese	Applicant & Description of Project		Amount Requested		Recommended Grant Year 1		Recommended Grant Year 2		Total Recommended Grant				
			£	€	£	€	£	€	£	€					
Innovative Ministry in a Rural Context															
IM-1	Limerick	Abington Church		€5,000	£0	€5,000					€5,000				
IM-2		Outdoor eco space for parish and local Syriac Orthodox community													
		Liberty Prayer Ministry		€20,000							€0				
		No connection with C of I													
IM-3	Kilmore	Shercock Tidy Towns		€8,000							€0				
		Painting of Shercock Church													
IM-4	Down	Killyleagh Parish	£22,050		£5,000	€6,042					€6,042				
		Youth and Toddler groups, community events and music scholarships													
IM-5		GFS Ireland		€10,000							€0				
		Display of the History of the GFS													
IM-6	Armagh	Kildress Parish Church	£25,000		£10,000	€12,085					€12,085				
		Rectory Garden resortation as a Spiritual resource													
IM-7	Down	Killyleagh Parish	£10,000								€0				
		Outreach to the community by increased Heritage Awareness													
IM-8	Kilmore	KEA Diocesan Council		€33,000		€18,000			€15,000		€33,000				
		Two year of Agricultural Chaplaincy within KEA Diocese													
IM-9		Gathered - A Partnership Ministry	£40,445		£20,000	€24,169		£15,000	€18,127		€42,296				
		Outreach Centre and associated hubs for people with no church connection													
IM-10	Kilmore	Kinawley and Holy Trinity	£5,000								€0				
		Provision of an AV system for the Parish group													
IM-11	Armagh	Altedesert Parish	£12,000		£10,000	€12,085					€12,085				
		Conversion of Parish Hall into Outreach Community Centre													
IM-12	Down	Moneyreagh Community Church	£30,000		£10,000	€12,085					€12,085				
		Outreach work to the village of Ballygowan													
IM-13	Down	Bryansford - Kilcoo Parish Curch	£8,700		£5,000	€6,042		£3,000	€3,625		€9,668				
		Develop various initiatives to connect with the local community													
IM-14	Down	Moneyreagh Community Church	£3,000		£2,000	€2,417					€2,417				
		Expand "HOST" community outreach Coffee Shop													
IM-15	Armagh	St Matthew's Church, Richhill	£50,000								€0				
		Development of grounds at Church and Hall for Parish events													
IM-16	Down	Lower Kilwarlin	£6,183		£5,000	€6,042					€6,042				
		Furnish parish hall to enable outreach projects including Café Church													
IM-17	Down	Upper Kilwarlin	£32,100								€0				
		Outdoor Prayer Labyrinth													
											continued overleaf ---->				

		Conversion rate Sterling to Euro											
Application Number	Diocese	Applicant & Description of Project	€1.20846 / £1		Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Year 1				Recommended Grant Year 2		Total Recommended Grant	
			£	€		£	€	£	€	£	€		
Training - Lay & Ordained													
T-1	na	New wine ireland Training and events for church leaders	£50,000									€0	
T-2	Limerick	Adare - Croom - Kilpeacon - Kilmallock Training courses for rector in Counselling and Psychotherapy		€2,280								€0	
T-3		COI Deans Conference To support the annual 2 day meeting of the Deans		€2,000			€500					€500	
T-4	na	HOB Providing training and education for each diocesan bishop		€40,000			€40,000					€40,000	
T-5	Down	Dundonald - St. Elizabeth's Creation of a ministry training scheme in Dundonald Parish	£45,217				£7,000	€8,459				€8,459	
			£865,629	€450,562			£263,080	€474,071	£52,000	€82,840		€556,911	
			£	€			£	€	£	€		Total Expressed in Euros	
							Total recommended grants, 1st and 2nd year						

APPENDIX Li
STANDING COMMITTEE
PRIORITIES FUND

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		Year ended 31 December 2025	
		2025	2024
		€	€
INCOME			
Contributions	1	575,280	304,798
Investment Income		47,095	19,822
Individual Contributions		186	121
Bequest Income		-	-
Bank Interest		25	
		<u>622,586</u>	<u>324,741</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Administration Expenses	2	(20,833)	(24,981)
Operating Surplus for the Year		<u>601,753</u>	<u>299,850</u>
ALLOCATIONS & GRANTS			
Allocations & Grants Distributed	3	(383,531)	(467,000)
Surplus/(Deficit) after Allocations & Grants		<u>218,222</u>	<u>(167,150)</u>
Valuation Movement		72,255	52,259
Currency translation adjustment		(5,309)	3,837
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		<u><u>285,168</u></u>	<u><u>(111,054)</u></u>

STANDING COMMITTEE

PRIORITIES FUND

BALANCE SHEET

Year ended 31 December 2025

		2025 €	2024 €
INVESTMENTS			
Investments held by the RCB	5	1,260,114	1,187,859
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash held with the RCB	6	425,276	212,363
Debtors	7	-	-
		425,276	212,363
Net Assets		<u>1,685,390</u>	<u>1,400,222</u>
FUNDS EMPLOYED			
Balance at 1 January		1,400,222	1,511,276
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		285,168	(111,054)
Balance as at 31 December		<u>1,685,390</u>	<u>1,400,222</u>

Standing Committee Report 2026

Notes to the Financial Statements

	2025	2024
	€	€
1. Contributions		
Contributions from the dioceses	575,280	304,798
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2. Administration Expenses	2025	2024
	€	€
Salaries & PRSI	20,007	20,044
Stationary, Printing	578	4,150
Miscellaneous & Transfers	248	697
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	20,833	24,891
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
3. Grants & Loans	2025	2024
	€	€
Ministry	55,129	49,358
Retirement Benefits	-	-
Education	26,521	102,544
Outreach Initiatives	278,035	263,098
Innovative Ministry	23,846	52,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	383,531	467,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
4. Capital Commitments		

As at 31st December 2025 the Priorities Fund had committed grants of €466,016 for Jan 2026 – March 2027. These grants have not been provided for in the Financial Statements-

5. Invested assets are shown at market value at both 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025.

	2025	2024
	€	€
6. Cash on deposit held by the RCB		
Cash on deposit held by the RCB	425,276	212,363
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

This represents cash held on behalf of The Church of Ireland Priorities Fund by the RCB in pooled bank accounts.

Standing Committee Report 2026

	2025	2024
	€	€
7. Debtors		
Contributions Accrued	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

8. Foreign Currency transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2025, €1 = £0.8717 (2024: €1 = £0. 8275).
9. An accountants' report has not been provided for these Financial Statements as the cash balance of €425,276 and Investment balance of €1,260,114 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 M

Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board

General Synod Report 2026

“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)



Mrs Gillian Taylor
Safeguarding Manager for
Casework



Dr Niall Moore
Safeguarding Manager for
Policy and Training

Members of the Safeguarding Board

- The Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev John McDowell (Chairperson) (4/5 meetings attended)
- The Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson (0/5 meetings attended)
- Clerical Honorary Secretary of General Synod, Rev Canon Gillian Wharton (4/5 meetings attended)
- Representative of clergy from Northern Ireland, Bishop Ian Ellis (5/5 meetings attended)
- Representative of clergy from Northern Ireland, Rev Dr Christopher St John (3/5 meetings attended)
- Representatives of clergy from the Republic of Ireland, Rev Ruth Elmes (3/5 meetings attended)
- Representatives of clergy from the Republic of Ireland, Rev Eugene Griffin (4/5 meetings attended)
- Representative of the Representative Church Body, Rev Canon Paul Thompson (4/5 meetings attended)
- Chief Officer and Secretary General, Mr David Ritchie (5/5 meetings attended)
- Independent member, Senior Consultant Child Protection in Sport Unit at NSPCC Mr Paul Stephenson (3/5 meetings attended)
- Independent member, Policy Manager with the Rape Crisis Centre Ms Shirley Scott (5/5 meetings attended)

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.

Summary of activities

Policy development

The Safeguarding Managers worked with internal and external advisors to prepare policies and procedures which were presented to the Safeguarding Board for consideration, these included:

Amalgamated Child Safeguarding policy

The new draft policy has been approved by Standing Committee and has involved consultation with the statutory authorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland including Tusla, the Department of Health (NI) and the Data Protection Commissioner. A process to induct people in the new policy is underway alongside redevelopment of existing guidance to support the implementation of policy at parish and diocesan level.

Procedure for Visiting Members of the Clergy Seeking to Minister in the Church of Ireland for Longer Term Ministry

A new procedure to provide consistency on safeguarding processes for visiting members of the clergy has been drafted and approved by the Safeguarding Board and the House of Bishops. This procedure forms part of the guidance to accompany the new safeguarding policy.

Procedure for External Groups Who Use Church Property

A new process to replace the existing common protocol document has been completed, which will form part of the new guidance to accompany the safeguarding policy. This procedure provides greater clarity around the interaction between external groups using church property and parachurch organisations who use church property to deliver ministry with children.

New Structure of the Safeguarding Team

Following a governance review, the Safeguarding Team has been restructured to operate across both jurisdictions of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Existing staff now have a focus on specialisms with one team focusing on policy, training and proactive safeguarding and another team focusing on casework.

The Policy and Training Team is managed by Dr Niall Moore who is the Safeguarding Manager for Policy and Training. Mr Alex Kinch and Ms Sarah Mac Bruithin are the Vetting and AccessNI Administrators, and Ms Chiara DeRaffaele is the Safeguarding Administrator. The Policy and Training Team are responsible for issues relating to policy, training, Garda Vetting, AccessNI or any safeguarding issue that is not related to an allegation whether in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

The Casework Team is managed by Mrs Gillian Taylor who is the Safeguarding Manager for Casework. Mr Anthony Russell and Ms Katie Harrigan are the Safeguarding Casework Officers. The Casework Team are responsible for offering advice on any allegations or concerns related to the safety of a child or adult whether in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, or issues relating to persons of concern who wish to take part in church services or other church related activities.

Database Development

In April 2024, the RCB Safeguarding Office began a project to develop a centralised secure database. The purpose of this new database is to provide a centralised system for storing safeguarding information relating to contacts, roles, training records, vetting contact information and advice. The system is now fully operational and is now able to produce reports and statistical information relating to advice offered, training delivered, parish returns and the current people involved in safeguarding at parish and diocesan level. The process to log relevant existing data to the central database is well underway with dedicated staff now in place to support this important project. Further development of this system will continue in the coming year to support the work of the team.

Safeguarding Training

In 2025 the Safeguarding Managers provided training to 865 people including child safeguarding Parish Panels members, those involved in adult safeguarding, those involved in vetting, students in CITI and those involved in pastoral ministry. This is in addition to the training that is organised in each Diocese by Safeguarding Compliance Officers/Safeguarding Leads and delivered by trainers trained by the RCB.

Advice Offered

During 2025 the Safeguarding Team offered 516 individual pieces of advice to dioceses, parishes and relevant individuals relating to all aspects of safeguarding. 55% of advice related to casework and responding to allegations or persons of concern. The remainder of advice focused on the category of protecting (28%) which included advice on proactive safeguarding, including vetting and AccessNI queries. The remaining 17% related to general policy advice and issues related to compliance, training and supporting people with additional needs.

Establishment of a Case Management Committee

A key part of the new safeguarding policy is the development of a Case Management Committee to offer multidisciplinary advice on complex cases. The terms of reference for this committee were agreed by Standing Committee in November, and an independent chairperson will be appointed alongside members of the Committee.

Vetting Services

Vetting and AccessNI staff provide a vetting service for parishes, dioceses, Church of Ireland schools and relevant organisations. This service is provided pursuant to a Service Level Agreement with parishes, diocese, schools and other relevant organisations. During 2025 the RCB processed over 3826 vetting applications and 1533 AccessNI applications.

In 2025 major changes occurred in both AccessNI and Garda Vetting processes. Both AccessNI and the National Garda Vetting Bureau introduced improved secure systems, new processes for signatories and applicants and training requirements. The Vetting and AccessNI staff worked throughout the year to implement and communicate these changes, through email, newsletters, individual support and the delivery of mandatory vetting training. The team members appreciate the support and patience of those within parishes, dioceses and schools as we work together to implement these changes.

Further information regarding safeguarding can be found on <https://safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org/>

**STANDING COMMITTEE
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	Notes	2025 €	2024 €
INCOME			
Representative Church Body	1	839,958	728,968
Royalties Fund Income		36,637	45,314
Grants/Contributions		-	5,511
Deposit Interest	2	1,690	1,422
		<u>878,285</u>	<u>781,215</u>
EXPENSES			
Services provided by RCB	3	397,263	358,518
General Synod Expenses	4	50,149	53,257
Miscellaneous Expenses	5	43,611	58,703
		<u>491,023</u>	<u>470,478</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		<u>387,262</u>	<u>310,737</u>
ALLOCATIONS AND GRANTS			
Allocations to Ecumenical and Anglican Organisations	6	139,077	125,522
Allocations to Church related Organisations	7	227,352	174,744
		<u>366,429</u>	<u>300,266</u>
Surplus for year		<u>20,833</u>	<u>10,471</u>

STANDING COMMITTEE

FUND ACCOUNT

Year ended 31 December

		2025 €	2024 €
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash on deposit held by RCB	8	177,861	157,789
Net Assets		<u>177,861</u>	<u>157,789</u>

FUNDS EMPLOYED

Balance at 1 January		157,789	149,454
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		20,833	10,471
Currency translation adjustment		(761)	864
Adjustment to opening balance		-	(3,000)
Balance as at 31 December		<u><u>177,861</u></u>	<u><u>157,789</u></u>

Notes to the Accounts

1. Income from Representative Church Body

	2025 €	2024 €
Representative Church Body allocation	941,059	856,816
Refund unexpended allocation	(101,101)	(127,848)
Total income from RCB	<u>839,958</u>	<u>728,968</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

	2025 €	2024 €
Royalties Fund	1,690	1,422
	<u>1,690</u>	<u>1,422</u>

3. Services provided by RCB

Services provided by the RCB relates to the time apportionment of certain RCB staff who provide Standing Committee support.

4. General Synod Expenses

	€	€
Venue and Facilities	50,149	53,257
	<u>50,149</u>	<u>53,257</u>

5. Miscellaneous Expenses

	2025 €	2024 €
Publications & Printing	7,155	8,916
Honorary Secretaries' expenses	10,048	6,850
Porvoo Expenses	2,525	2,816
COI Church & Society CO	938	1,065
Council for Mission	3,028	24,415
Commission on Ministry	14,665	9,839
Subscriptions	3,264	3,353
Historiographer	1,300	1,300
Sundry	688	149
	<u>43,611</u>	<u>58,703</u>

6. Ecumenical and Anglican Organisations	2025 €	2024 €
Anglican Consultative Council	56,077	59,072
Irish Council of Churches	28,374	28,127
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland	11,471	12,085
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	13,611	13,853
World Council of Churches	4,798	4,955
Conference of European Churches	12,000	-
Irish School of Ecumenics	2,000	2,000
Delegates' expenses (travel/conferences)	10,746	5,430
	<u>139,077</u>	<u>125,522</u>
	=====	=====
7. Allocations to Church related Organisations	2025 €	2024 €
Central Communications Board	192,482	144,424
Grants paid to General Church Organisations	5,000	5,000
Grants paid to Support Allocations	13,000	12,000
Church of Ireland Marriage Council	3,350	11,774
Royalties Fund Expenditure	13,520	1,546
	<u>227,352</u>	<u>174,744</u>
	=====	=====
8. Cash on Short Term Deposit	2025 €	2024 €
Royalties Fund	179,772	155,652
Other Account Balances	(1,911)	2,137
	<u>177,861</u>	<u>157,789</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 2025, €1 = £0.8717 (2024: €1 = £0.8275).

10. An accountant's report has not been provided for these financial statements, as the balance of €177,861 is included within the scope of the Representative Church Body's audit.

GENERAL PURPOSES FUND

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year Ending 31 December 2025

GENERAL PURPOSES FUND**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	2025	2024
	€	€
INCOME		
Interest and dividends	1,316	1,249
	<u>1,316</u>	<u>1,249</u>
EXPENSES		
Registrar's fees	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS FOR YEAR	1,316	1,249
Balance 1 January	55,496	52,306
Currency translation adjustment	(7)	3
Unrealised Gains on Revaluation	<u>2,735</u>	<u>1,938</u>
Balance 31 December	<u>59,540</u>	<u>55,496</u>
FUNDS EMPLOYED		
Investments	47,318	44,586
Cash held by RCB	<u>12,222</u>	<u>10,910</u>
	<u>59,540</u>	<u>55,496</u>

Sterling balances and transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2025, €1 = £0.8717 (2024: €1 = £0.8275).

APPENDIX R

Interim Report of the Wedding Venues Working Group to the General Synod

Members:

Rev Canon Gillian Wharton (Co-Chair) 3/3
Mr Ken Gibson (Co-Chair) 3/3
Most Rev Patricia Storey 3/3
Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield 1/3
Rev Carlton Baxter 3/3
Mr Andrew Brannigan 3/3
Dr Ruth Gardiner 3/3
Rev Canon Jennifer McWhirter 3/3
Ms Judy Peters 1/3
Rev Lesley Robinson 3/3
Very Rev Niall Sloane 3/3
Mr Timothy Smyth 2/3

In attendance (RCB Staff)

Mr Linto John
Ms Aisling Sheridan

In response to a resolution passed at the General Synod of 2025, the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland, at its meeting on 16 September 2025, established the Wedding Venues Working Group, to investigate the possibility of allowing Church of Ireland clergy to solemnise marriages in secular venues as part of the Church's outreach mission, and to bring a final report with recommendations to the General Synod of 2027. The members of the Working Group hold a variety of views and opinions on this topic, bringing breadth and balance to the discussions.

The Working Group has met on two occasions (3 November 2025 and 4 February 2026) with the next meeting scheduled for 24 March 2026.

The Working Group agreed that the term "secular venue" was not wholly suitable, given that its work encompasses any building that is not a consecrated Church of Ireland worship space. Accordingly, the group adopted the working title Wedding Venues Working Group to reflect this wider scope.

Previous Discussions

The Working Group noted that discussions originally began when the General Synod 2018 requested the Marriage Council to consider whether marriage ceremonies might be conducted in buildings other than consecrated church buildings. The Marriage Council and the Liturgical Advisory Committee expressed concern that existing regulations required clarity and that any change would necessitate new liturgical provision. Subsequently, the issue was considered by the Standing Committee and referred back to the Marriage Council, the Liturgical Advisory Council and the Church and Society Commission.

On 15 June 2021, the House of Bishops presented Standing Committee with revised marriage regulation wording that affirmed that marriages are ordinarily to be celebrated in consecrated church buildings, and that any marriage outside such buildings should only proceed in exceptional circumstances with the relevant bishop's prior approval. This was agreed by Standing Committee.

Current State Marriage Regulations in RoI and NI

The Group examined the current marriage regulations for both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which reflect the legislative frameworks under the Civil Registration Act 2004 and the Marriage (Northern

Ireland) Order 2003 respectively. Members noted that these regulations were drafted over two decades ago and were shaped by the pastoral and cultural context of that time. Several members of the Group expressed the view that while the existing provisions allow for exceptional flexibility, their language now seems outdated and insufficient as a response to current pastoral realities. Discussion highlighted that civil marriage trends and couples' preferences have shifted significantly, with many now valuing the convenience and comfort of secular venues such as hotels and event spaces for their weddings.

Pastoral and Missional Considerations

At the request of the Working Group, papers with differing viewpoints were presented to the Working Group by Very Rev Niall Sloane and the Rev Lesley Robinson.

Very Rev Niall Sloane's paper highlighted a number of reservations and concerns, should marriage ceremonies be permitted to take place in buildings other than those consecrated for worship in the Church of Ireland. It also included examples of connection and outreach that had occurred when marriage ceremonies took place in churches.

Rev Lesley Robinson, who was the proposer of the motion at General Synod 2025, tabled a paper outlining the opportunities for pastoral engagement, mission and outreach with individuals and families who might not otherwise attend church. She reported that she had been asked on occasions to officiate at a marriage ceremony in buildings other than those consecrated for worship in the Church of Ireland, and other clerical members of the Group also stated that they had had similar requests.

Consultation with other Denominations

The Group consulted with other Christian denominations regarding their practice on marriages in secular venues. Responses indicated a diversity of approaches:

- the Moravian Church permits such marriages and generally supports the practice, though with a preference for weddings in worship spaces;
- the Presbyterian Church in Ireland reports long-standing ministerial discretion for such weddings;
- the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) allows weddings outside meeting houses;
- the Methodist Church in Ireland permits secular venue weddings in certain circumstances;
- the Roman Catholic Church does not permit marriages outside consecrated churches.

Discussions to Date

1. There is a pastoral concern amongst clergy and laity that the current regulations may be restrictive.
2. Would there be a missional value in offering couples the option of a Church of Ireland wedding liturgy in venues other than consecrated church buildings?
3. Any change to existing practice must safeguard the centrality and significance of consecrated worship spaces in the Church of Ireland.
4. Discussion also reflected the need for protocols which would respect the conscience, integrity and office of local clergy, should there be any change to existing regulations.
5. The Working Group acknowledged that the existing "exceptional" provision already allows for some pastoral flexibility. However, concern was expressed that the definition of "exceptional" was open to interpretation and such divergence could present a difficulty for a bishop.

The Working Group will bring its final report to the General Synod of 2027 as per the terms of reference.

APPENDIX P

WORKING GROUP CONCERNING A CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE BY THE CHURCH TO HISTORIC INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE (HISTORIC INQUIRIES WORKING GROUP)

Members:

Archbishop of Armagh (1)
Archbishop of Dublin (1)
Ms Hilary Prentice, Chair RB Executive (1)
Rev Canon Gillian Wharton, Honorary Secretary (1)
Mr Ken Gibson, Honorary Secretary (1)
Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (1)
Mr David Ritchie, The Secretary General (1)
Mrs Janet Maxwell, Head of Synod Services (1)

The Institutional Inquiries Working Group met on one occasion since the last meeting of General Synod. The ongoing work dealt with during this period:

- Further research into records of the Church of Ireland Adoption Society records in Northern Ireland (all files from 1950s).
- Monitoring progress - Inquiry into Mother & Baby Homes in Northern Ireland.
- Monitoring progress - Inquiry into Historic Clerical Child Sexual Abuse in Northern Ireland (relevant committee - Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board).
- Monitoring developments - Mother & Baby Home redress scheme (RI).
- Monitoring legislative requirement –relevant records.

Northern Ireland

On 28 January 2026, Ven Shane Forster and Mrs Janet Maxwell attended a meeting with the Executive Office team making preparations for the Public Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes and related issues. The team is led by Mr Martin Carey, Director of Truth Recovery Programme. The Church connection with two of the homes included in the study (Kennedy House and Hopedene Hostel) arose through connections with the work of the Church of Ireland Moral Welfare Association.

The Moral Welfare Association was a body formed in the 1930s, at which point it was independent of the Church. By the late 1940s, Northern Dioceses of the Church of Ireland had agreed to nominate representatives to the Association. The Association's central board at this time also included independent members, representative of C of I umbrella bodies, and representatives of independent non-church, charitable, civic and state sector welfare agencies.

The Association in turn set up Kennedy House (1947-56) and sent representative to sit on the managing committee of Hopedene Hostel (1943-91), which was itself established as a multi-agency initiative led by Belfast City Council (Corporation) in 1943 as part of the war-effort led by the Ministry of Health in Whitehall. The Association founded the Church of Ireland Adoption Society in 1950.

While the Church did not manage the Moral Welfare Association for most of the period under scrutiny, by the 1960s, there was a close relationship with the Church, and particularly with the Dioceses of Connor and Down and Dromore. In the late 1980s, the General Synod agreed to reorganise the efforts of various groups working in the area of social welfare and created the General Synod Board of Social Responsibility, which absorbed the remaining activities of the earlier bodies. No homes remained open at this time, but the Adoption Society was taken into the scope of the ongoing activity and remained so until it became full independent in 2018.

In January 2026, the Working Group was given a further opportunity to comment on the Chapters on Hopedene Hostel and Kennedy House to be included in the Report of the Independent Panel. The comments submitted focuses on the results of further research, which had thrown fresh light on the actions taken by the Ministry of Health following the outbreak of war in 1940, resulting in a national effort to co-ordinate and improve the provision of services by state and charitable agencies to unmarried women and their children. Circular 8266 of 1943 summarises this initiative and demonstrates the policy behind Belfast Corporation's efforts to co-ordinate the work of agencies working in the Belfast Area, and which resulted in the establishment of Hopedene Hostel in that year.

The significance of governmental intervention in the direction of policy and provision in respect of unmarried mothers and their children has not been sufficiently recognised in much of the narrative around this issue.

Indeed, the multi-agency approach that was encouraged by the government is reflected in the structures of the Moral Welfare Association, itself. The Association's central board as set out in the new Constitution of 1947, reflected the same multi-agency co-operation. Representation included independent individuals, Church diocesan representatives and representatives of civic and Council welfare agencies.

- Kennedy House - operated by the Church of Ireland Moral Welfare Association (Northern Dioceses) with partnership finance from two (possibly three) County Welfare Authorities, 1947-56; the report also identifies a home of the same name run by the C of I Rescue Society 1912-1946. The Church of Ireland Rescue Society, was a women's lay committee which had no direct links to either the central church, nor dioceses.) Between 1922-1956, some 168 women were admitted to the two institutions known as Kennedy House.
- Hopedene Hostel 1943-84) (established as a multi-agency home as an initiative led by Belfast City Council responding to the Ministry of Health's nation-wide initiative to co-ordinate the work of charity and state agencies working with unmarried mothers and their children.) The Board of Hopedene comprised representatives nominated by a wide range of organisation including the C of I Moral Welfare Association (Northern Dioceses) and the Church of Ireland Rescue League, alongside representatives of various other denominational, civic and medical institutions). Hopedene was closed in 1984 following a review conducted by the three main Churches liaising with the Dept of Health & Social Services, which was providing funding to sustain the home. The decision to wind up in 1984 led to sale of the building. Funds were directed in part to the Church of Ireland Board of Social Responsibility, now an independent charitable organisation called Family Routes, which also took in the records and used these to set up an adoption tracing service. Between 1922 and 1984, the Interim Report identified 670 women using the facility.

Link to the original Report: [Publication of Research Report on Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\).](#)

The Public Inquiry is due to be set up during 2026, and will look at various aspects of the provision for unmarried mothers and their children, largely focusing on looking for systemic institutions operating as mother and baby homes. A redress scheme has already been announced that will provide a set sum of £10,000 to those who were resident in named homes, with individuals being able to bring claims for specific harms at a later point. Mr Martin Carey, Director of the Truth Recovery Programme has indicated that contributions may be sought where specific harms or systemic failings are identified.

The issues that the Public Inquiry will focus on were previously indicated as follows:

“

- *what led women and girls to be admitted to such institutions;*
- *their treatment while there;*

- *their departure from the institutions;*
- *the placement of children, now adults, (other than with a birth mother), born while their mothers were in an institution, for the purposes of adoption, fostering or other care arrangements; and*
- *the registration, regulation or inspection of the institutions. (p.15)”*

The Inquiry will also look at individuals and organisations attached to these homes in Northern Ireland:

“The policy intention is to focus not only on the institutions themselves but also on any organisations or individuals linked to their activities. This reflects the recommendation of the Report “to investigate individual, institutional, organisational and state departmental / agent responsibility concerning human rights violations experienced in Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries, Workhouses and their pathways and practices (including the adoption system, related institutions such as ‘baby homes’ and private nursing homes, and cross border and international transfers of children and women)”. (p.18)”

Ongoing research into Records of the Church of Ireland Adoption Society

The Working Group has received a third report from Family Routes regarding a review of adoption records of The Church of Ireland Adoption Society by independent researchers. The research has looked at standards of care exercised in the adoption work carried on by the Society. The third Report looked at the totality of files from the 1950s, which is the decade in which the greatest number of adoptions took place. Some 156 records were considered. This is the only study of its kind undertaken on adoption records relating to the work of the Inquiry and hopes that it will be of use to the Inquiry as it conducts its business. In this study, there was no evidence of cross border adoption. Evidence of counselling or advice on alternatives was less than in records from later decades, but researchers commented that in most cases during the 1950s, the decision on adoption had been taken prior to the involvement of the Adoption Society and its social workers. In balancing this apparent lack of counselling, during the 1950s, the records from Kennedy House show that a significant number of women returned to their families and a higher number of these brought their children with them than is found in samples from other institutions. This would indicate that the Moral Welfare Association was engaging with women with advice, counselling and active support to achieve an outcome that would involve the family of the birth mother during the time the mother was resident in the home. It also demonstrates a level of success for their advocacy and counselling work and that they were sincere in their appeals to the Church to work with the Association to try and keep mother and baby together.

Inquiry into Historical Clerical Child Sexual Abuse in Northern Ireland

The Working Group noted that the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board is engaging with Prof Tim Chapman and his team in Northern Ireland regarding the research being undertaken into historical clerical child sexual abuse in Northern Ireland.

Republic of Ireland

A - Engagement with Independent Negotiator on behalf of the State (Redress Scheme)

A further letter was sent to Minister Foley in July 2025 to reiterate that the Church of Ireland was not the founder owner or manager of any homes mentioned in the Redress Scheme for Mothers and Baby Homes.

B - Preservation of Certain Records

Statements on relevant records from the Archbishops and Bishops were prepared and submitted ahead of the deadline for reply on 20th March 2025 under The Maternity Protection, Employment Equality and Protection of Certain Records Act (2024) in the Republic of Ireland. During 2025, there was some informal indication from the National Archives that the scope of records might be extended, but nothing further has been added to the existing criteria at the point of writing. For the information of anyone managing historic records, the criteria defined in the legislation is as follows:

The institutions defined are broader than mother and baby homes and include orphanages and industrial schools, personal records and any images. The relevant period is 1922-1998.

Relevant 'institutions':

1. A Mother & Baby Home
2. A County Home
3. A Magdalen Laundry
4. An industrial school, reformatory or related institution
5. An orphanage
6. An institution designated by the Minister

In Northern Ireland, PRONI has led a similar project to preserve relevant records ahead of the work of the Public Inquiry into Mother and Baby homes and related issues commencing. This is expected to begin in 2026/2027.

APPENDIX Q

WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW CLERGY TENURE REPORT 2026

Members and Attendance (as of February 2026)

Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (Chair) (9/9)

The Bishop of Connor (7/9)

Ms Helen Arnopp (7/9)

Rev Canon James Boyd (8/9)

Mrs J Bruton (7/9)

Rev Ruth Elmes (7/9)

Very Rev Stephen Farrell (2/9)

Ven Barry Forde (9/9)

Rev Canon Nicola Halford (7/9)

Miss Irene Knox (6/9)

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (6/9)

Mr Glenn Moore *resigned October 2025*

Mr Willie Oliver (6/9)

Dr Nicole Gallagher (staff in attendance)

Background

This Working Group was originally formed as a Select Committee at the General Synod of 2023 but has since become a Working Group of the Standing Committee.

Objectives

The objectives for this group as laid out in the Terms of Reference document as approved by Standing Committee were as follows:

- To review the concept of clergy tenure as understood within the governance of the Church of Ireland;
- To consider the tenure of other clerical/ministerial titles (Priest-In-Charge, Bishop's Curate, Pioneer Minister, Chaplain etc.) (While other ministerial titles were discussed, it was decided by the group to focus mainly on incumbents as they are the ones who have security of tenure by virtue of their being an office holder).
- To undertake a review of the provisions currently in place within the Constitution in respect of breakdown of pastoral relationships and to consider additions or amendments to these provisions, if appropriate, as well as possible measures to prevent the occurrence of pastoral breakdown in some cases before an issue occurs (This objective was the main focus of the group and is the basis for the majority of the groups final recommendations);
- To review the concept of tied housing and whether they are still fit for purpose in the parish context (The concept of tied housing was discussed by the group and the conclusion was reached that tied housing is still fit for purpose as it enables a greater flexibility for clergy to move to where they feel called to serve without having to worry about accommodation for themselves or their families).

Recommended Changes to Existing Policy and Legislation

The legislative recommendations of the Working Group are appended to this report and briefly outlined below.

Amendments to the Disciplinary Process in Chapter VIII

Following numerous consultations with interested parties, it was decided by the Working Group that, on the whole, our current disciplinary process as laid out in Chapter VIII is still, by and large, suited to its purpose. However, it was clear that some amendments would be required in order to make the process clearer, quicker,

and more robust. Therefore, in the attached document, members will see that changes being recommended to this process include:

- The inclusion in legislation of a six-week timeframe between the time that a bishop receives a formal complaint which they may try to resolve pastorally on a local level, if appropriate, and onward referral to the next step in the complaints process. This means that a complaint cannot sit with a bishop indefinitely and will speed up the complaints process which is beneficial for all parties concerned.
- The introduction of the concept of mediation after this six-week timeframe has lapsed which should be concluded within six weeks over a maximum of three days unless an extension is granted by the bishop with the consent of both parties. The introduction of mediation at this earlier stage in the process should mean that complaints are given a chance to be dealt with sooner, without allowing the problem to fester for longer than necessary.
- The introduction of legislation that would allow for the Complaints Committee to require a member of the clergy to undergo an independent medical assessment should that member of the clergy claim that they are unable to cooperate with the disciplinary process on medical grounds. This change would see that clergy who are deemed medically fit to engage with the disciplinary process will be obliged to do so, without holding up the process indefinitely, while also protecting clergy who are deemed by the independent assessment as being unfit to engage.
- A restructuring of the list of clerical offences liable to disciplinary action in section 25 of Chapter VIII. This list is now divided into four sections (Doctrinal, Ecclesiastical Law, Civil Law, and Safeguarding). The inclusion of safeguarding offences within the section is also a new recommendation being made by this Working Group.
- An amendment to section 26 stating that written submissions to the Complaints Administrator need not be accompanied by the sum of £600 or €1000 if the complaint is being made by a bishop concerning any member of the clergy convicted of a criminal offence carrying a custodial sentence or any complaint relating to safeguarding offences which has been approved by the Case Management Committee. The payment of a bond in instances where a cleric has been convicted of a criminal offence was deemed to be wholly unnecessary and the payment of a bond in the case of safeguarding complaints was deemed inappropriate as nobody should feel that they cannot make a safeguarding complaint due to lack of funds.
- An addition to section 27 (b) stating that if a safeguarding complaint has been made by a bishop on the advice of the Case Management Committee, the complaint will be directed straight from the Complaints Administrator to the Complaints Committee without the requirement for attempted pastoral resolution as outlined in section 19. This would also be the case for safeguarding complaints being made by an archbishop concerning a diocesan bishop or the archbishop of the other province.
- The introduction of legislation changing the number of days between the Disciplinary Tribunal notifying the Respondent of the time and venue of a hearing of the formal complaint and the actual hearing of that complaint from 42 to 21 days, and the inclusion of a clause whereby the Disciplinary Tribunal must act without undue delay in cases where the Respondent has been convicted of a criminal offence in either jurisdiction, removing the need to wait the 21 days. This reduction in the number of days would speed up the process while also giving the Respondent enough time to organise attendance at a hearing, while the provision for the Disciplinary Panel to act without undue delay in cases where the Respondent is incarcerated means that cases such as these could be concluded as swiftly as possible.

Introduction of Interlocutory Orders

Following consultations with the respective chairs of the Complaints Committee and the Disciplinary Panel, it was agreed by the Working Group that there should exist within the constitution the power for the Disciplinary Panel and Appeals Tribunal (either by their own motion or on application by the Complaints Committee or the Respondent) to make such interlocutory orders as deemed appropriate to the circumstances of any particular case. Interlocutory orders are temporary, interim orders that can be issued while a case is ongoing before a final decision is reached. The Working Group wishes to make clear that these measures would only be used where deemed absolutely necessary at the discretion of the Disciplinary Panel or Appeals Tribunal (bodies whose membership include highly experienced legal professionals) and would, by no means, be used for every

case. The list of interlocutory orders which may be used are included in the bill to amend Chapter VIII of the Constitution appended to this report.

Termination of Tenure

Termination of Tenure may be seen as the most significant item of this review and the Working Group has come up with a proposal to legislate for the termination of tenure in two specific circumstances: ill-health and pastoral/parochial breakdown. The Working Group believes that the attached proposal is one that is fair to both clergy and parishes and, while it will not be the answer to every tenure-related issue within the Church of Ireland, it is certainly the first step.

- **Ill Health**

Currently, once a cleric has been on certified sick leave for a twelve-month period they are eligible to apply for the Clergy Permanent Health Insurance Scheme. The Working Group is suggesting a change to this process whereby if a cleric is on certified sick leave for a continuous twelve-month period or for twelve months within an eighteen-month period, it would be mandatory for that cleric to apply to the Clergy PHI scheme (unless the cleric in question had already reached Normal Retirement Age). The Working Group also suggests the introduction of a new mechanism whereby the cleric's diocesan bishop can, in circumstances where the cleric has not yet reached Normal Retirement Age, trigger the PHI application on their behalf or, in circumstances where a cleric has reached Normal Retirement Age, serve that cleric with notice of termination of tenure. This would be at the complete discretion of the diocesan bishop taking all factors of the individual circumstances into account and no stipend would be ceased and there would be no requirement to vacate their residence until any PHI application has been determined. The Working Group is also recommending the migration of the Clergy PHI Policy from policy (or 'soft law') into legislation (or 'hard law'). The effect of this would be to protect the clergy so that the terms of the policy could not easily be changed from what the cleric originally signed up for.

- **Parochial/Pastoral Breakdown**

In instances where there would appear that there has been a complete parochial/pastoral breakdown between a cleric and their parish to the extent that the viability of the parish and/or the ministry and well-being of the cleric is in jeopardy, the Working Group is suggesting the introduction of a no-fault termination process. This process would begin at a local level through the diocesan bishop and, if suitable, mediation (parallel to section 19 of Chapter VIII). Should this issue be unable to be resolved at a local level, this would then lead to the diocesan council tasking a Diocesan Committee of Inquiry to review tenure. The Committee of Inquiry would then bring its recommendations to the diocesan council and it may then be determined that the cleric concerned would cease to hold office and vacate the glebe house within a three-month period while receiving their full stipend and a reasonable accommodation allowance from the RCB for a period of one year or until he/she has obtained another ecclesiastical office, whichever is sooner. Following the decision that tenure of a cleric be terminated, it is also a recommendation of the Working Group that there should exist a mechanism whereby any lay person who, through the investigation process, has been seen to have played a considerable role in the breakdown of the clerical/parochial relationship, could be required to cease to hold any office within the parish for a prescribed period of time. The Working Group is also recommending that legislation be introduced to cover instances of intractable breakdown between a bishop and his/her diocese which would be a parallel of the proposed legislation outlined above.

Other Recommendations

Through the course of the discussions of this Working Group, it has been noted on several occasions that while 'neglect of duty' is listed as one of the clerical offences liable to disciplinary action under Chapter VIII, the duties of a cleric are not clearly outlined anywhere in one place. Instead, they are scattered between the Constitution (including the Canons), the Ordinal, and the institution/licencing service. The Working Group is, therefore, recommending the production of a 'Clergy Support and Guidelines' booklet to be given to ordinands and to all incumbents on the occasion of their institution or licencing. This document would not only outline the duties expected of a cleric but also the benefits and supports that are available to them as well as a step to step guide to the disciplinary process and the protections that are in place at a central level to protect clergy from complaints with no foundation.

Thanks

The members of the Working Group wish to thank all those who engaged with and assisted them in their deliberations, especially those from other congregations who joined the group, either in person or online, to share their experiences of the disciplinary processes of their own denominations, and Mr Patrick Good KC, Chair of the Complaints Committee, and Ms Claire Callanan, Chair of the Disciplinary Tribunal, for sharing their feedback and experiences of the existing Chapter VIII disciplinary process. Thanks must also be paid to Mr Lyndon MacCann SC and the Ven Barry Forde for the provision of their considerable legal knowledge in the drafting process.

It is the sincere hope of the Working Group that the attached recommendations are palatable and fair to both clergy and laity, as well as to the House of Bishops, and that if the recommendations are passed by the General Synod, the result will be:

- A Church that can deal with complaints in a more prompt manner while remaining fair to its clergy.
- A Church where clergy are held accountable for major underperformance issues.
- A Church where the laity are held accountable for their role in the complete breakdown between an incumbent and his/her parish.
- A Church that can resolve breakdowns in relationships more efficiently and effectively.
- A Church where clerics who are on sick leave are generously supported, but where parishes do not have to face the uncertainty of having a rector who is on leave for an open-ended period of time.

HISTORIOGRAPHER'S REPORT 2026

Several books have appeared since my last report that are of major interest to students of the Church of Ireland's history. They include *The Church of Ireland under the Stuarts* (ed. Patrick Little) and *Ireland from Restoration to Union; 1660-1800: essays in honour of Jacqueline Hill*, the latter carrying Raymond Gillespie's *The death of Mark Quin*, a Dublin apothecary and former lord mayor who took his own life in Christ Church Cathedral', and Colm Lennon's chapter on *Civic unity and the problem of urban poverty: a case study of St Audoen's parish, Dublin, 1633-1799*. The Irish Manuscripts Commission has published *The letter book of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork 1629-1634*, filling a significant gap in the state papers of the period. Miriam Moffitt's *Soupers and Jumpers: Protestant missions in Connemara 1848-1951*, first published in 2008, arrived in a new and revised edition. 2025 also saw the publication of Amy Boylan and Janee Allsman (ed.) *Elie Bouhérou: the collections and communications of a Huguenot refugee*, Ireland's first public librarian and the publication by the Anglo-Catholic History Society (UK) of Michael Yelton's *Anglo-Catholicism and the Church of Ireland*.

Architects who contributed to the Church's built heritage are the subject of Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel and Richard Wood's *The Hill Architects: a Cork architectural dynasty, 1827-1951*. Also having reference to Cork is David A. Fleming's *Building Mitchelstown 1779-1830*. Further dealing with the province of Munster have come *Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick*, Bryan Macmahon's *Calamity and controversy: the famine years in Dingle and West Kerry* and Rachel Finnigan's *Memories of gentry houses in Skibbereen and Douglas, County Cork*.

Eileen Murphy and Colum Donnelly (eds) *Antrim: history and society* is the 32nd volume of the county series and contains William Roulston's *The provision of places of worship of the Established Church of Ireland in County Antrim, 1660-1740*. Alan King's *A tale of two towers: an illustrated history of bellringing at Saint Nicholas' parish church, Carrickfergus*, covers a related theme.

Several long-standing series contain much of relevance to the history of the erstwhile Established Church. For instance, the Anglican Records Society has published registers of the dioceses of Elphin and Ardagh for 1921. Researchers will also find much material in titles coming from the Irish Legal History Society, such as Niamh Howlin and Felix M. Larkin (eds.) *Confluences of law and history*.

The 'Revisionism' controversy has for decades engaged the attention of historians. Inevitably, there has been debate on the writing of Church of Ireland history. The Church has followed this path, as sometimes cherished attitudes to its history were abandoned. Many historians have found in this Church a subject worthy of their attention. The Church has facilitated their writings through its investment in library services and publishing.

Students of the history of the Church of Ireland have had at their disposal the seven volumes of *A new history of Ireland* and can keep abreast by consulting The Royal Irish Academy's database of Irish history online and its Dictionary of Irish biography.

I acknowledge with many thanks the assistance I received from the Library of the Representative Church Body.
Canon Dr Kenneth Milne

General Synod Board of Education, Northern Ireland (NI) Report 2026

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) remains deeply concerned about the stress and weariness among principals, teachers, governors, and other staff in our current education system. Staff are dealing with increasing demands both physically and emotionally. The Board would ask Synod members to pray for all schools and for clergy to be present in their local schools as support for principals and their staff.

The Board of Education (NI) is still 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 none.

The Board of Education (NI) was disappointed in the result of JR87 in the Supreme Court but continues to support the TRC in the revision to the Religious Education curriculum in Northern Ireland. The Board of Education (NI) endorses 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 welcomes the review of the RE curriculum and supports Dr Hamill in his role representing the Church of Ireland on the Consultative Group in this process. The Board welcomes the Minister's plans to review the inspection process for Religious Education. The Board welcomes the TRC initiative of creating a Charter for all Christian organisations working in schools and fully endorses the use of the charter by schools.

The Board of Education (NI) is actively supporting schools in the nomination of the boards of governors and encourage all those who appoint governors to do so prayerfully and with wisdom. The Board wishes to thank all clergy who have nominated themselves and many other representatives to boards of local schools.

2. Education Authority (EA)

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Services provision continues to be central to the work of EA, given the exponential increase in the number of children and young people presenting with SEN in recent years. EA provided places for all children with SEN in September 2025. Work commenced in September 2025 to prepare places that will be required for children in September 2026. The number of children across Stages 2 and 3 projected as requiring a new or change of placement for September

2026, at October 2025, is 5,309. The demand for places in Special Schools and Specialist Provisions has increased from 6,930 in 2022/23 to 7,462 in 2024/25.

The pressure on all types of placements causes ongoing concern. This is as a result of the continual lack of availability of places, particularly in high demand areas of the province such as Belfast and Derry/Strabane. The estimated pressure across Special Schools and Specialist Provisions for September 2026 is for 943 additional places. The pressure is particularly prevalent for Nursery and Year 1 children.

A Controlled Schools Unit has been established within EA to provide dedicated support to schools of that management type. In terms of performance against the EA Business Plan 49 of 51 lines of work across six themes are on track for achievement by March 2026. Shared Education programmes continue with 134 partnerships involving 311 schools. Area Planning for the provision of school places currently has 85 workstreams as it seeks to deliver on the Department of Education sustainable Schools policy.

EA continues to work in a constrained financial environment. The Authority operated within its allocated budget in 2024/25. During the 2025/26 year the Authority continued to make efforts to live within budget and as a result a number of actions were implemented to accrue savings. It is projected that 71% of schools will have a financial deficit at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

The Board wishes to thank Mr Ray Gilbert for his tireless work representing the Church of Ireland on the Board of the Education Authority.

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, APWG, and APLG (southwest) and Mr Ian Bell is the TRC representative on the APLG (east).

The TRC continues to work with representatives from the Catholic Church to agree the conditions required for creating Jointly Managed Church Schools. There has been little progress on this area in the last year, and we still look for a suitable project to support.

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 Bishop Andrew Forster, and the four Church of Ireland representatives are Bishop Andrew Forster, Mr Ray Gilbert, 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 has 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 with the impact

CSSC makes on schools and wider education issues.

The Minister of Education set up a Taskforce and following its report a special Controlled Schools Support unit has been set up in the Education Authority. A further public consultation has taken place, and the Minister is now working on the formation of a full Managing Authority for Controlled Schools (MACS) similar in role to CCMS. This MACS will require legislation through the Assembly, and it may not be possible to complete this in the current mandate. The TRC are exploring with the Minister exactly what the role for the Transferring Churches will be in this new body.

5. Funding Scheme

The Board of Education NI opened the funding scheme and had six applicants. All six grants were awarded to St Mark's (Portadown), Kilroot and Templecoran (Carrickfergus), Moneyreagh Parish (Belfast), Mullabrack and Kilcluney Group (Armagh Diocese), Shankill Parish (Lurgan), and Willowfield Parish (Belfast). Areas of work with parishes working closely with their local school included: P7 Transition, Book project, Self-esteem, Drama, and Risk.

6. Annual Theological Lecture

The annual theological lecture at Queens University took place in October and this new time of the year proved successful. The lecture was delivered by Professor John Wyatt on Autonomy, Suffering and Human Dignity: Theological and Medical Responses to Assisted Dying.

7. Church of Ireland Schools

The Board of Education NI acknowledges the amazing work of the Drelincourt School over so many years and its closure in August 25 marked the end of Church of Ireland primary education in Armagh. The Board wishes all the staff well in their future work and will support the Trustees of the school in finding a further educational use for the site.

Membership

The Board welcomed Rev Canon Terence Cadden as a new member following the resignation of Mrs Eileen Trew. Rev Canon Cadden is Chair of Governors of Seagoe Primary School, the one remaining Church of Ireland school in Northern Ireland.

The Board wishes to thank Dr Peter Hamill for his ongoing service and commitment to the Board.

General Synod Board of Education, Republic of Ireland (RI) Report 2026

A. Board of Education (RI)

AIMS

The aims of the General Synod Board of Education are to:

- Define the policy of the Church in education, both religious and secular and, in promotion of this policy, to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to co-ordinate activities in all fields of education affecting the interests of the Church of Ireland;
- Maintain close contact with Government, the Department of Education and Skills, Diocesan Boards of Education, and other educational and school authorities with a view to ascertaining the most efficient and economical use of resources including funds, transport facilities and teachers;
- Study any legislation or proposed legislation likely to affect the educational interests of the Church of Ireland and take such action with respect thereto as it may deem necessary;
- Deliberate and confer on all educational matters affecting the interests of the Church;
- Make such enquiries as it shall deem to be requisite and communicate with government authorities and all such bodies and persons as it shall consider necessary.

POWERS

- Shall have the power to represent the Board of Education of the General Synod in all educational matters applying solely to the Republic of Ireland;
- Will advise the General Synod of developments in educational policy in the Republic of Ireland and will represent the Church as an education partner with the Department of Education and Skills and other educational bodies;
- Support, through the *Follow Me* programme, religious education in primary schools under Protestant management;
- Provide support, training and advice to primary level patrons and boards of management;
- Undertake the processing of garda vetting applications for non-teaching employees and volunteers in Church of Ireland primary schools and employees and volunteers in parishes and other Church of Ireland organisations.

Executive Summary of Report:

1. Personalia and Board Function
2. Fifty Years of Boards of Management: 1975-76 to 2025/26
3. Education Policy Development
4. Education Convention
5. Advocacy on Issues: Budget 2026
6. School Management Support and Advice
7. Patronage Support
8. Follow Me RE Curriculum Developments
9. Special Education and Special Classes
10. DEIS and DEIS Plus
11. Board of Management Training (Primary)
12. ‘Small Schools’ Administrative Cluster Initiative – Action Research Project
13. Second Level Schools Matters: SEC – Annual Report
14. Church of Ireland Centre, DCU – Update 2025

Appendix 1 Membership for Triennium 2025-2028

1. Personalia and Board Function

In January 2025, the Board welcomed Ms Helen McEntee, TD to the office of Minister for Education and Youth. The appointment of a new Minister (and government following the election in late 2024) brought about a change in the name, function and responsibilities of ‘the Department’ from the Department of Education and Skills to the Department of Education and Youth. The encompassing of ‘youth’ into the functions of the Department of Education has created an opportunity for the Church of Ireland to engage on that area of work in addition to primary and secondary education. The Board also congratulated Mr Michael Moynihan, TD, on his appointment as Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion. In December 2025, a cabinet reshuffle meant that Ms McEntee moved to be Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ms Hildegard Naughton, TD, was appointed Minister for Education and Youth. The Board congratulated Ms Naughton on her appointment and the new Minister acknowledged and thanked the Board for their kind wishes. Ms Naughton advised that she looked forward to engaging with the Board during her time in office as Minister for Education and Youth. The Board met four times (January, June, September and November) in hybrid format in 2025. The Board appointed two sub-committees during 2025. The attendance of members was recorded in the Minutes of the Board. The Board welcomed the Rev Canon John Clarke as member to fill a vacancy arising in the category of members elected by the dioceses. The term of office of the nominee from the Board to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) expired in 2025. The Board wishes to thank Mrs Joyce Perdue, retired principal of Rathfarnham NS, Dublin, most sincerely for her service on behalf of the Board and Church of Ireland schools on the NCCA. In accordance with the relevant procedure, the Board has sent forward a new

nominee to the NCCA for consideration by the Minister for Education and Youth for appointment in 2026. Further reports on the work of the Board are outlined in this Report (below).

The Minutes of the Board of Education RI were provided to PWC (Auditors of the RCB) in line with audit requirements. The annual accounts of the Board of Education RI were audited by PWC (Auditors of the RCB) as part of the RCB annual audit and were also provided to the Department of Education and Youth.

2. Fifty Years of Boards of Management: 1975/76 to 2025/26

The academic year 2025/26 marks fifty years since Boards of Management were introduced by Mr Dick Burke, TD, Minister for Education (1973-76). The introduction of Boards of Management marked a move to collective governance for schools and away from the ‘single manager’ model which had existed since the early decades of the National School system for education. The Board created a sub-committee in 2025 tasked with appropriately marking this significant anniversary in the history of Irish education. The sub-committee is focused on the end of the school year 2025/26 and will be in contact with both schools and dioceses in this regard.

The Board wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who have served and continue to serve on Boards of Management and to recognise the important but often unseen work undertaken by Boards of Management.

3. Education Policy Development

The Board gave consideration to various education policy developments during its meetings in 2025.

A significant education policy development currently before the Oireachtas is the Parent and School Charter Bill. This Bill aims to give a stronger role to parents and students in the management of schools and will broaden the accountability of Boards of Management (primary and post-primary). The Bill also proposes the introduction of a complaints process for students which will therefore place such a complaints process on a legislative basis. The Board made observations on the text of the draft Bill and the Secretary engaged in a bi-lateral meeting with Department of Education and Youth officials to raise a number of concerns and seek clarification on various aspects of the Bill, on behalf of the Board. The draft Bill was subsequently amended to reflect some of these concerns.

During 2025, the Board reviewed the ‘Statement of Strategy’ published by the Department of Education and Youth which outlined the broad policy objectives for the Department. A number of observations raised by the Board on the implementation of various policies were subsequently advised to Department officials.

The Board welcomed the introduction of the new Primary Education Curriculum which was launched by the Minister for Education and Youth, noting that the new curriculum retains teaching time for the Patrons curriculum; a key element for schools under Church of Ireland Patronage since it is the only education sector where the Patrons programme is linked to school admissions process through legislation. As such, two pieces of legislation now support the role of the school Patron: the Education Act 1998 and the Admissions to School Act 2018 (in regards to the recognition of the Patrons programme for school admissions purposes).

The Board received advance briefings from the DEY in regards to revisions to the Child Protection Procedures for all schools and noted that the new procedures would require training to be provided for all members of Boards of Management on various aspects of the new procedures. In this connection, the Board also noted the publication of the ‘Scoping Inquiry’ into allegations of abuse in schools run by religious orders both boarding and day in late 2024 and the announcement by the Minister for Education and Youth to establish a Commission of Investigation into the handling of allegations or concerns of the abuse of children in all schools and all those in positions of authority (e.g. An Garda Síochána, the HSE, the Inspectorate and Department of Education) from 1927 to 2013. The Board was advised, in late 2025, that Mr Justice Michael McGrath (judge of the Court of Appeal) would chair the Commission of Investigation. In December 2025, Mr Justice McGrath announced his intention to begin the process of investigation by conducting a national survey among survivors and any persons with experiences relevant to the investigation. The Board wishes to express its support for the work of

the Commission of Investigation and is ever mindful of the devastation that the experience of abuse has on the life of a person.

4. Education Convention

In July 2025, the Minister for Education and Skills, Ms Helen McEntee, TD., announced her intention to launch a National Convention on Education which was described by the Minister as a ‘once in a generation opportunity for children, young people, parents, educators and wider society to help shape Ireland’s education system for decades to come’. Professor Anne Looney was appointed as chairperson of the Convention. It was announced that the Convention would run over four weekends in 2026. The Board is a recognised stakeholder in education and its representatives will participate in the deliberations of the Convention.

5. Advocacy on Issues:

The Board engages in an ongoing manner with the Department of Education through its participation in the ‘Primary Education Forum’. Ms Sarah Richards and the secretary attend the ‘Forum’ on behalf of the Board and Church of Ireland primary schools. The Forum is an opportunity to engage directly with Department of Education officials regarding all aspects of policy development and policy implementation.

On behalf of Church of Ireland Primary Schools, representations were made by the Board and education secretary on various issues facing schools. In particular, representations were made to the Department seeking to ‘slow the pace of change’ on new initiatives and new policy roll-outs. 2024/25 saw a high level of pace and sequence of change in the education system generally. The Board sought assurances from the Department of a recognition of this pace of change in the coming school year and has formally requested that adequate time, space, resources and scope for leadership be given to ensure effective implementation of initiatives already in the system.

Representations were also made (and will continue to be made) regarding adequate funding for schools; along with reiterating again the need for the advance publication of schedule of payments for school funding. In this regard, a formal submission was made to the Department regarding ‘Budget 2026’ and which was followed up by in-person meetings with the Minister for Education and Youth and political spokespersons on education. The submission made by the Board is available to read on the education section of the Church of Ireland website and the lobbying return for various meetings in this regard is available to view on www.lobbying.ie.

The Board also has representation on the ‘teacher supply’ working group within the Department of Education and Youth which is tasked by the Minister to look at ‘creative solutions’ in regards to addressing teacher shortages.

6. School Management Support and Advice

While the role of the Board is to review, consider educational policy development and general strategic engagement on behalf of the Church in the field of education, the secretariat has an additional role in providing close advice and support to primary schools under Church of Ireland Patronage. Funding is provided to the Board in this regard and is applied (through the RCB) to the support of the education secretary role and that of the education advisor through a ‘strategic partnership’ with the CPSMA for school support services. In 2025 over 2,000 enquires for support and advice (by phone or email) to primary school leaders and Board chairpersons. This service is highly valued as it allows the staff of the Board to keep in close contact with operational matters at school level and is essential to the Board fulfilling its function as the management body for Church of Ireland primary schools.

Garda Vetting Update

The Board of Education/Safeguarding Office carries out Garda Vetting for ancillary staff and volunteers in Church of Ireland primary schools. In 2025, 2775 applications were processed in respect of primary schools. The Board wishes to thank Mr Alex Kinch, Ms Chiara de Raffaele and Mrs Sarah Mac Bruithin for their work in the Garda Vetting Unit RI. This work is part funded by the Department of Education and Youth.

7. Patronage Support

The role of the school patron has developed significantly over the past number of decades. Where once, a school patron could devolve much of the responsibilities and management oversight to school Boards of Management, the increase in both regulation and the codification of practice with regard to governance, financial oversight, child protection has seen a consequent increase in the work involved in performing the role of school patron. For the majority of primary schools under Church of Ireland patronage, the school patron is the bishop of the diocese.

Following discussions with between the Board, the episcopal patrons at primary level and the RCB, it was agreed that a new support function would be created to specifically support the work of school Patrons. In this regard, Mrs Christine Cody was appointed as Patronage Support Officer, responsible to the bishops of the Church of Ireland who hold Patronage at primary level.

8. Follow Me RE Curriculum Developments

The first two parts of the Follow Me programme were published in digital format in 2025 after a launch and presentation at General Synod by Dr Jacqui Wilkinson (series editor). Designed as slide decks for 3rd and 4th classes to replace the previous teachers' manuals, the digital lessons have been very well received in primary schools. Inservice training was provided for teachers by Ms Carolyn Good and Dr Jacqui Wilkinson in September 2025. The Second phase of the project is well underway and a team of teachers worked on developing slide decks for 1st and 2nd classes in 2025. These are planned to be edited, piloted and published for schools to purchase for September 2026. Sales are managed through the Follow Me website www.followme.ie, which also contains RE related resources for primary schools.

Music is inextricably linked with Anglican worship and the pipe organ plays a symbiotic part in the making of music for Anglican worship and liturgy in the majority of Church of Ireland parishes and cathedrals. One new resource available on the website, with supporting lesson resources, is a new video entitled 'Pulling out all the stops', which seeks to introduce pupils in schools to the distinctive musical tradition in the worship and liturgical life of the Church of Ireland. This video was commissioned by Follow Me and is an introduction to the organ of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork. It was created by Mr Peter Stobart, Director of Music at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork and was filmed and directed by Fuchsia Fishbourne (MainFrame TV). The Board wishes to thank Mr Stobart, Mr Matthew Breen, Assistant Director of Music at St Fin Barre's, Cork and the staff and pupils of St Fin Barre's National School, Cork who participated in the video on the introduction to the pipe organ.

The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/qGufu79g7uM>.

The Board continues to be grateful to Dr Wilkinson and Ms Good for their ongoing work on the Follow Me curriculum and to the Rev Prof Canon Anne Lodge, chair of the Religious Education sub-committee. The Board also wishes to thank all the primary teachers who undertook to review lessons for inclusion in the new slide deck resources.

9. Special Education and Special Classes

A major feature in the development of educational provision in 2025 was the announcement of funding for schools to open special classes. Over 400 special classes were sanctioned at primary level for the school year 2025/26, bringing the total number of special classes in all primary schools to over 2,338 and 997 at post primary level. This represents a major investment in special education by Government since the cost of staffing one special class with a teacher and two SNA's amounts to €160,000 (Source: Dáil (PQ 174) 1st October 2024). The ability to open a special class varies from school to school. In many instances, while a school may wish to open a special class, factors such as restrictions on available space or access will curtail a school's ability to do so. During 2025, the secretariat of the board maintained close contact with the Social Inclusion Section of the Department of Education and Youth to determine the ability of Church of Ireland primary schools to open special classes. The most recent data in this regard (at 31st December 2025) is that 19 Church of Ireland primary schools were approached in 2025 by the NCSE to open a special class, with four agreeing to do so and eleven

indicated that they were not in a position to do so, while a further four are in negotiations with the NCSE. The Board understands that opening a special class is a major decision for a school in terms of both the use of internal space and the work involved in setting up a class. However, the Board encourages schools to open special classes where possible, mindful that not only is inclusion a necessity in the provision of education but goes to the heart of the Christian ethos of the school.

10. Deis and Deis Plus (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)

Minister McEntee has announced a new DEIS Plan for schools which is to be developed through consultation with a range of stakeholders, primarily including DEIS schools. The Minister has also announced her intention to develop a DEIS Plus scheme which will focus on schools with the highest levels of disadvantage with a target of early intervention and to seek to consolidate various educational and community services in a focused way in schools with acute disadvantage. The Board has been advised by the Department that this scheme is currently at end point design with the intention of bringing it forward for Ministerial approval by December 2025. The number of schools under Church of Ireland/Protestant primary patronage which are part of the DEIS scheme is thirty-three and which represents a significant number of the total number of Church of Ireland/Protestant primary schools. The Rev Canon Professor Anne Lodge engaged in a number of meetings with the DEY on behalf of Board in regards to research basis of the DEIS scheme and the implementation of the extension of the DEIS scheme.

11. Board of Management Training (Primary)

Board of Management training was provided for schools on the topic of ‘Legal Issues and Risk’ in the Autumn of 2025 in the following dioceses: Cashel, Ferns and Ossory (CFO), Meath and Kildare, Dublin and Glendalough and for Cork, Cloyne and Ross diocese in early 2026 (which also marked the retirement of Bishop Paul Colton as a school patron at primary level). These training seminars were provided in partnership with Ecclesiastical Insurances and the Board thanks EIO for their involvement and support in providing these events.

12. ‘Small Schools’ Administrative Cluster Initiative – Action Research Project

The ‘Small Schools’ Administrative Cluster initiative is now in its fifth year. This project involves schools clustering together (usually four schools) with an administrator shared between the schools in the cluster. The intention is to support smaller rural schools administratively and to lessen the administrative workload on teaching principals. Four primary schools in Donegal are participating in the project. In May 2024, the Minister announced that the project would be extended for a further three years and also announced that the project would form the basis for research on supports for small rural schools in both an Irish and European context. The project is supported by OIDE with a small school’s project co-ordinator. The project has proved a success with Church of Ireland primary schools in the cluster and the extension of the project was welcomed by the Board. Further information can be found at: www.smallschoolsproject.com

13. Second Level School Matters

While many of the education policy issues considered by the board over the past year were of common interest for both primary and post primary alike, a number of issues are of particular relevance to Church of Ireland and Protestant post primary schools and the Board wishes to highlight the following items in that regard.

From September 2025 the redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum begun with the redevelopment of the subjects in the first tranche and will continue to be rolled out over the next few years. Teachers in the first tranche of subjects have undergone a series of in-service days in regards to the implementation of the redeveloped subjects and this will continue on with the roll-out of the redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum. In this connection, the Board notes that while the TUI has agreed to senior cycle redevelopment (on the basis of achieving a range of outcomes) the ASTI, through a ballot of members, has not agreed to the implementation of senior cycle redevelopment and is advancing its disagreement through the relevant dispute resolution mechanisms. A number of Church of Ireland post primary schools have teaching staff with both TUI and ASTI members.

The lack of availability of teachers for certain subject areas continues to cause difficulties for both secondary and comprehensive schools in inhibiting the ability of schools to offer full curriculum subject provision (in particular practical subjects). Schools in the Dublin area report that the cost of accommodation is an extenuating factor in sourcing teachers at post primary level. The Board is aware that this issue has been raised at national level by both school management bodies and the teacher unions. The long-term effect of this lack of teachers to teach specific subjects should be a serious cause of concern for Government. In regards to classroom management, while the introduction of pouches for student mobile phones was greeted with some derision on their introduction, school leaders have advised that the introduction of mobile phone pouches have had a positive impact on school life.

Church of Ireland and Protestant post primary schools are committed to inclusion and supporting students with special needs. It should be noted however that where a school is fee-charging it is precluded from receiving special needs resources and supports from the State even where the school waives fees for those students. This seems to be an anomaly in the allocation model of special needs provision and indicates to special needs students that they have less recognition from the State in attending a school of their own ethos than students in the majority of other schools.

In 2025, the Department of Education and Youth announced a pilot scheme regarding the management of applications which involves parents in a specific area filling out one application form for all schools in their local area. The provisions in this pilot scheme have caused some concern for Church of Ireland and Protestant post primary school leaders in regards to the ability of parents to express a single choice (i.e. for a school of their own ethos) and in regards to how applications for boarding places might be treated in the common admissions system. It is recognized that, at this point, this is a pilot scheme which can be amended and developed based on the outcome of the experiences of the pilot scheme. It is also noted however that the common admissions scheme is simply an administrative tool and will not provide any extra school places in areas experiencing acute shortages of school places.

The report from the SEC is included below, but in this connection, it should be highlighted that the schools which are part of the SEC scheme and receive capitation funding from that scheme, continue to be treated by the State as ‘private’ schools. This means that, since 2009, they have received a lower level of resourcing and funding and are excluded from a range of Department of Education and Youth schemes and programmes. This situation continues to impact on Church of Ireland and Protestant parents and can act as disincentive for parents to choose a school of their own ethos for their children’s second level education.

The Board congratulates Mount Temple Comprehensive, Dublin on the commencing of building works on a new school building to accommodate up to 1,200 students which is due for completion in early 2027.

The Board notes a number of new senior management appointments in Church of Ireland/Protestant post primary level schools and congratulates the following on their appointment as principal during 2025:

- Mr David Bane, Mount Temple Comprehensive School, Dublin.
- Mr Tim Hicks, East Glendalough Comprehensive School, Wicklow
- Mr Noel Cunningham, Wilsons Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath

And for the school year of 2024/25:

- Mr Brian Moore, Wesley College, Dublin
- Mr Alan Cox, Rathdown School, Dublin
- Ms Deborah Crean, Temple Carrig Secondary School, Greystones, Wicklow.

14. SEC – Annual Report

The SEC is an independent company, initially established by General Synod in 1965, which is fully funded by the Department of Education and Youth, through an agreement relating to the payment of capitation funding dating back to 1968 and continues to provide financial support to second level students who are of a Protestant denomination. Over sixty Protestant denominations are currently recognised for grant eligibility purposes. In 2023/24 €5.942 million in grant support was paid to approximately 1,285 recipients. 52% of recipients are in band 1, meaning that those recipients have an income that is either derived from social welfare or equivalent levels. The members of Committee are nominated by the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) and elected to serve as directors of the SEC (clg) at the AGM of the SEC.

Mr Gavin Woods was elected as Chairman of the SEC in 2025, succeeding Mrs Hazel Corrigan, Honorary Secretary of the General Synod. Dr Ken Fennelly is the Company Secretary of the SEC. The reporting requirements of the SEC changed in 2019. Where before the annual report was provided to the General Synod, the annual report of the SEC is now provided to the Department of Education in the first instance and is published on its website at www.secgrant.ie in July each year.

15. Church of Ireland Centre, DCU – Update 2025

The core work of the Church of Ireland Centre (CIC), DCU is the care of its Bachelor of Education students and the delivery of their B.Ed. pathway. The CIC delivers key components to students on the CIC B.Ed. pathway including the RE Certificate in Teaching the Follow Me programme; Religious Studies modules; the Small Schools specialism modules. Students on the CIC B.Ed. pathway undertake most of their placements in schools under Church of Ireland / Reformed Christian patronage. The Director of CIC reviews all applicants commencing the Centre's B.Ed. pathway annually to ensure their eligibility in line with the derogation to the Employment Equality Act.

CIC provides a part-time hybrid course on the Follow Me programme for teachers working in Church of Ireland schools. 29 teachers successfully completed the course led by Dr Jacqui Wilkinson in 2025. This course is supported by the General Synod Board of Education. The 2025 course included webinars for schools on RE and neurodivergence with Dr Claire O'Neill and on RE and Art delivered by Dr Wilkinson.

CIC liaises with primary schools under Church of Ireland and other Reformed Christian patronage through school placement for its students. It also provides supports, engages in research and policy support and disseminates a biannual Newsletter. In late May, Prof Geraldine O'Connor and Rev Canon Prof Anne Lodge engaged in a consultation exercise with schools in the Dublin area about changes to the operation of the final-year B.Ed. placement. In September, CIC and DCU bade farewell to Prof O'Connor who retired after decades of service, much of it spent organising school placement. CIC is very grateful to Prof O'Connor for her dedication to this role and is delighted that she will stay connected with CIC. Her replacement, Ms Laura O'Sullivan (who had worked alongside Prof. O'Connor) was appointed at the end of December.

On 10th June, CIC welcomed a delegation of teachers and clergy from the Anglican Diocese of Chota Nagpur in India and hosted a seminar about denominational education provision in Ireland and India. On 27th November, CIC organised its second annual Advent Schools' service in the DCU All Hallows' Chapel. This was attended by 12 primary schools, and their bishop, from around Dublin that regularly host our B.Ed. students. Music was led by the choir of Kill o the Grange National School and the address was given by the rector Rev Canon Alan Breen.

Dr Wilkinson and Rev Canon Prof Lodge presented at a General Synod Board of Education event for new principals on 17th January. Rev Canon Prof Lodge presented on small school leadership priorities at the ESAI Conference in Athlone on 10th April. Dr Wilkinson presented at the ISREV conference in Riga in July on the Follow Me programme and its place within the primary curriculum. Dr Wilkinson published an article entitled: 'Assessing the influence of the home in sustaining church attendance in Anglican children attending Anglican primary schools in the Republic of Ireland' in the Journal of Beliefs & Values. Rev Canon Prof Lodge

published an article entitled: ‘The beauty of the place and the beauty of the liturgy: exploring the mission and ministry of Christ Church Cathedral Dublin’, using an Anglican ethos assessment tool, also in the Journal of Beliefs and Values. Both are freely available through an open-access arrangement.

16. Conclusion

The marking of fifty years of Boards of Management provides an important moment of reflection on the evolution of school governance in Ireland. The Board acknowledges with gratitude the commitment of those who serve on Boards of Management, whose voluntary work underpins the stability, accountability and ethos of our schools. In that regard, the Board commissioned commemorative plaques which were presented to school Boards of Management over the past few months to mark the anniversary and to thank Board members for all they do for our school communities. The Board continues to be grateful to the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU in the development of the ‘Follow Me’ RE curriculum.

Throughout the past year, the Board has engaged with the Department of Education and Youth, and various other State agencies, to seek increased resources and to inform policy development from the perspective of Church of Ireland school leaders and Boards of Management. However, the Board wishes to note that in many instances the timeframes provided by the Department of Education and Youth and other State agencies for providing observations on draft policies can be very short. Often only a few working days are provided, making it impossible for the Board or the secretariat to engage in consultations with school boards, patrons and other relevant stakeholders.

The past year in education was characterised by two key developments at national level: the announcement of a National Convention on Education which will meet over four weekends in 2026/27. The Board looks forward to participating in the National Convention in the coming year. The second key development in 2025/2026 was the increased provision for special education classes. The Board wishes to reiterate its commitment to encouraging special education provision and inclusion, wherever possible, in Church of Ireland schools.

In conclusion, the Board wishes to thank the secretary to the Board, Dr Ken Fennelly and the education advisor, Mrs Susan Ellis, for their ongoing work in supporting the Board and schools.

THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERSHIP

(from 31st March 2025 – 31st March 2028)

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS (Ex Officio)

THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD (Ex Officio):

Rev Canon G Wharton

Mr K Gibson

Ms H Corrigan

Rev Canon M Kingston

Elected members: 2 from each diocese (one clerical and one layperson):

Armagh

Rev Canon M Kingston

Mr T Flannagan

Clogher

Rev L Capper

Ms R Barton

Derry and Raphoe

Rev Canon H Gilmore

Mr D West

Mrs A Reid

Down and Dromore

Rev C Simpson

Mrs D Cheshire

Connor

Rev P Jones

Mr R Gilbert

Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh

Very Rev N Crossey

Vacant

Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe

Rev S Cousins

Mrs M Brickenden

Dublin and Glendalough

The Rev S Hanily

Mr J Aiken

Meath and Kildare

Rev Canon JDM Clarke

Mr T Smith

Cashel Ferns and Ossory

Rev Canon H Oxley

Mrs M Jacob

Cork, Cloyne and Ross

Ven A Orr

Mr P Stobart

Co-opted members: (including 9 representatives of teachers) along with NI Board nominees:

1. *Vacant* (CIPSMA)
2. Very Rev N Sloane (Sunday School Society)
3. Rev Canon Prof A Lodge (Third Level)
4. Dr E Gash (ISA)
5. Mr N Barrett (ISA)
6. Mr A Forrest (ISA)
7. Mr K Sparling (ASTI)
8. Mrs S Hall (ASTI)
9. Mr D Duffy (TUI)
10. Ms S Richards (PSCICE)
11. Ms R Frazer (PSCICE)
12. *Vacant* (PSCICE)
13. Mr L Hawkins (CIYD)
14. Mr S Henry (CIYD)
15. Rev A Adams
16. Mr M Johnston
17. Miss F Boyd
18. Mr R McLoughlin, OBE.
19. Mr I Bell
20. Prof N Purdy, OBE (to February 2026)

Observers:

Dr R Stevenson

(Presbyterian Church)

Ms D Wood

(Methodist Church)

In Attendance:

Dr PJ Hamill, Secretary NI

Mrs S Ellis, Education Advisor

GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2026-27)

Archbishop of Armagh
The Archbishop of Dublin
Rev Canon M Kingston
Hon Secretary RI
Rev C Simpson
Mr T Flannagan
Mr R McLaughlin, OBE
Ms S Richards
Mr A Forrest
Mrs M Brickenden

BOARD OF EDUCATION (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND) (2025-28)

Ex officio members:

The Archbishop of Dublin (Chair)
Honorary Secretaries – Rev Canon GV Wharton, Ms H Corrigan

Elected by House of Bishops:

Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry (Deputy Chair)
Bishop of Clogher

Diocesan Representatives: Rev Canon J Clarke, Mrs M. Brickenden
Post primary representatives: Mr A Forrest, Mr K Sparling
Third level representatives: Rev Canon Prof A Lodge
Primary representatives: Ms S Richards, Rev Canon H Gilmore

CIYD representative: Mr L Hawkins
Sunday School Society: Very Rev N Sloane

Co-options GS BOE: none

Observers:

Dr R Stevenson
(Presbyterian Church)
Ms D Wood
(Methodist Church)
Secretary, Board of Education (Republic of Ireland)
Dr K Fennelly, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

In Attendance:

Dr P Hamill, Church of Ireland House, Donegal St, Belfast, NI.
Mrs S Ellis, Education Advisor

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 P Thompson (Board of Education only)

Mrs R Barton

CONNOR Rev Dr A Campbell (Board of Education only)

Mr R Gilbert

DERRY *Vacant*

Mrs A Reid

DOWN Rev C Simpson

Mrs D Cheshire (on Board as co-opted member)

Co-opted members:

Mrs R Forde

Mr M Johnston

Miss F Boyd

Mrs E Trew (till Sept 25)

Prof N Purdy, OBE (to February 2026)

Mr I Bell

Mr R McLoughlin, OBE

Canon T Cadden (joined Nov 25)

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, Floor 2, 18-22 Hill Street, Belfast BT1 2LA



Church of Ireland Youth Department

General Synod Report 2026

MEMBERSHIP

Executive

<i>President</i>	Most Rev Patricia Storey	3/3
<i>Chairperson</i>	Mrs Brigid Barrett	3/3
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mr Edward Hardy	3/3
<i>Secretary</i>	Mrs Judith Peters	3/3

Miss Valerie Walker 3/3

Central Board – Executive (above) and:

Rev Peter Ferguson 1/3
Rev Alan Breen 2/3
Miss Sally Siggins 1/3
Rev Martin O’Kelly 2/3
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston 1/3
Mr Andrew Watson 3/3
Rev Canon Nicola Halford 1/3
Rev Peter Blair 2/3
Rev Lindsey Farrell

Co-options

Mrs Brigid Barrett 3/3
Mrs Hilda Connolly 3/3
Mrs Claire Hinchliff Neill 3/3
Mr Nathan Kingston 3/3
Miss Hannah O’Neill 2/3

Standing Committee Representatives

Dr Harriet Wilkinson 0/3
Mr Edward Hardy 3/3

National Youth Officer

Mr Simon Henry 3/3

Youth Ministry Development Officer (Southern Region)

Mr Luke Hawkins 3/3

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 Luke Hawkins. They are both provided with administration and communications support by our Office Manager, Mrs Barbara Swann.

CIYD frames their work through their Strategic Plan 2022-2025, alongside engagement and support from The Department of Education 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 2025 were:

- Pancakes and Prayer Lent Project – CIYD teamed up with Bishops’ Appeal and charity Fields of Life to encourage all our youth groups & schools to take part in Pancakes and Prayer, a special initiative focussing on several schools in South Sudan within the Dioceses of Ibba and Maridi. We asked groups to pray throughout Lent for the students, teachers, and the wider communities of two schools in South Sudan who are part of the Fields of Life Thrive programme to enable children to have a school meal. But also encouraging each group to run a special fundraising initiative at some point during this period. It was an enormous success across the island with just under £/€ 10,000 being raised for the schools.
- The continued success & engagement of the *Young Leaders In Ministry Fund*, established to celebrate the 150th 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 3rd level qualifications and development within the wider youth ministry sector, supported by the Priorities Fund.
- Before You Finish Breakfast – a new assemblies resource for workers and volunteers alike who visit schools, in partnership with Tearfund Ireland.
- 250th Anniversary celebration service for Sunday Schools in Church of Ireland in partnership with Children & Families Ministry.
- CIYD all Ireland National Youth Forum meeting in January.
- Missional Generation partnership – VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) resources including 3 days of seminars and workshops at Summer Madness & youth leader care box giveaways
- Gaming for God – a spin off with our work with Missional Generation, young people in a number of parishes held gaming events in order to reach younger children with the gospel message.
- Partnership with the Mind Matters & Action Mental Health to provide mental health training to young people, youth leaders and parents
- Online Prayer campaign & FUEL Advent - linking in with CIYD’s annual Day of Prayer for the Church’s Ministry with Young People, the Sunday before Advent, this 2nd run of the Advent version of our bible reading resource.

CIYD ACTIVITIES IN 2025

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.

- The “Connect” programme - partnering with the Irish Methodist Youth Department, continued throughout 2025 with relevant training for youth workers and volunteers. This included “Valuing Volunteers” with Mr Andy Hickford, mental health awareness training with Action Mental Health, Young People and AI technology, Prayer Brunch, and our “Connect Christmas” event in December with lunch and a Christmas Communion led by Rev John Alderdice from the Methodist Church in Ireland.

- 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, Mr 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 leaders – resources, interactive technology & with mainstage speakers sharing. Our venue also launched a fresh resource inspired by passionate teens from Mullingar! Helping young people to respond to climate change with prayer, practical action, and faith. The resource offers creative activities and spiritual insights to help youth leaders empower their communities in faith-filled environmental care across Ireland. For the first time, CIYD facilitated the travel of Dioceses from the Southern Region by coordinating a marquee and catering. We had a number of Churches and young people come to the festival for the first time, and several became Christians.
- Winter Madness - CIYD was involved with supporting this Saturday evening event in Dublin & Glendalough Diocese in March, with a packed church at Holy Trinity, Rathmines and our National Youth Officer Mr Simon Henry on hosting duties.
- Online Training - CIYD responded to feedback by providing regular and relevant training for young people, volunteer leaders, parents, clergy and youth workers alike. Areas covered included: Chaplains' training, Youth Mental Health Introduction for Parents, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Resilience workshops for teens, CITI training with Ordinands, Training for parents on teenagers with anxiety, suicide prevention training, Parents session on exam stress, Parents session on body image & disordered eating, and Bible engagement training.

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 effecting change in the church, took place with encouraging attendance from all over the island and led by Bishop Adrian Wilkinson for our opening plenary and facilitation by Ms Susie Mapledoram (Youth Officer for Diocese of Manchester) and Mr Mark Wells (Bible Society NI) with a focus on how we live out our faith in the school arena and be a living testimony for our Christian faith to others.
- Summer Camps - Throughout the summer months our full-time staff supported Diocesan summer camps and events. Mr Luke Hawkins spent the week at Gurteen College with a group from the United Diocese of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe going through the Youth Alpha Course.
- National Ploughing Championships - CIYD's increased presence at this event led to engagement with roughly 4,000 young people with lots of free giveaways, resources and lots of interesting faith conversations.

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 weekends, resources etc as well as working with certain Dioceses on strategic development and supporting DYO's in their role.
- DYO Gathering - CIYD hosts an annual retreat for Diocesan Youth Officers, facilitated by Innovista Ireland in November, at Mount St Annes Retreat Centre, Portarlinton.
- Day of Prayer 2025 - 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. For 2025 we developed a social media prayer campaign. Our 10 Prayer Videos produced a

major uplift across our social media channels. Total views increased from the week before which was 2,192 to 7,006 - a rise of 219 %. Individual Prayer Reels generated 5,370 views, averaging around 450 views each. Engagement more than tripled, and non-follower visibility almost doubled (from 18.8 % to 35.2 %). In short, the daily prayer-focused Reels significantly expanded our missional prayer reach, strengthened engagement within community, and drew new audiences into the CIYD network.

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.

- Before You Finish Breakfast - A brand-new resource for 2025 created by Tearfund Ireland and CIYD for Six Assemblies featuring Bible studies and faith-based content and social justice themes such as immigration and climate change. Designed for Secondary Schools, but also suitable for older primary pupils.
- '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.
- "Missional Generation" – VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) resources, Eco Gen — a fresh resource inspired by passionate teens from Mullingar! Helping young people to respond to climate change with prayer, practical action, and faith. The resource offers creative activities and spiritual insights to help youth leaders empower their communities in faith-filled environmental care across Ireland and was launched at Summer Madness.
- Prayer Journal - this very popular resource for young people was reprinted this year to link in with our annual Day of Prayer for young people and youth ministry and quickly disappeared from CIYD shelves.
- Fuel Advent - back by popular demand for the season, this Advent resource encourages regular Bible readings habits for young people and for them to engage actively with God's Word.

National Quality Standards Framework

This process involves self-evaluation of the organization based on various criteria laid down by the Department of Education & 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
- The 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 – at present the partnership is being explored
- "Together" Youth Leaders Forum
- Education Authority (NI) Regional Advisory Group

CIYD ACTIVITIES IN 2026

Our staff team continues 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. An all-island youth workers’ retreat is planned for April to Rome led by Canon Daniel Nzum.
- 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 2026 will have a focus on young people’s understanding and engagement with prayer and the Bible and building confidence in these areas.
- Pancakes & Prayer - For 2026, CIYD will again collaborate with Bishops Appeal and the Fields of Life charity to engage young people and churches in fundraising efforts, prayer focuses and mission awareness regarding on going work in South Sudan schools.
- Schools Ministry - CIYD will have a focus on schools and chaplaincy ministry in the Southern Region to maximise training opportunities and potential for faith growth within our schools as well as special school services. This includes facilitating school retreat days at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin.
- New Strategic Plan - At General Synod in 2026, CIYD will launch its new strategic plan. This has been put together with input & feedback from clergy, volunteers, youth leaders & young people from across the island.

Development and Communication

- Churches working together – Northern Region - under new Education Authority (NI) funding streams and criteria, denominational 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.
- Digital Detox - CIYD aims to launch a brand-new resource based around young people’s social media habits and their faith.
- Instagram - CIYD will continue to focus on our account - **ciyd_insta** – to improve communications with relevant stakeholders and agencies and to promote our own work resources.

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**

The Youth and Children’s Board of the Diocese remains central in the support and development of local parish youth and children’s ministry. The annual AYAC “Big Overnight” (March 2025) saw circa 35 young people and adult leaders participate in a 24-hour packed overnight (including a visit to the Todd’s Leap Activity centre, Ballygawley). It was a delight having Mr Simon Henry of the CIYD as our guest speaker and whilst everyone was tired on the journey home it was with a sense of gratitude to God for His blessing and presence. The Easter Dawn service (April 2025) organised by the Youth and Children’s Board saw (circa) 250 worshippers attend an early morning Communion service at which Archbishop John McDowell presided. Many thanks to the AYAC Board and all volunteers who ensured the smooth running of this beautiful worship service.

AYAC trip to Romania with Habitat for Humanity (August 2025).

Led by Canon Kingston (St. Mark’s Armagh) and Ms Victoria Eveson (St. Nicholas, Dundalk) a team of 11 young people and volunteer leaders from the Diocese spent a full week in Romania supporting Habitat for

Humanity in building homes for those most improvised. The young people and leaders under the excellent supervision of Habitat Romania, fitted stud walls, laid flooring and plastered external walls of a home for a Romanian family. Whilst the work was physically demanding, the whole experience of serving those less well off, meeting local Christians and bonding as a team was a huge blessing for the participants.

Diocesan Youth praise night (September 2025)

Following a hiatus of a few years, it was a genuine joy seeing almost 90 young people and leaders take part in a Diocesan wide youth praise night led by Youth and Children's Board of the Diocese and with our guest speaker Rev Rodney Blair encouraging all to deepen our walk with Christ. It is hoped that Diocesan youth praise events will become a regular feature for parish youth groups across 2026.

Training and development work across the Diocese

Across 2025 a number of training opportunities have occurred in support of Youth and Children's ministry. In January 2025 a very well attended workshop facilitated by "The Big House" and the Southern Trust's Bereavement Officer Mrs Laura Creaney in regard to "Understanding a young person's or child's experience of bereavement". March 2025 also saw a workshop held in Cookstown by the Diocesan Mental Health Working group in regard to the "Bereavement Journey", a series of support evenings for all living with bereavement. In May 2025 a "Pop-up" Zoom training in terms of "Running a Holiday Bible Club" saw 5 to 6 parishes take part led by Ms Rachael Murphy of the CFM Board.

2025 also saw an evening's training session in regard to "Volunteer recruitment and retention" being delivered which was widely appreciated. It was a real encouragement (in partnership with CIYD) seeing a full cohort of Youth mental health practitioners trained from a range of parishes and youth work contexts across October 2025.

Parish youth and children's ministry

The basis of all Armagh Diocesan youth and children's ministry is in one-to-one parish support. Being out and about with local parishes in regards God's mission to and with young people, children and families is a genuine privilege and joy. This work is fluid and a mixture of responding to ministry support requests and bringing ideas, resources and initiating conversation. No one day is the same and parish support and engagement is varied and rewarding. The on-going support of CIYD is hugely appreciated in this ministry and the expertise and passion of the small but dedicated CIYD team has a real impact across many young lives in the Diocese of Armagh.

CASHEL FERNS AND OSSORY

We had a number of large diocesan youth events in 2025, and we are thankful that these events have been so well supported by the young people and their families in this diocese. There is great sense of family within our diocese, which we hope to continue building as we move forward. I must pay tribute to the adult leaders, both clergy and lay, who give up so much of their time and energy in planning and delivering these large-scale youth events.

Bishop's Youth Advisory Group

The youth workers and clergy meet around three or 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. Thank you to Carlow Union of Parishes for the use of the Church of Ireland Community house, who are always obliging to host the meetings and allowing us the all-important cuppa!

CIYD Youth Forum 2025

The all-island Church of Ireland Youth Department Annual Youth Forum took place on Friday 31st January 2025 through to Sunday 2nd February 2025 in Dromantine Retreat Centre, just outside Newry, Co. Down, gathering young people from all corners of Ireland to come together in faith and CFO were represented by some of our Youth at the Youth Forum. This year was extra special as the guest speaker to start the day off on Saturday morning was our very own Bishop Adrian Wilkinson. Bishop Adrian spoke to us on how life was like a square box, and that each side of the square represented different areas of our life; Friends, Focus,

Fulfilment and Faith. Ms Susie Mapledoram, who came a long way from the Diocese of Manchester, lead some sessions alongside Mr Mark Wells (Bible Society NI) Also on Sunday we had CIYD's President Bishop Pat Storey (Meath and Kildare) pay us visit, wrapping up events and shared her journey of faith with God and boosting young people moral as they went back to their families, schools, parishes and dioceses, encouraging them to have an active faith.

Diocesan Confirmation Retreat 2025

We had a very good diocesan confirmation retreat in Newtown school from Saturday 12th April – Monday 14th April 2025. We were delighted that 45/50 confirmation candidates along with youth workers and clergy from across our diocese were able to come together for the weekend.

We are very grateful for the enthusiasm and friendliness of the confirmation candidates who all participated fully over the three days. During the weekend we had regular worship gatherings and talks, led by Canon Nicola Halford who focused on particular topics relevant to those who are preparing for confirmation. Canon Nicola spoke to the young people about prayer, the Church and how we serve God by serving others. We joined together singing worship songs and taking part in prayer activities. On Sunday morning we joined in the Palm Sunday service with Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford and we were warmly welcomed by Bishop Adrian, Dean Bruce Hayes and the congregation there.

Sincere thanks to all the adult leaders who assisted on this weekend, and of course Bishop Adrian who popped his head in to say hello to our young people. We are sincerely grateful to all our volunteers who give up their time to help in this very important ministry.

Diocesan Summer Camp 2025 in Gurteen Agricultural College

We returned to Gurteen Agricultural College in July for our diocesan residential summer camp. For both Junior Camp and Senior Camp after both showing that they are hugely popular. We had approximately 48 young people attend Gurteen for the Junior camp weekend and 36 for the senior camp. Our timetable was full of games, challenges, tournaments, arts & crafts, and much more.

Worship is an important aspect of our camp and each evening we gathered for some time of prayer, worship songs, bible readings and talk. We are sincerely grateful to Rev Arthur Barrett (Rector of Killanne / Killegney Union of Parishes), who was our chaplain and led our worship for the week. He used the theme Come Just As You Are. Using the song "Come Just as you are to worship" as our anthem for the weekend and 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 in a positive and gentle way.

Huge thanks to the leadership team and we were so grateful to have our junior leaders - Mr Cian Rothwell, Mr Darragh Murphy, Ms Katie Clearly, Ms Poppy Walshe, Ms Rebekah Clegg and Mr Ben Smyth. Growing youth leaders for our diocese is another important and vital aspect that such residential camps help to do.

Canon Nicola, it was very much noticed that you were not among us this year and we send your every blessing and a speedy recovery.

Youth Clubs and Youth Workers

There are a number of youth clubs around our diocese, holding regular youth club meetings over the past year and we hope that this will continue to grow. If you have a Youth Club in your parish, please contact our DYO, Rev Ger James. I would love to know and more importantly I would love to pop over to say hello to your young people. dyo.cfo24@gmail.com.

CLOGHER

2025 has been a busy and blessed year for young people across Clogher Diocese. Our newly formed youth council has gained huge momentum, and we have a fantastic team of volunteers that work tirelessly to support our young people. In February of 2025 we held our first Youth Social in St. Patrick's Church Hall in Monaghan. It was so encouraging to see so many young people in attendance from many parts of the diocese.

This momentum continued with another event in October of 2025 at the Share centre. Our young people from all corners of the diocese gathered together and took part in bush craft skills, archery, combat corps and climbing wall. New friendships were made and old ones strengthened. Our leaders worked together to ensure that all young people had a wonderful time, and we are very grateful to our Bishop, to our youth leaders, parents, neighbours and friends who encourage our young people to support these events.

God is working in the diocese and we see that clearly in the numbers attending our events and indeed looking ahead for more!

As a youth council we also supported a number of parishes across the diocese with youth grants, both in late Spring and in the Autumn. A variety of youth events are taking place and are in the planning. As a council we also provided resources from 'The Big House' for young people within every parish across the diocese, ensuring that we are reaching as many young people as possible.

The future is bright, God is moving, and we are looking forward to another busy year in Clogher!

CONNOR

2025 was a year of change for Connor Youth, as the Diocese welcomed David Armstrong as the new Diocesan Youth Officer in January. During this season of transition, Connor Youth experienced a number of encouraging highlights that continued to build momentum across the diocese.

In June, Connor Youth once again hosted a sub-camp at Ireland's largest Christian youth festival, Summer Madness. Around 180 young people and leaders from 12 parishes across Connor attended and made use of the sub-camp. Alongside providing space for meals, the sub-camp offered opportunities for young people to connect with others from Connor churches and for leaders to disciple their groups through shared conversations. A highlight of the week was the annual Bishop's Barbecue, where Rt Rev George Davison and clergy served food to young people and leaders.

In September, Connor Youth gathered at Castlewellsan Castle for the annual residential weekend, Connor Takes the Castle. Approximately 100 young people and leaders took part in Bible studies led by Rev Peter Blair, exploring what life in Jesus means through John's Gospel. The weekend also included a wide range of activities, such as silent discos, sports, archery, and rock climbing. Following a blessed weekend in 2025, plans are already underway for the next Connor Takes the Castle on 2–4 October 2026.

Throughout the year, Connor Youth also hosted three youth nights in Ballymena, Christ Church Lisburn, and Portglenone, alongside a training night in Antrim in partnership with Growing Young Disciples, equipping youth workers and volunteers to reach Generation Z with the gospel.

It's been a great year for Connor Youth and huge thanks to our amazing Youth Council for their dedication and support.

CORK, CLOYNE & ROSS

The new year started off with a visit to Fota Wildlife Park for an educational tour.

A visit to the Zookeepers area to see where the food is prepared for the animals and a meet and greet with the giraffes in their shed was also had. In February, we took a group to Airtastic in Little Island to the Inflata Park and Arcade.

Another very busy and successful Confirmation Weekend was had at the beginning of March. Everyone gathered on the Friday eve in the Carhue Centre in Bandon, where activities, workshops and lots of fun had been planned for the evening. Everyone attended the Bishop's Confirmation Morning in Ashton school on Saturday morning and a trip to Airtastic afterwards for bowling and food before heading home.

The Easter event took place on Saturday with a trip to Smugglers Cove for a run around the Rebel Rampage and the Tubing with pizza after! The day finished up on the Warren Beach with Dean Cliff Jeffers and Rev

Michael Kenning for a Eucharist Service. In June, the annual 6th class day out in Oysterhaven was on the agenda - plenty of muddy activities were held in the morning before heading out on the water kayaking in the afternoon.

It was back to Summer Madness with 4 leaders to help out in the CIYD Connect Café during the summer. In September, the troops were rounded up for a visit to Footgolf in Kinsale and with a game of Nerf Wars to finish before a feed of pizza.

In October, we launched our Youth Initiative Project. Giving parishes the opportunity to apply for a grant from CDYC by submitting a proposal of events, budgets and adequate leaders. We will offer training and support to any groups who have been successful.

The Advent Youth Service was held in St. Fachtna's Cathedral in Rosscarbery in November with Rev Eugene Griffin as our guest, speaking on the theme of Darkness into Light.

The year finished up with a trip to Cork to Mahon Point Shopping Centre for some Christmas shopping before heading to Winterlee for some Christmas Markets and Ice-skating.

And not forgetting our Youth Leaders Christmas Dinner at the Talbot Hotel in Ballincollig. We have lots more planned for 2026 starting off with the Bishop's Confirmation morning with loads more activities to follow!

DOWN AND DROMORE

2025 was another busy year for young ministry across parishes in Down and Dromore, supported by various diocesan initiatives including leadership training, discipleship groups, support days and various youth events and residential camps.

To help train leaders we ran our 'FORGE' year-long leadership course and 'SERVE' short-term course, and we were pleased to start our first 'Anthem' worship leading training for young people.

We also trained around 20 new leaders for summer camps. Leadership training evenings were held for volunteers in youth and children's ministry and a prayer breakfast for our youth and children's workers. Approximately 590 leaders were also trained in Safeguarding.

Our events included the 'Big Diocesan Youth Weekend' for 130 in February, regular 'Saturday Night Live' youth worship nights and hosting a venue at Summer Madness for around 15 of our youth groups who came to the diocesan marquee for their food. The rest of the summer saw record attendance at our 3 Summer Adventure Camps with around 130 young people and 40 leaders involved.

Sadly, at the end of the summer we lost the amazing staff that made this all possible! Our Youth Officer, Josh moved on to a parish role and both Janine (Young Adults) and Millie (Children's Officer) moved on to other roles as well. They are greatly missed.

In October we ran a discipleship weekend for around 50 older teens and then finished off the year with a youth Christmas worship celebration in Hillsborough for around 100 young people and leaders.

DUBLIN & GLENDALOUGH

Mission Statement

To see all church communities in Dublin & Glendalough full of young people who are actively developing and growing in their faith in God.

This work is focused on supporting parishes - the clergy, youth workers and young people - in encouraging and developing the faith of our young people as well as organising events centrally.

DGYC Internship

We were delighted to welcome Molly and Nana in September 2025 as DGYC Interns. Since then, they have been working with local parish youth and children's work, and assisting Emma, our DYO, in diocesan work. The main focus of the internship is the interns themselves, so we started off the year with training, and have continual development opportunities throughout the year. The interns have been an absolute blessing in DGYC's, and local church work!

Our applications are now open for 18-25 years old for 2026/27. The Internship is focused on faith and personal development; all while being involved in local church.

Events and Resources

The majority of faith-based youth work is run by volunteers in a local context, so we provide resources and events to support that important work. These range from training events to worship evenings, to youth groups and sourcing and producing resources. We aim for dgyc.org to be an online hub of resources.

It was an honour to be able to collaborate with Summer Madness and to host Winter Madness in Dublin once again, and we're encouraged to see busloads of young people travel to this event.

We joined with other dioceses and CIYD this year in running a joint marquee at Summer Madness. This was a real blessing to our groups and allowed 3 new groups from Dublin and Glendalough to attend.

DGYC would like to thank Diocesan Councils for continuing to support youth ministry, and to CIYD for their invaluable support, resources, wisdom and fun.

DERRY AND RAPHOE

We ran two Diocesan Confirmation days to bring parishes and young people together to meet with others on the same journey. We explored more of Jesus' miracles, ministry and message, and Bishop Andrew met with the young people. Our diocesan representatives attended the CIYD Youth Forum, where they were able to meet and discuss with young people from the whole Church of Ireland.

Our annual diocesan youth weekend – "The DRY Weekend" – saw a record number of young people attending. We went to Gartan Outdoor Education Centre, outside Letterkenny, for a weekend of friendship, outdoor activities and exploring the book of Psalms during our teaching time.

Summer Madness was a huge success with our diocese again, seeing young people signing up to attend after coming to the DRY Weekend. Working in partnership with other diocese to share resources and spaces is always hugely beneficial to leaders, and to allow the young people to meet those from other dioceses.

Once again, we were able to provide school leaver packs for parishes to hand out to young people who were leaving school, either for university, college or work. We had our second Big Restart event, to help bring groups together after the summer break. This year we visited Todd's Leap, after a reschedule due to storms.

Our year ended with our Young Leaders Training programme running for its second time. The young leaders have been working hard using the Serve programme and now we're planning their graduation service.

KILMORE, ELPHIN & ARDAGH

The past year has been one of encouragement and growth in youth ministry across the Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. We give thanks for God's faithfulness and for the opportunities provided for young people to encounter the love of Jesus in meaningful and transformative ways.

A significant development has been the expansion of the diocesan intern ministry. Through diocesan support and grants, €5,500 was invested in resourcing interns who have contributed actively to schools' ministry, parish youth work, and diocesan events. Their work has included facilitating lunchtime faith groups, running school retreat days, and supporting mission initiatives, while also helping to nurture future leaders for the Church.

Youth Alpha has played a particularly important role within schools, especially among Transition Year students in both Sligo and Longford. The course has provided a welcoming space for young people to explore questions of faith, with evidence of deepened discipleship and increased confidence in sharing faith with peers.

Larger youth gatherings remain central to youth ministry, with groups attending events such as Move and Intents, where young people engage with scripture, worship together, and respond to God's call.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of CIYD, partner organisations, and local youth leaders. Looking ahead, developing a more sustainable financial structure for youth ministry is a priority, ensuring good stewardship and long-term growth.

MEATH & KILDARE

2025 saw many great new things in youth ministry in Meath and Kildare. In November, a new youth group – Grounded – was launched in Mullingar. Grounded is a collaboration between Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Christian Fellowship Churches and seeks to give young people rooted foundation in Christ.

Every Friday 20-30 young people meet for fellowship, games, and Bible study, with a worship service being held on the last Saturday of the month.

We are really excited to see where God will take Grounded in 2026, and we are planning on going to Winter Madness, CIYD Youth Forum and Summer Madness.

Another 'new' thing was the return of the National Ploughing Championships to Tullamore in September. The Diocese handed out more than 2000 cups of tea, including to many young people who came to our tent. CIYD were with us, but many of the young people spoke to Diocese members, prayed using our prayer stations, and rested on our comfy sofas. They brought an incredible energy and atmosphere to the tent and the Ploughing as a whole.

Elsewhere, the Diocese took more than 20 young people to Summer Madness 2025, with the spiritual conversations going on into the night. Wilson's Hospital School continues to be a valuable pillar of the Church of Ireland ethos in the Diocese, with weekly prayer sessions and Christian Union.

This year also saw Harvest and Carol services, with a special service for 1st years held in All Saints' Mullingar.

TUAM, LIMERICK & KILLALOE

The dedicated volunteer committee of U.D.Y.C. Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe delivered a varied and engaging 2025 programme of day, weekend, and week-long events that fostered faith, friendship, and community, supporting the spiritual growth of young people throughout the year.

Throughout the year, we enjoyed a range of Day Trips, Summer Camps, and a memorable Junior Weekend, welcoming a wonderful mix of new and returning young people. Their enthusiastic engagement made each event special, and it was deeply rewarding to see joyful faces, receive positive feedback, and hear encouraging stories from families about the impact of these experiences.

We were grateful to have representation at the National Youth Forum organised by CIYD, offering valuable input from across the dioceses. Winter Madness at Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines in Dublin was another highlight, providing an opportunity for worship and connection with the wider youth community. As we continued to grow within the new united diocese, we were delighted to host events across the region, meeting young people and volunteers throughout its length and breadth.

Summer Madness was a particular encouragement, especially the Southern Region Hub, where shared worship and meals ministry with other dioceses strengthened connections through CIYD support.

Our Summer Camps were a standout moment of the year. Junior Camp focused on the theme “*That’s Who I Praise*”, led by Andrew O’Brien, while Senior Camp followed the Alpha Youth programme, led by Luke Hawkins from CIYD. The Junior Weekend also provided a joyful space for faith, friendship, and adventure, enriched by worship reflections from Dean Diane Matchett.

We were encouraged by the growth of our junior leaders and were delighted to host our second *Taking a Leading Role* training event. We remain deeply grateful to all who supported the programme behind the scenes throughout the year.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH
DEPARTMENT**

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

STATEMENT OF BOARD’S RESPONSIBILITIES

The board is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the accounting policies of the Church of Ireland Youth Department.

The board is required 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 board are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Department 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. It is 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 2025**

		2025 €	2024 €
INCOME			
Department of Education and Youth	2a	230,833	211,966
Funding provided by Representative Church Body		195,021	187,311
Other Income		8,492	9,805
2b			
		<u>434,346</u>	<u>409,082</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Office & Administration Expenses	3	(369,934)	(40,169)
Staff Costs	4	(180,761)	(139,734)
Fees & Membership	5	(845)	(870)
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		(221,540)	(180,773)
Operating Surplus for the Year		212,806	228,309
TRAINING, PROGRAMME & GRANT ALLOCATIONS			
Training, Programme & Grant Allocations	6	(213,047)	(200,445)
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
(Deficit)/Surplus after Training, Programme & Grant Allocations		(241)	27,864
Currency translation adjustment		(388)	(206)
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the year		<u>(629)</u>	<u>27,658</u>

CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT**BALANCE SHEET****Year ended 31 December 2025**

		2025 €	2024 €
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	7	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	101,934	123,139
Cash at bank		6,901	4,151
		108,835	127,290
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors	9	(34,206)	(52,032)
Net Assets		74,629	75,258
FUNDS EMPLOYED			
Balance at 1 January		75,258	47,600
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the year		<u>(629)</u>	<u>27,658</u>
Balance as at 31 December		74,629	75,258

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.

	2025	2024
	€	€
2(a). Income		
Department of Education and Youth		
- Youth Services Grant Scheme	228,715	211,966
- Capital Funding Scheme	2,118	-
	230,833	211,966

Income from the Department of Education and Youth is applied to supporting the costs of the organisation as detailed in the expenditure section of the Income & Expenditure Account under the following headings: Office & Administration, Staff Costs, Fees & Membership and finally Training Programme & Grants.

	2025	2024
	€	€
2 (b). Other Income		
Deposit Interest	3,052	2,332
Donations	413	1,871
Programme Grant	4,630	5,602
Sundry	397	-
	8,492	9,805

	2025	2024
	€	€
3. Office & Administration Expenses		
Insurance	3,562	3,587
Auditors' Fees	5,873	5,701
Rent	19,405	20,233
Telephone, Postage & Internet	3,356	2,193
Office Expenses	7,183	7,905
Depreciation	-	-
Resources	-	-
Sundry	-	166
Bank Interest & Charges	555	384
	39,934	40,169

4. Staff Costs	2025 €	2024 €
Staff Salaries	155,138	115,583
Staff Expenses	19,726	21,318
Central Board & Executive	5,897	2,833
	<u>180,761</u>	<u>139,734</u>
	=====	=====
5. Fees & Membership	2025 €	2024 €
General Membership Fees	845	870
	<u>845</u>	<u>870</u>
	=====	=====
6. Training, Programme & Grant Allocations	2025 €	2024 €
Training Events	84,893	76,892
Programme Events	12,946	10,773
Devolved Funding Grants	87,596	97,085
Summer Madness	11,472	1,208
Youth Link NI	14,028	14,487
Capital Grant Expenses	2,112	-
	<u>213,047</u>	<u>200,445</u>
	=====	=====
7. Tangible Fixed Assets	2025 €	2024 €
Cost		
At 1 January	106,584	101,818
Currency Adjustment	(5,317)	4,766
Additions	-	-

At 31 December	<u>101,267</u>	<u>106,584</u>
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Accumulated Depreciation

At 1 January	106,584	101,818
Currency Adjustment	(5,317)	4,766
Charge for the year	-	-

At 31 December	<u>101,267</u>	<u>106,584</u>
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Net Book Value

At 1 January	-	-
At 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

8. Debtors

	2025	2024
	€	€
Cash on deposit held by the RCB	101,640	62,913
Prepayments	294	60,226
	<u>101,934</u>	<u>123,139</u>

Prepayments and other debtors for the 2025 financial year include grant income of €58,060 which was due from the Department of Education and Youth.

9. Creditors

	2025	2024
	€	€
Accruals	34,206	52,032

10. Foreign Currency transactions have been translated to Euro at the rate of exchange ruling at 31 December 2025.
€1 = £0.8717 (2024: €1 = £0. 8275).

Independent auditors' report to the Board of Church of Ireland Youth Department

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

In our opinion, the Church of Ireland Youth Department's financial statements:

- for the year ended 31 December 2025 have been properly prepared in all material respects, in accordance with the basis of preparation on page 9 and accounting policies on pages 9 and 10 of the financial statements.

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the balance sheet as at 31 December 2025;
- 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.

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.

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.

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.

Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit

Responsibilities of the Board for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Board's responsibilities set out on page 5 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.

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.

The logo for PricewaterhouseCoopers, featuring the company name in a stylized, handwritten-style font.

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants
Ireland
25 March 2026

THE COVENANT COUNCIL REPORT 2026

The Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Church of Ireland

Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe (Co-Chair) (2/2)

Ms Elva Byrne (0/2)

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (0/2)

Ven Barry Forde (1/2)

Rev Clare Kakuru (0/2)

Rev Martin Steele (Appointed May 2025) (0/2)

Methodist Church in Ireland

Rev Canon Dr John Alderdice (Co-Chair)

Mr Colin Burrows

Rev Andrew Dougherty

Canon Gillian Kingston

Rev Canon Dr Janet Unsworth

Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu

In Attendance

Dr Nicole Gallagher (Synod Officer)

Mr Linto John (Synod Support Officer)

Executive Summary

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 welcome 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 Discussion

As reported over the past couple of years, 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:

- Understandings of Ministry and Episcopate within each denomination and the implications of these for those who move to serve in the other denomination
- Covenant Partnerships and Local Expressions of Cooperation
- 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)
- Pioneer Ministry
- Safeguarding policies and interchangeability
- Clarifying how to enable interchangeability in a range of contexts, including both occasional and long-term exercises of ministry across traditions.
- Looking ahead to the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Covenant in September 2027 and the production of a renewed common declaration to mark this occasion.

Safeguarding Protocols

Safeguarding within the context of interchangeability has been one of the most discussed topics by the Council over the past year. In the context of Covenant Churches, safeguarding must be a foundational and clearly agreed aspect of the partnership. When a Covenant Church is created, a written agreement should be established that sets out which denomination's safeguarding policy will be followed, including training requirements, recruitment standards, and all associated procedures and how those policies will be implemented in practice during transition and ongoing ministry. The Council is currently liaising with the Safeguarding Officers in both denominations in regard to arrangements for Covenant Churches and to cover both clergy and those in authorized lay ministries who move from one denomination to the other, either on a full time or occasional basis.

Current and Future Projects

Covenant Council is greatly encouraged by the Local Covenant Partnership at Christ Church Primacy, Bangor. This has provided an opportunity to update the regulatory framework for Covenant Partnerships, ensuring these will fulfil all ecclesiastical requirements of both denominations and be compliant with the charity regulator. We anticipate that this will form a precedent enabling current and future local covenant partnerships to thrive in common life and ministry.

Following on from the success of the pilot scheme that took place in the Dublin area concerning the interchangeability of accredited local preachers from the Methodist Church and diocesan lay readers from the Church of Ireland, discussions continue on holding a similar scheme in a more rural setting.

A revision of the *Guidelines to the Journey* booklet is still taking place. This update will be an editorial update of the previous booklet but will also include some new material. It is envisaged that this new booklet will be available online in PDF format and will be a 'living document' that can be revised and updated as the need arises.

The Council also plans to issue a guidance document within the next year outlining the practicalities of interchangeability for clerics. Substantial work has already been undertaken, and it envisaged that this would include details of the processes to be used in moving from one polity to the other, including a clear, separate section on safeguarding. One of the challenges in compiling such a process document has been to reconcile the need to render canonical obedience to a diocesan bishop and be under his / her jurisdiction with the fact that being in full connexion with the Methodist Conference is so much a part of a Methodist minister's spiritual DNA. Last year the Methodist Church agreed that when a Methodist minister takes up a Church of Ireland post, their full connexion would be 'in abeyance' for so long as they remained in that post. The Council welcomes this decision and is of the mind that this particular challenge in our creative relationships has now been addressed, reconciling the issue of a minister remaining in full connexion (and, thus, not jeopardising their spiritual identity) while being under the sole jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop.

Now that interchangeability is firmly embedded into the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, work continues on its inclusion within the Manual of Laws of the Methodist Church which will form part of a wider revision. Updates on this will come in due course.

Covenant Council is looking forward to marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Covenant in September 2027. It is our hope to renew the Covenant with aspirations to shape our common life and mission that we might grow together so that unity might be fully realised.

Membership

The Council is delighted that Rev Canon Dr Janet Unsworth has been appointed as President of the Methodist Church in Ireland for the upcoming year and the Council sends its prayerful good wishes to her as she undertakes this new role and in her appointment to the Anglican-Methodist International Coordinating

Committee (AMICC). Dr Unsworth has served as secretary to the Council for the past number of years until this February and the Council is grateful to the staff members of the General Synod department for their continuing secretarial support.

Last year's report noted that a number of members have been on the Council since its inception. A rolling plan was, therefore, put in place to allow some of the longer-serving members to step down over the course of the next two to three years. The first Church of Ireland member to step down last summer was the Dean of Cork, the Very Rev Nigel Dunne. The Council wishes to pay a sincere and heartfelt tribute to Dean Dunne for his tireless work on the Council and for being a key figure in getting Interchangeability 'over the line'. Rev Martin Steele was elected as a Council member at last year's General Synod to fill the vacancy that occurred on the resignation of Dean Dunne. It is planned that a couple of other long-serving members will be afforded the opportunity to step down from the Council in the coming years, once suitable alternative members can be found. From the Methodist side of the Council, Rev Canon Dr Heather Morris resigned as Co-Chair and this position has now been filled by Rev Canon Dr John Alderdice. The thanks of the Council goes to Rev Canon Dr Morris for all her work during her tenure as Co-Chair and the members look forward to working with Rev Canon Dr Alderdice and another new Methodist member, Mr Colin Burrows, over the coming years.

COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE REPORT 2026

MEMBERSHIP (20) – 5 meetings in 2025

A Bishop (Chairman): The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe (5)
WCC Representative: VACANT
ACC Representative: Rev Canon Katharine Poulton (2)
ACC Representative: Mr Glenn Moore (0)
Porvoo Contact Group Person: The Rev Canon Stephen Fielding (5)
An Hon Secretary of General Synod: Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (1)
Hon Records Secretary: Ms Gina Coptly (5)
Hon Secretary: Very Rev Niall Sloane (5)
The Archbishop of Dublin (5)
The Bishop of Derry (2)
Rev Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum (0)
Rev Dr Christine O'Dowd Smyth (resigned June 2025) (0)
Rev Meurig Williams (appointed June 2025) (0)
Rev Suzanne Cousins (3)
Ms Cate Turner (4)
Very Rev Abigail Sines (4)
Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien (2)
Mr Femi Atoyebi (0)
Dr Bridget Nichols (4)
Rev Dr Ryan Hawk (4)
1 vacancy

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.

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

This year's report once again details the extraordinary range of activities, conversations and initiatives overseen by the CCUD. Year after year its work might be described as the quiet cement of relationship - building, and much of what is achieved more publicly is the fruit of the expertise and resources which our Commission provides as the Church continues its pilgrim way towards that Unity which is the gift and the will of Christ.

Manifold thanks are again due to our untiring Hon Secretary, Dean Niall Sloane. Ms Gina Coptly has been a valued and committed Records Secretary, and for this we are very grateful. Much of the heavy lifting is done by the Chairs of our Working Groups. Canon Kevin O'Brien continues to lead the European Affairs Working Group...he personally is a veritable encyclopaedia concerning the many issues with which it deals, and he brings to the table his long and unique experience of ministry in the Diocese of Europe. Rev Suzanne Cousins has stepped down as Chair of the Inter - Faith Working Group, a cause to which she devoted great energy and knowledge. That Group is now being led by Very Rev Abigail Sines and she deserves our thanks and our good wishes not only for this work but for her new ministry as Dean of Clonmacnoise.

I want to make special mention to of our Anglican Affairs Working Group, which Dr Bridget Nichols continues to guide with scholarly insight and vast knowledge of global Anglicanism. A particular task of the group has been to inform the House of Bishops concerning continuing debate regarding the so- called Nairobi Cairo proposals, and to assist its members in offering a response. Many will be aware that these proposals have emerged from IASCUFO, the International Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order. They recommend something of a recalibration of the relationship between the Instruments which (not always entirely successfully) bind the Anglican Communion together. Consequent questions are raised about how one defines membership of the Communion as its foci move much more towards the Global South and tensions inevitably arise concerning - for example - the relationship between truth, culture and revelation. In all of this, at the very time when the Chair of Augustine has changed hands, people ask ...is Anglicanism today about full communion with Canterbury, or simply about a historic connection? What will be the place of future

archbishops of Canterbury in terms of gathering and presiding over the other instruments of Communion? Can there be a hierarchy of degrees of communion between churches which call themselves Anglican? These questions will dominate the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, meeting as it happens this summer in Belfast. It is the first meeting of the Council in Ireland in half a century and therefore offers a special opportunity for the Church of Ireland to showcase itself in terms of worship and hospitality. We are conscious of how much work, including locally, is going on at this time to prepare the agenda of the ACC and we trust its members will leave our shores with a sense both of our history and of our energy! And equally we trust that Nairobi Cairo, and so much else that has been harvested into this rich and comprehensive Report, will lead to some lively and insightful debate during the General Synod.

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).

ANGLICAN & ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

Membership

Dr Bridget Nicholls (Convenor), Rev Julie Bell, Mr Glenn Moore, Rev Bob Cotter, Very Rev Susan Green, Rev Canon Katharine Poulton, Rev Canon Stephen Fielding and Ms Cate Turner

During this year, the Anglican Affairs Working Group completed its discussion of the ACC-18 Resolutions, noting actions to be referred on to other Councils of the Church of Ireland.

In the second part of the year, the Group has mainly been occupied in studying the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals produced by IASCUFO at the end of 2024, in order to produce notes towards the House of Bishops' response to the Anglican Communion Office.

Some members of the Group continue to be actively involved in planning for the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Belfast in 2026.

Some have been part of delegations attending the Four Nations Faith and Order meeting in May 2025 and the Porvoo Theological Conference held in Wales in October 2025.

ANGLICAN AFFAIRS

FOUR NATIONS FAITH AND ORDER CONSULTATION

The Faith and Order Consultation will next meet in April 2027 when the Church of Ireland will be hosting.

THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (ICC: 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 102nd annual general meeting of the Irish Council of Churches took place in Centenary Methodist Church, Leeson Park, Dublin on 3 April 2025.

The following Church of Ireland delegates were in attendance: Very Rev Niall Sloane; Very Rev Kenneth Hall; Rev Canon Katharine Poulton; Rev Canon Jane Galbraith; Rev Canon Andrew McCroskrey; Rev Abigail

Sines; Rev Suzanne Cousins; Rev Philip McKinley; Rev Dr Ryan Hawk; Mrs June Butler; Ms Georgina Coptý; Dr Nicole Gallagher; Mr David Ritchie; and Mr Craig Copley Brown.

The meeting began with a presidential address from the Rt Rev Sarah Groves, who serves as both Minister of Gracehill Moravian Church, Co. Antrim, and as a Bishop in the Moravian Church. Bishop Groves spoke of the important work of the ICC, in facilitating dialogue and collaboration among the different Christian denominations on the island of Ireland. In the course of her address, she noted three key points that faced the ICC in the coming year. The first of these was “Where are we going in the next 25-50 years”; the second “How the structures of the ICC reflect the membership of each denomination”. Bishop Groves noted that she is only the second female to hold the office of President of the ICC and hoped that more women would follow in occupying this important role. The bishop also noted that the ICC were now seeking a more permanent office to continue its work, in light of the sale of 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast. Bishop Groves expressed her thanks to Dr Damian Jackson for his service to the ICC as its General Secretary from 2022 until 2024.

Once the business of approving the ICC’s minutes, annual report, and accounts, and the appointment of its Executive, was concluded, Prof Ben Tonra from the School of Politics and International Relations at UCD, provided the keynote address, “Should the Church have a voice in the Public Square?” Prof Tonra posed some difficult, yet engaging questions to delegates, namely on whose behalf does, and should the Church speak; should the Church withdraw itself from public discussions on sensitive matters due to its connections with imperialism and genocide; and how can the Church find its place amongst the complex political landscapes that exist in our society. This was followed by a very fruitful roundtable discussion, where delegates had the opportunity to sit and discuss the topic in small groups.

An enjoyable lunch was provided to delegates, providing an opportunity for socialising and fellowship. Our thanks to the catering team who provided an impressive service to those in attendance throughout the day’s business. The agenda after lunch opened with a musical ‘Psalm Jam’ led by Rev Kiran Young Wimberley and Rev Dr Karen Campbell, using a number of psalms set to original and traditional tunes, to sing “in a time of global uncertainty.”

A reflection and table discussion on ‘A Pilgrimage to Unity’ formed the basis of the AGM’s final item. This session was chaired by Rev Dr Karen Campbell, with the panel consisting of Mr Darren Shiels and Ms Lydia Hamilton from Youth Link NI, Dr James Nelson from the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, Most Senior Apostle Olusola Obube, from the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church in Ireland, and Miss Sona Andrews from the Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church in Ireland.

The meeting closed in prayer, with a renewed sense of common purpose and unity. We express our thanks to the organisers, especially Mr Mark Kernohan and his team for the smooth running of the day’s proceedings.

*Mr Craig Copley Brown
April 2025*

IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING (IICM: 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 Most Rev Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick, and Rt Rev Sarah Groves, President of the Irish Council of Churches.

The 35th Irish Inter-Church Meeting was held in Dromantine Retreat Centre, Newry in November 2025. Sixteen denominations were represented from the Irish Council of Churches alongside fellow bishops, clergy and lay leaders from the Irish Episcopal Conference. This year, the gathering reflected on the importance of 1,700 years of reciting the Nicene Creed and its importance for living faith today.

Considering the creed in a Scottish context

Rev Dr Liam Fraser, the former convener of the Theological Forum of the Church of Scotland talked about the recent decision within the Church of Scotland at its General Assembly in 2025 to incorporate the Nicene

Creed and the Apostles' Creed in a new book of confessions. These creeds will be included in the vows taken by ministers and other office holders.

This was a significant change from the sole focus on the Westminster Confession of Faith. Since 1647, this confession had been recognised as a subordinate standard but since then there has been growing ambiguity concerning what subscription means. Dr Fraser parsed out the desire within the Church to return to identifying foundational fundamental doctrines that could be wholeheartedly subscribed to.

This recent decision clarified its core identity as Catholic and Reformed. Yet, despite this intentional decision to affirm the central position of the Nicene Creed, Fraser drew a distinction between Nicene Creed and Nicene theology.

After interviewing approximately 100 leaders within his denomination, he noted that whilst 73% believed the creed was somewhat to very important to Christian unity, 88% were engaging in ecumenical activity. In analysing this difference, Dr Fraser believed it was important to draw a distinction between the creed and the theology of the creed: the latter is universal, but the former is more limited in scope tradition culture and history.

Dr Fraser commented: "If fellow denominations accept the theology of Nicaea, then some level of cooperation is not only possible because of Nicaea, but it is probably what Jesus wants. Jesus prays John 17, that all his followers would be one, so if we are not one, then the world will not only believe that Jesus was sent by the Father, but Jesus makes a close connection between unity and evangelism."

Within the inter-church group who had gathered from across Ireland, it was recognised that there were differences in how the creed was said; some used "I believe" to signify personal affirmation, others used "we believe" to highlight the communal identity and many used both. There was also the painful acknowledgment of how the introduction of the filioque clause as a later addition had caused division.

Coptic Orthodox leader shares perspective

On the second day of the conference, His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, the first Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, joined us. He gave a stirring and challenging talk on the importance of the first Nicene Council as it was a significant moment when the one holy universal apostolic Church was visible.

It was a time when there were no denominations and no fractures and it was important to remember this moment and to continue striving towards this unity. He spoke about the importance of advocating for those who were being persecuted for their religious beliefs. He commented that we may disagree on doctrine and belief but if we understand the image and likeness of God in every person, then we need to advocate for those and speak for those who are persecuted even though we disagree with them.

He spoke movingly about Christians who are still being martyred in Egypt and their resilience in continuing to meet in the same place and encourage young people towards the catechism. He also spoke of the Quiet Revival of how young 25–35-year-olds are approaching him wanting to learn about the faith and are willing to engage in over 16 months of catechism.

The impact of the 21 Coptic Christians who were martyred in Libya continues to provide a strong witness of resilience in the Christian faith. These were young ordinary men who strengthened each other in Christ in the midst of dehumanisation and violence. He noted how both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England had recognised the witness of their faith and how this provided a strong witness towards unity.

Notwithstanding, His Eminence was clear that even though there is a desire for unity there are differences that need to be acknowledged most particularly in understanding of the sacrament of communion. He talked about how he had incorporated an Anglican practice of blessing into his communion liturgy as a means of showing respect for difference but in an inclusive way.

Other topics covered throughout the two days were research from Prof Gladys Ganiel and Dr Caoimhe Ní Dhónaill on how the pandemic had affected church practice; the growing presence of youth in churches; and theological discussions on the content of the Nicene Creed.

Through both these voices as well as a strong panel of theological experts, there was hope that even though it is clear there are differences in how the creed is spoken or sung within our denominations, there continues a strong, pulsing Nicene theology that keeps drawing us together. Despite our human limitations and significant personal failings, God still urges us to partner with him in being a witness in this world.

Nicene theology keeps orienting us towards the divine and human Jesus Christ who holds all things together. The theme of the deep call to union with the triune God emanating from John 17 was a persistent theme, to be able to pray as Jesus prayed, “that they may all be one as you Father are in me and I am in you.”

The final call by Archbishop Angaelos was the imperative, coming from Cyprian of Carthage: “Unity is the garment of Christ, let us not rend it”.

*Rev Karen Campbell,
November 2025*

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI: 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.

The AGM was held on 29 September 2025, online. CTBI Moderator, Rev Graham Sparkes, welcomed attendees and opened the AGM with prayer.

A space was provided to attendees to share any news since the last AGM in 2024.

Then followed the main business of the meeting, during which Bishop Andrew Forster was reappointed as Trustee and Director of the company.

The General Secretary (Dr Nicola Brady) presented her report which mostly dealt with the Strategic Plan of CTBI. There are five strategic priorities in the plan:

- 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;
- Promoting ethical and inclusive leadership.

After a break there was a roundtable discussion on the topic ‘Striving for Unity’.

Unity is God’s gift to the church and an important part of our discerning of that gift are the conversations between different traditions and churches. These conversations can take many forms. The focus for this roundtable was on the role of theological dialogue and the impact of the resulting agreements, declarations or covenants between different churches on the ecumenical landscape and the wider society, reflecting on the learning from different contexts. The panellists were Bishop Sarah Groves from the Moravian Church, Rev Ainsley Griffiths from the Church in Wales and Rev John McPake from the Church of Scotland.

Following the presentations Rev Dr Peter Colwell chaired a Q&A session. Themes addressed included prayer, vocation and speaking from the heart. The goal of visible unity is an important dimension of our work that is not easily captured in strategic plans etc. but the fruits of these dialogues are very evident from this panel

discussion. It was noted that there are many other examples of these types of dialogues represented among AGM participants. GK shared from the experience of the Methodist-Anglican dialogue in the Irish context. This dialogue has now moved to examine the question of interchangeability of lay ministries with the impetus for this coming primarily from rural communities. In response to a question about whether there is any way CTBI and national ecumenical instruments might support this work, it was suggested this kind of exchange is helpful, allowing for solutions to be shared from one context to another. It is especially valuable to learn from what is happening on the ground. Cascading out information, reports and resources is another helpful way of sharing. Minority-majority dynamics are another area that might usefully be fully explored, particularly as secularisation contributes to a rapidly changing landscape in which many churches face similar challenges. AH highlighted how the Declarations signed in Scotland have resonated with local churches in Scotland and has prompted reflection on what it means to journey together as friends. It created a sense of the churches at national level giving support to what has long been happening on the ground in local communities.

The next AGM will be held on Monday 21st September 2026, 10 am to 1 pm in The New Town Church Edinburgh (in person).

*Dr Nicola Brady,
January 2026*

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC: 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.

There are no easy paths for the peace work of the European churches. At the conference “Towards a Christian Citizenship” at Nyborg Strand 15-17 September 2025, it became clear that the churches’ work for peace takes place in a field of tension that requires courage, dialogue and fundamental following in the service of one’s neighbour.

The conference was inspired by the theme of the Danish government's EU presidency - Security in Europe. The setting was the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which this year held its annual meeting for ecumenical secretaries of member churches and national councils of churches in Denmark. A side story in a Danish context is that CEC was founded at Nyborg Strand in 1959, and that this was commemorated and marked during the conference.

The tension between unity in Christ and national loyalty

One of the main questions of the conference was whether it is possible to stand in unity in Christ and at the same time be loyal to the nation. The background to the conference was war and increased threats of war in Europe - and that the arrangements that have stood as guarantors of security in Europe for decades are falling apart in recent years. This poses the question for the churches of what their responsibilities and tasks are in a changed Europe.

Participants from 25 nations in Europe and Canada and from all corners of the church map had registered within a short time. The organizers KEK, the Council of Danish Churches and the Inter-Church Council of the Danish Church see this as an expression of the church people's keen awareness that valuable structures and institutions are undergoing rapid and disturbing change.

Current peace work in a field of tension

The conference's panel debates and presentations with leading church people, researchers and church EU lobbyists ranged from a critical look back at the historical peace work of CEC and the churches to insight into current efforts for church peace work, internally in the churches, in church organisations and in political lobbying in Brussels.

The topics were many; from the responsibility of the churches to contribute to peace in Europe to positions on the EU, NATO, the arms industry, nationalism and armament. The same topics were repeated in the informal conversations outside the program. Many indicated that the informal conversations are important for building and maintaining relationships across denominations and nations.

The overarching question of what the responsibilities, roles and obligations of Christians are in a changing Europe was an exercise in talking about something that the churches have not needed to talk about for decades until now. And the framework is a field of tension: On the one hand, the churches want to follow Christ as peacemakers. On the other hand, a country like Ukraine now stands in need of concrete help in the form of weapons for defence and to defeat the enemy.

The critical historical retrospective

Professor Katharina Kunter, University of Helsinki, has researched the history of KEK and gave a look back at the time when KEK was founded in 1959 against the backdrop of the Cold War. KEK wanted to unite the Eastern and Western churches in one community in Christ.

- KEK must ask itself how well it succeeded - or how much influence subversive activity from the Eastern Bloc had on KEK. Eastern European dissidents say that they did not get the support they needed from KEK because it wanted to maintain dialogue with the Soviets at all costs, she said.

This led to discussions in the chamber about self-examination, possible apology, and attention to not repeating the omissions of the past today.

- Europe stands at a turning point in 2025. The Helsinki Agreement from 1975 is crumbling and after years of diplomatic success, we are in danger of losing it all. Russia is not only attacking peace and freedom in Ukraine, but throughout Europe. For Christians, the situation requires us to take a position on our role in relation to peace and freedom understood as security, the rule of law and democracy, said Katharina Kunter.

Can't survive without being European

The Ukrainian PhD and director of Dialogue in Action in Ukraine, Dr Tetiana Kalenychenko, rejected that the churches in Ukraine can stand both in unity in Christ and in loyalty to the nation, as in certain parts of the church in Ukraine there is nationalism and Russian sympathies.

"Dialogues across Ukrainian churches are welcome, but it is difficult to talk about unity. For us, reconciliation is more important than unity in Christ," she said.

Her compatriot HE Metropolitan Yevstratiy, Deputy Head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, debated with bishops from two other EU candidate countries, Armenia and Georgia, about citizenship, war and peace in Europe.

- Russia is using the churches as weapons and wants to steal our history with a narrative that Russia is the right Christian power in Ukraine. We only have Europe to turn to in the current situation. We cannot survive without being European. Our belonging to Europe is a defence of Ukraine and of the hope for freedom, he said.

To emphasize the seriousness, he recalled that shortly after the full-scale invasion, Putin spoke of the Final Solution in relation to Ukrainian identity, and that Ukraine is a false state invented by the former Austria-Hungary.

HE Metropolitan Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia, warned that wolves are waiting at Europe's borders. "We Georgians know how ferocious they are," he said.

- The wolves are the geopolitical threat facing Eastern European states and Armenians, Georgians and Ukrainians are turning to Europe together for an alternative, said HE Metropolitan Yevstratiy.

Discord can be overcome

Rev Frank-Dieter Fischbach, Secretary General of CEC, emphasized at the end of the conference that the churches of Europe must talk about self-defence, which is a right and duty of nations.

-But what does this mean for the churches? We must continue the dialogue on that. In relation to the EU candidate countries Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, we must stand up for our values; for the rule of law in solidarity with the victims of violence, he said.

At the same time, he reminded that history after World War II shows that divisions can be overcome. As a German, Rev Fischbach pointed to the good neighbourliness and mutual trust that has grown between Germany and France after the war.

The next CEC Assembly is due to be held in 2028.

*CEC Communique
October 2025*

Report on the CEC Conference

Resisting Empire, Promoting Peace – Churches confront the ‘Russian world’ ideology

1st – 3rd December 2025

organised by CEC in collaboration with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church of Finland.

The ‘Russian World’ (Russkii mir) is the concept of a divinely privileged civilization that transcends (current) political borders. It is a cultural, spiritual, and geopolitical space: ‘Holy Rus’ centred on Moscow, the ‘Third Rome’. This worldview has morphed into a political programme, characterized by imperial ideology and militarism. Especially concerning is the complicity of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

Drawing on a dualistic worldview, ‘Russian World’ ideology portrays the West—with its emphasis on human rights, democracy, liberalism, gender equality and individual autonomy—as an evil to be resisted in the so-called ‘metaphysical battle’ for the ‘traditional values’ that Russia is allegedly defending.

ROC continues to provide quasi-theological and institutional support for this ideology, and the invasion of Ukraine, claiming divine sanction.

On ‘Canonical Territory’

The voices of the Orthodox churches were especially illuminating during the conference.

Within Orthodoxy, an important ecclesiological concept is ‘canonical territory’. Autonomous national or regional churches have authority in a defined territory. For example, if a Greek Orthodox Christian emigrates to Finland, they (are supposed to) recognize the Finnish Orthodox Church as the sole Orthodox Church in that territory, and not attempt to establish parallel structures such as a ‘Greek Orthodox Church in Finland’¹

ROC has disregarded this Orthodox principle of canonical territory, claiming extra-territorial authority. Subjective ‘feelings’ of ‘Russianness’ are placed above objective canonical structures and status. Any region containing Russian speakers in ex-Soviet states is deemed to belong to Ruskii Mir. Currently, Ukraine is the focus, but there is no reason why President Putin’s logic could not equally be applied to enormous swathes of Europe: the Baltics, and much of Europe that is as Central as it is Eastern.

In the analysis of multiple speakers, an influence on and tool employed by President Putin is National Romanticism. This is most often an artistic representation of a much rose-tinted past, an idyll that evokes false

¹ Brief discussion was had about the situation in the Anglican Communion: autonomous national churches like the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church in relation to the presence of the Diocese in Europe.

memory, nostalgia for what we think we once had, ‘simpler times’, ‘poor but happy’, better times that have been destroyed by some unspoken force that the artist implicitly blames.

A military slogan is ‘God is with us’, a perversion of the name Immanuel. ROC claims that wherever an Orthodox believer looks to Moscow, regardless of geography, it is the divinely appointed responsibility of Russia to protect and defend that believer. This includes military action, as is the case in Ukraine. For this reason, according to ‘Russian world’ ideology, events in Ukraine are not seen as a war against a foreign state but rather a ‘special military operation’ within the Russian orbit.

The various Orthodox Churches in Europe, other than ROC, have been working theologically and legally on this issue of territory and authority. The relationship between church and state requires theological analysis in a contemporary European context, not only in former Soviet states but across Europe.

On Dualism

The war in Ukraine is projected as a cosmic spiritual war. To oppose the war is therefore seen as opposition to God and his appointed people responsible for safeguarding the world against liberal politico-spiritual forces.

Eschatological and especially apocalyptic language is being used in Russia to paint a dualist picture of world history. That Russia is ‘on the right side’ is unquestioned as authoritative church teaching. Being on God’s side is allegedly down to one’s pertaining to the Russian world or supporting it.

The church requires preachers and hermeneuts to correct this distortion and abuse of Christian scriptures and doctrine.

On Imperialism

In the current European context, there is a need for theological work on post-colonialism, legacies of empire, and perceived national exceptionalisms. Care must be taken in our use of biblical language, such as building the ‘Kingdom of God’ and ‘going into all the world’, lest these be co-opted with pernicious motives. We noted that, even on the most sanguine reading, ‘empire’ in the Bible is ambivalent at best, is continuously relativized, and stands under God’s judgment even if in some way used as a ‘vehicle’ for his purposes. Despite the canonical status of difficult texts (ethnic-religious wars, conquest, chosen status) the people of God are never encouraged to imperial expansion: if anything, the expansion of Israel under Solomon leads to its fragility.

On Language of Sanctity and Sacrifice concerning War

Language of ‘holy war’ has replaced any concept of ‘just war’ in Russian discourse. ‘Holy war’ is preferable to a profane peace, according to this worldview. It is alarming to see weapons ‘blessed’ by clergy; to hear priests and bishops declare that sins relating to the perpetration of war crimes have been pre-emptively absolved and remitted; and to hear. Language of ‘sacrifice’ is blended with the unique sacrifice of Christ, and language of ‘sanctity’ applied to unconscionable acts.

Concerns for Spread of Ideology – In Europe, imperial ideologies are not unique to Russia. Churches must be alert to similar ideologies taking effect elsewhere. Of particular concern are reports of Russian interference overseas, and exploitation of social media to generate and spread ‘fake news’, to exacerbate extremism, nationalism and polarization, and to foment unrest and instability in European states.

Like anyone in Ireland on social media, members of the Church of Ireland are exposed to Russian World ideology and cognate ideologies in sympathy with it. This happens through unsolicited posts generated by bots to a degree that few of us are aware. It benefits the Russian regime if Europe becomes weary of the war in Ukraine, and if democratic institutions and national solidarity are destabilized.

The Statement

The statement agreed at the most recent gathering of CEC Churches Confront the ‘Russian World’ Ideology can be found at:

<https://ceceurope.org/conference-statement-shares-how-churches-can-confront-russian-world-ideology>

A Personal Note

I was very privileged to represent the Church of Ireland at this conference. I come away with a sense that we in our marginal North-West European location are geographically distant from Ukraine and Russia in some regards, and probably quite culturally distant and lacking understanding of the worldview and the heretical theological justification behind it.

Ukrainian delegates expressed their thanks to churches like ours who have welcomed refugees in various ways, and who continue to pray for that country. I was pleased to be able to share examples of this support at national Church of Ireland as well as parish level.

Ukrainians, and delegates from other states on the periphery of the so-called ‘Russian World’, are also fearful that a peace deal may be brokered that serves to appease President Putin for a time and even serves to legitimate the war he considers ‘holy’.

I come away aware that in this modern era Ruskii Mir like any other pathological ideology is not in fact a distant irrelevancy but only a click away. Closer to home, there are other groups with dangerous visions for the ‘canonical territory’, if I may appropriate the term, to which the Church of Ireland ministers. These may not share Putin’s agenda in the sphere of influence he believes to correspond to his presidency, but they may find inspiration in his use of subjectivist identity, national Romanticism and the co-option of ‘state religion’.

I note the upcoming far-right ‘carol service’ being organised in central London by Mr Tommy Robinson, a ‘Christian nationalist’ co-option of the Good News of the Incarnation. This is being billed by Unite the Kingdom as “a new Christian revival in the UK – a moment to reclaim and celebrate our heritage, culture and Christian identity”. However, I note also the Church of England’s swift and unambiguous response, and the ‘rapid response’ resources of the Joint Public Issues Team, a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. This is the kind of role, speaking the faith in the public square, that Russia and its national church censor.

In light of my attendance at the CEC conference, I encourage all of us to stand against the heresy of ‘Russian World’ ideology, to stand with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and all places experiencing its consequences, and to consider how in the Church of Ireland we deal with similar ideologies that subvert the Gospel that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ.

I wish to thank Standing Committee and CCUD for the opportunity to attend.

*Rev Chris MacBruithin
December 2025*

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC: 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 WCC central committee met in Johannesburg, South Africa from 18 to 24 June 2025. The central committee, which meets every two years, is responsible for the policies and strategies to fulfil the mandate of the 11th Assembly held in 2022. The central committee was hosted by our member churches in Southern Africa together with the South African Council of Churches. It brought together over 300 members, presidents, advisors, guests, stewards and participants from around the world.

The reports, statements, and livestream recordings of prayers and plenaries are available on the WCC website. In addition to its business, the central committee discussed important issues affecting the life and witness of the churches in their ongoing pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity. With this letter, I am writing to inform member churches and ecumenical partners about some of the main outcomes of the central committee. The meeting was first and foremost a **pilgrimage encounter** with the churches in Southern Africa. It was an opportunity to experience the extraordinary legacy of the churches' courageous witness in overcoming apartheid and the continued commitment of churches everywhere to overcome racism in all its forms.

The central committee celebrated 1700 years of common Apostolic Faith professed in the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed as a strong sign of the churches' visible unity in Christ. The central committee took stock of the climate crisis and the need for churches to amplify their efforts for climate justice. It also celebrated the rich ecumenical heritage of promoting gender justice, including the 'Thursdays in Black' campaign 'for a world without rape or violence'.

I am delighted to report that the WCC fellowship is growing. In South Africa, we welcomed four **new member churches**. We are now a fellowship of 356 churches representing over 600 million Christians. After prayerful preparation, the central committee welcomed the following churches:

- Apostolic Pentecostal Church International [Liberia], a Pentecostal church with 52,000 members
- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian [Malawi], a Reformed church with 3.2 million members
- Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, a Lutheran church with 2.2 million members
- Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany, a Baptist church with 80,000 members.

The central committee also received the application of the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, an African independent church with over one million members in Nigeria, for an "interim period of participation in the work of the WCC and for interaction with the local fellowship of member churches". With this letter, I am informing the member churches with every hope that in the next two years, a consensus will develop and the central committee will complete the process in 2027.

The central committee launched an **ecumenical decade of climate justice action** in a bold and prayerful response to the growing climate emergency. The decade is an invitation for churches to deepen their engagement for climate justice, leading by example, promoting policy change, empowering resilient communities, and developing an economy of life. The decade calls for more than change, it calls for deep spiritual transformation – *metanoia* – a radical turning of hearts, minds, and practices.

Consequently, I want to encourage our member churches and ecumenical partners to remain steadfast in their work for climate justice. The churches have been at the forefront of the movement for ecological and economic justice. Our work and action for climate justice are more important than ever.

The central committee adopted a number of statements and minutes on **international concerns** for peace and justice. In response to the escalating crisis in Gaza, the central committee adopted a statement calling for an end to apartheid, occupation, and impunity in Israel and Palestine.

"We recognize a clear distinction between the Jewish people, our siblings in faith, and the acts of the Government of Israel, and we reaffirm that the WCC stands firm against any kind of racism, including antisemitism, anti-Arab racism, and islamophobia. However, the unbearable suffering inflicted on the people of Gaza, and the escalating violence and oppression in the West Bank and in Jerusalem compel the global fellowship of churches to speak with clarity, urgency, and commitment to the principles of justice under international law and ethics".

The crisis was discussed in a special hearing, in standing committees, and again in plenaries. The statement names and denounces the "system of apartheid imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people, in violation of international law and moral conscience". The statement has received support and critique, helping to embolden

the churches' deep commitment to justice and peace. With this letter, I want to encourage the churches to continue praying and working for peace and end to war, conflict, and occupation.

The central committee launched preparations for the **WCC 12th Assembly** in 2030, electing planning committees and initiating the search for a host venue. In 2027, the central committee will select the venue and allocate seats and issue invitations to nominate delegates.

I would like to encourage member churches in every region to consider hosting the next WCC assembly. The ideal venue will accommodate between 2000 and 4000 people in one location, have dedicated spaces for worship, a plenary hall for up to 1500 people, and break-out spaces for committees, workshops and fellowship. The churches offering to host the assembly should exhibit strong ecumenical cooperation. They should be able to offer logistical and financial support and ensure that both the preparations and the event are accompanied by prayer. Guidelines for hosting the assembly are attached.

The central committee meeting in Johannesburg was a significant pilgrimage encounter. Below are more highlights and outcomes. I remain grateful for the commitment of our member churches and ecumenical partners to the life and work of the WCC.

Let us together strengthen our Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation and Unity.

*Rev Dr Prof Jerry Pillay
General Secretary of WCC*

*MEISSEN (Meissen: 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 shares observer status at meetings with the other Anglican Celtic churches and is currently represented by the Church in Wales.*

The 35th meeting of the Meissen Commission was held on 16-19 October in the Hamburg Missionsakademie, a postgraduate research centre supported by the German Church and associated with the University of Hamburg. The Meissen Agreement exists primarily between the Church of England (COE) and the Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (EKD), with the three Celtic Anglican Churches holding one 'Observer' position (this runs for a five-year term and is about to be passed from Ireland to Wales). One of the questions posed to the Celtic Churches this year was whether they might wish to consider becoming full members of the Meissen process through formal adoption of the Agreement itself, and I would suggest that this is a matter which might usefully be brought before the respective provincial Commissions for Christian Unity and Dialogue.

Given the name of the venue, 'Missionsakademie', it was somewhat ironic to hear how uncomfortable the EKD feels about the word 'mission' itself. There would appear to be complex resonances for the German Church of what 'mission' has represented in the past, including an association with colonialism, and this demurring from it also involves a clear shying-away from anything that could be perceived as evangelism. By contrast, it was striking that for the English Church 'mission' is emphasised as being 'front and centre' of virtually everything that it intends to prioritise over the next number of years. The COE, for example, voiced its warm welcome of the recent Bible Society Report documenting the so-called 'Quiet Revival', and in tabling to the Commission its most recent Report of the Archbishops' Council, it named multiple missional goals such as, 'a doubling of numbers of children and young people by 2030'; '10000 new Christian communities across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital'; and the making of 'missionary disciples' living 'missional lives throughout the week'. Church responses to the ongoing situation in the Middle East generated some animated debate, with the clear indication that this continues to be a sensitive subject in Germany. Likewise, all present voiced concern about the rise of populism and right-wing extremism in their respective contexts – in Germany this is manifested through the rise of the 'Alternativ für Deutschland' political party; in Great Britain by the advance of 'Reform UK'; and in Ireland through the various groupings which now protest regularly outside centres for asylum-seekers – and there was a substantial conversation about the

proliferation of flags being erected on lampposts, with the representative of the German-speaking churches in Britain describing how these had become ‘intimidating’ for her congregants.

Not surprisingly the COE felt it necessary to inform the Commission about its process of appointment for a new Archbishop of Canterbury, with the lengthy delay in realising this explained as having allowed the timeline to remain aligned with +Justin Welby’s anticipated retirement date in January 2026 even after his much earlier resignation. The Bishop of Rochester, +Jonathan Gibbs, also spoke at length about the decision of the English bench not to proceed with either liturgical revision of marriage rites or further provision for clergy who are same sex attracted. Having taken extensive theological and legal advice, the bishops were persuaded that any such changes would have to be enacted by synodical process, and, given that this in turn would require a two-thirds majority, they foresaw both the impossibility of achieving this, and the inevitability of a full church split if that were even attempted.

This year’s Meissen meeting took as its primary theme, ‘The Church in the Public Square’, and the Commission was pleased to receive two excellent presentations from visiting speakers. Bishop Tilman Jeremias, from the Nord Landeskirche, provided a fascinating historical overview which suggested that many of the ongoing internal tensions experienced by both the EKD and broader German society derive from how Germany had to manage the coming together of East and West following the collapse of the former Communist regime. Despite the EKD’s ability to attract people to cultural events, such as concerts and community vigils, Jeremias suggested that most Germans today feel deeply distanced from religious questions, and yet, adopting some words of Wolhart Pannenberg, he insisted that ‘religion remains a universal anthropological need’. Building on this, Professor Florian Höhne, from the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg, developed a more theological perspective concerning ‘The Church in the Public Square’, noting that it warrants willingness on the part of churches to address key sociological questions and, above all, to articulate hope. ‘The Church’, he said, should act as ‘a school of public virtue’.

With regard to wider ecumenical relationships, the Commission deliberated at length over the implications for Meissen of the recently signed ‘Augsburg Agreement’ between The Episcopal Church of the USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria, itself a constituent member of the EKD. Unlike Meissen, which has yet to realise interchangeability of ministries, the Augsburg text begins from having already reached such a consensus. The Commission was conscious of how this new development presents both an opportunity and a challenge, not least insofar as it raises a fundamental question about the nature of the EKD itself – is it a single church, or is it in fact a federation of different churches? There was also appreciative mention of the work of the Council of Protestant Churches in Europe, which brings together signatories to the Leuenberg Agreement. Of note, it would appear that the COE may be considering the possibility of associate member status to this body, and this is again perhaps something which the Celtic Churches might also wish to explore.

*Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott
October 2025*

*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 Meurig Williams (Church of Ireland))*

The group met in Paris in February 2025.

Amongst issues discussed were:

- Reports from member churches;
- Plans to celebrate the 25 years of Reuilly;

- A lengthy time was given to sharing and discussion of ordination rites within member churches;
- Discussion on interchangeability and understandings of authority;
- A final session was devoted to exchanges on local projects and material;
- A visit to à la Communauté de Reuilly was greatly appreciated.

The group hopes to meet next in Canterbury in October 2026.

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 2030

PORVOO (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

Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, Church of Ireland Contact Person)

The Porvoo Communion of Churches is one of 15 Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran churches in Europe.

The communion was established in 1992 by a theological agreement entitled the Porvoo Common Statement which establishes full communion between and among these churches.

https://porvoocommunion.org/porvoo_communion/statement/the-statement-in-english/

Every year, the Porvoo Communion arranges a conference in October for the member churches around a particular theme. In 2025, in celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the Communion held its triennial theological conference in Cardiff on the theme: Theological Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Journey: Learning from the Council of Nicaea, generously hosted by the Church in Wales.

At the Opening Eucharist, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Faroe Islands signed the Porvoo Declaration and was welcomed with great joy as a new member of the Porvoo Communion. This was a significant highlight of this year's conference and was attended by the Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales alongside the participants from the Porvoo churches attending the Conference. The Bishops also hosted a special reception with invited guests from denominations and organisations involved in Welsh ecumenical life, where Welsh culture was celebrated with music from a traditional 'plygain²' service.

During the Conference, the participants worshipped together and visited several places of interest in Cardiff and experiencing some of the Welsh context. The importance of the bilingual environment was highlighted by a visit to the Senedd (parliament) where a copy of Bishop Morgan's 1588 Welsh Bible was on display, widely credited with helping to preserve the Welsh language by making Scripture accessible to Welsh speakers. The strength of diversity was underpinned by taking part in Ecumenical Vespers in the Roman Catholic Cathedral on the eve of the Feast of St John Henry Newman, where Rt Rev Dr Rowan Williams was invited to give the Reflection, and by meeting in a venue operated by the Roman Catholic Church.

Professor Catrin Haf Williams and Bishop Rowan Williams delivered the two keynote addresses entitled 'Investigating the Origins and Shape of Early Divine Christology' and 'Nicaea, the New Creation, and the Body of Christ', respectively.

² Before day-break service on Christmas morning, where members of the congregation sing Welsh carols, which also include verses on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Shorter presentations were given by various participants during the three conference and discussion sessions which examined historical and contemporary perspectives on the Council and its Creed:

- The Council of Nicaea: Inscribing the bounds of Christological Orthodoxy;
- Beyond Nicaea: The Christ of the Councils as the guarantor of Christian Unity?
- The Nicene Legacy: How does the Council of Nicaea shape our ecumenical and interreligious commitments 1700 years later?

The Nicene Creed is common to all the churches of the Porvoo Communion and therefore is a strong foundation for our unity. Across a wide-ranging set of contributions, the Conference explored the tension between the Nicene Creed as a static formulation of belief and a lived expression of faith in worship.

The annual meeting of the Porvoo Communion reaffirms our desire to work together in the mission of the Church as Lutherans and Anglicans in Europe, learning from each other as churches. This will continue in 2026, when the Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion will meet in England.

The Church of Ireland was represented in Cardiff by: Archbishop Michael Jackson, Anglican Co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group, Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, Church of Ireland Contact Person, Dr Andrew Pierce, Church of Ireland delegate.

Porvoo Work Plan 2026-2027

2026 – Primates’ Meeting Dates: 6-8 Oct. 2026 (PCG 5-8 Oct. 2026) Location: York

2027 – Thematic conference Dates: 12-14 Oct. 2027 (PCG 11-14 Oct. 2027) Location: Iceland

The Porvoo Declaration commits the churches which have signed it ‘to share a common life’ and ‘to pray for and with one another’. An important way of doing this is to pray through the year for the Porvoo churches and their Dioceses. The prayer diary for 2026 is found online at <https://porvoocommunion.org/porvoo-prayer-diary/>

*Rev Canon Stephen Fielding
October 2025*

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS WORKING-GROUP

Membership

Rev Canon Kevin O’Brien (Convenor), Prof Ben Tonra, George Woodman, Rev Canon Adrian Empey

A meeting was held in Sept 2024 at CITI in order to revisit the operation, purview, membership and ‘audience’ of the working group, given the following concerns:

- How to broaden the expertise contributing to the group’s activities?
- What is the desired focus and function of the working group?
- Whom is it serving, to whom is it reporting, what practical utility is/could be derived from its reports?
- The possibility that more focused subject reports throughout the year were seen by only a very few members of CCUD, and solely the generalised General Synod report was seen by the many.
- Had the working group therefore been producing reports that few saw, and fewer acted upon?
- Could the reporting of the working group combine shorter, more focused reports with a wider readership – in real-time?
- If the working group was to dedicate time to its work, they needed to be assured that it would result in tangible benefits to others.

The group considered the following ‘audiences’:

- Members of the General Synod involved in passing legislation
- Other committees of the General Synod involved in drafting Legislation and administering policy
- The House of Bishops

- Clergy who may require information about European issues when formulating teaching and preaching
- Members of the Church of Ireland who might wish to be informed about developments affecting their lives, businesses, farms, schools etc

The group concluded, that in order to increase access to information concerning Europe it would, for an initial two-year trial period, employ a ‘blog’ format published at: ewg.blogspot.com

- The blog is now open to all readers via this link: ewg.blogspot.com.
- As of December 2025, the blog had over 1000 posts.
- All General Synod members are invited to subscribe.
- All committee members and RCB staff are invited to subscribe.
- We hope to recruit an ‘editorial team’ of up to eight, comprising the existing members, plus an additional four to be invited for their additional expertise – to operate as a collective – all of whom can post content.
- Each of the ‘editors’ may recruit ‘occasional contributors’ on a subject-by-subject basis who would submit their content to an ‘editor’ for approval and subsequent posting.
- Posts cover the following topics and be drawn from a variety of named sources:
 - Rural affairs/EU agricultural policy
 - Legislation affecting church buildings
 - Employment issues
 - Cultural affairs
 - Social policy
 - Reaction to conflicts especially local
 - Refugee-migrant policy
 - Green issues
 - EU Parliament
 - Ukraine
 - Brexit
 - Academic papers - news of seminars/lectures
 - Conflict/security
 - European church culture and ecumenical matters
- Posts include material from:
 - The ‘editors’ own content e.g. reports on conferences/meetings attended and commentary on specific issues
 - Secondary source material from the press, TV and other media
Commission/Parliament/Council of Europe websites and bulletins
 - Original content from ‘occasional correspondents’ with particular expertise
 - Reports from the Church of Ireland CEC, Reuilly, Porvoo reps
- Feedback is invited via messaging to the blog e.g. requests for further information and/or additional topics to be included.
- Reports will be made to CCUD and General Synod as before but also posted on the ‘blog’.
- It should be noted that the EWG blog does not represent the views of the EWG (unless specifically stated), but is instead, a digest of material drawn together from various sources and standpoints to inform readers of a variety of views.

To widen access, the EWG will not publish information of a confidential or sensitive nature, so we request that members of General Synod share the EWG bulletin link with those who may be interested in developments across the European scene. It is intended to also provide a link from the CofI website, and other church websites are invited to include the link if they feel the bulletin may be of use to their readers. It should be noted that the desire of the EWG group is to be of the greatest help to the greatest number.

*Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien
December 2025*

INTER FAITH WORKING GROUP

Membership

Mr Femi Atoyebi, Rev Alistair Doyle, Mr David Reynolds, Very Rev Abigail Sines (convenor), Rev Dr Stephen Skuce (Methodist Church in Ireland), Mr George Woodman

The Interfaith Working Group (IFWG) saw a transition this year, with Rev Suzanne Cousins, who has been convenor for a number of years stepping down, and Very Rev Abigail Sines taking on the role of convenor. The IFWG wish to express their thanks to Rev Cousins for her dedicated leadership over the years and her commitment to strengthening the Church of Ireland's interfaith engagement. The IFWG also was pleased to welcome a new member, Mr George Woodman.

The IFWG meets online and reports regularly to the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue. The aims continue to be supporting the Commission in: (1), the equipping, education and encouragement of Church of Ireland people and parishes in the pursuit of positive, informed and peaceable relations with people of other faiths; and, (2), the support and enabling of the Commission in being a voice within the Church of Ireland for refugees.

2024 Dialogue of Friendship: Listening Well to Build Communities

This year was the fourth year of collaboration between the IFWG and the Sanctuary in Faith stream, part of Places of Sanctuary Ireland. Setting the stage for day's sessions, Archbishop Michael Jackson welcomed attendees and noted that the theme of 'listening well' captured the urgency to dig down into the self-understanding of communities and to focus the human curiosity on what is good. The keynote speaker was Dr Ebun Joseph, Special Rapporteur for the National Action Plan Against Racism; Module Coordinator and Lecturer in Black Studies at University College Dublin; Director of the Institute of Antiracism and Black Studies; and Founder, African Scholars Association Ireland. In her keynote address Dr Joseph took the theme 'From Fear to Friendship: Cultivating Acceptance, One Conversation at a Time' and spoke about the need to break down fear and division in society.

A series of panel sessions highlighted a range of different organisations working in the space of intercultural and interfaith relations. Mr Gideon Yutzy and Mr Kent Chadwick spoke on the activities of the Waterford Conversation Club, whose members are from different nationalities, meet regularly for conversation and food, providing opportunities for people from the locality who would not normally come into contact with each other to get together and understand each other. Pastor Hudson Kaunda and Ms Medahan Weldegabir of All Nations Ministries, Belfast, described the work of this Christian charity which supports local people, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in North Belfast. Their projects include providing household items and clothing; courses in English, life in the UK, sewing, driving theory and IT; an allotment; and providing upcycled bikes to newcomers and locals. Ed Peterson and Edwin Graham of the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum spoke about their activities in recent years which include the PeacePlus Interfaith and Belief Project, discussions around religious education issues, climate action, and peace and reconciliation. Ms Lynn Jackson of Holocaust Education Ireland spoke about her organisation's work promoting Holocaust education, awareness and remembrance, including the significant schools work which the organization undertakes.

Reflecting on the day Dr Lucy Michael of the Archbishop of Armagh's Reference Group on Racial Equality and Justice noted that shared humanity was a common theme amongst all the speakers. 'The word dialogue has perhaps been undermined by those who want to undermine other people's human rights,' she commented emphasising the power of connection and having the courage to stand with those who were on the receiving end of racism.

One of the attendees for the day shared this feedback on how the content of the sessions had impacted her: 'Words fail me many times to describe what I wish to say – however this event really uplifted me, to hear all that is going on in love in pockets around Ireland. Many are passionate about a better world where we can live together in peace, where we can learn from each other, where racism can become less and less – the work of

Sanctuary Ambassadors is so vital in schools, where young people meet – I would wish to stay motivated, to speak out just to be a light in some small way’.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Online Scriptural Reasoning (February)

Scriptural Reasoning is a method of reading, listening to and reflecting on religious texts together, for the purposes of learning about, exploring and appreciating our differences and similarities. There is no expected outcome or ‘agreement’ as such, simply an opportunity to listen and learn together. The ‘main event’ of Scriptural Reasoning is the facilitated small group discussion which follows the presentation of the three texts. The IFWG is planning a Scriptural Reasoning event during Interfaith Harmony Week (1-7 February), and potential Muslim and Jewish presenters already have been contacted. Booking link will be circulated in mid-January.

Dialogue of Friendship: Faithfully Caring for Creation (May)

The IFWG is looking ahead to another year of collaboration with Sanctuary in Faith for the Dialogue of Friendship event, to take place on 16 May at Dundrum Methodist Church in Dublin. The theme will be ‘Faithfully Caring for Creation’ and the keynote speaker will be the Revd David Coleman, Environmental Chaplain for Eco-Congregation Scotland.

There will also be panel presentations including the following:

- Dr Raja Harun MBE, Understanding ‘Al Mizan’, an Islamic perspective of stewardship of the world;
- Hilary Abrahamson, Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation;
- Dublin City Interfaith Forum ‘Safe Haven’ Initiative;
- East Belfast Mission, recently recognised as a Church of Sanctuary;
- Dr Manizha Khan, Sanctuary Ambassador and board member for Places of Sanctuary Ireland.

Interfaith Learning Pilgrimage to Cairo (October)

During the latter half of 2025, the IFWG entered into conversation with the Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) regarding the development of an interfaith programme, building on CMSI’s longstanding links with the Anglican Diocese of Egypt and its Centre of Christian-Muslim Understanding and Partnership.

The pilgrimage is planned for October 2026. Ideally, the group of 10-12 people traveling from Ireland will include participants from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds (and possibly other faiths if there is interest). In this regard it would differ significantly from other CMS Ireland teams, and the experience would be not simply of going to observe an interfaith dialogue project somewhere else, but that the entire experience of preparation and travel for the group would be an interfaith initiative. In Cairo the programme will include:

- Learning from the Diocese of Egypt’s Centre for Christian Muslim Understanding and Partnership, including participation in ‘Journey of Learning’ workshops, a journey through shared scriptures with members of the Islamic community in Cairo;
- Learning visits to the Diocesan ministries for refugees, which include educational, medical, and livelihood supports;
- Meetings with Islamic and Coptic communities and faith leaders.

The Interfaith Learning Pilgrimage application process was opened in October, and applications will close in late January 2026. After the selection process is finalised, the selected participants will be provided with a schedule of preparation and orientation sessions. Participants will be largely responsible for self-funding participation fees, however, with CCUD approval, the IFWG is pleased to note that part of its budget allocation for 2026 will be directed towards providing partial bursaries for individuals for whom the full participation cost would be prohibitive.

*Very Rev Abigail Sines,
December 2025*

Appendix 1 ~ Annual Church Meetings

The Methodist Church in Ireland Annual Conference

Report of Attendance

The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe

Along with Iris Suiter, I attended the Methodist Conference in Portadown in June - unfortunately only on the eve of the first day of the representative session and on that first day itself. However, it was possible within that timeframe to experience warm hospitality, to renew many friendships and to gain some useful insights concerning how business is done. Despite my many years of involvement with the Covenant process, I had never previously had such an experience of the nuts-and-bolts operation of the Irish Connection.

It was of course a pleasure, along with the bishop of Connor, to participate in the consecration of the incoming episcopal minister \ President Rev Alan Wardlow and to hear his inaugural discourse. The following evening, I attended (but not as a liturgical participant) the Ordination of two new presbyters and was of course struck by the remarkable similarity between the Methodist Ordinal and our own. The main differences arose when the ordinands offered eloquent testimonies, received with loud applause, concerning their journeys to that moment. Furthermore, although I should have known not to be surprised, I was somewhat overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of hymns and worship songs sung during the liturgies and indeed in the course of conference business. Three separate and lengthy songs taking the place of the Gradual hymn somewhat wearied my Anglican soul. That said, I did feel exhilarated by the rendering of the Wesleyan hymn ‘And are we yet alive’ at the opening of proceedings. And I was delighted to learn, looking ahead to next year, that the President / episcopal minister elected and designated for 2026/ 27 will be Rev Janet Unsworth of Edgehill who is such a wise and delightful colleague at the Covenant Council.

Much of the business which I witnessed was akin to what would occur at our own synods ... pioneering initiatives and meeting their costs, discussions of ethical investment and whether any of the church’s money was inadvertently financing fracking, discussion of education North and South including the affairs of Methodist College and Wesley College, even procedural wrangles of various sorts. One interesting decision peculiar to Methodism was a decision that from next year the Lay Leader like the President should hold office for a single year. A context in which I could not but admire the Methodists (although in this matter I know to compare their polity with ours is akin to the proverbial comparison of apples and oranges) relates to their dealing with the Charitable Regulatory Authorities North and South. Methodism is essentially but two charities, one on each side of the border. All the local accounts of circuits and societies are subsumed into a single consolidated and audited account for submission to the Regulator. It would appear to be a somewhat heavenly practice.

I sadly missed Saturday’s proceedings, which apparently included a measured debate concerning the tragedy of Gaza, and also consideration of the Covenant Council report. In the context of interchangeable ministry with us, Methodists have been agonising over how to handle the issue of full connection. Such connection is part of the DNA of Methodist ministry, not usually resigned or forsaken except frankly in a situation of a fall from grace. So what is to be done when a Presbyterian in good standing and full connection accepts an incumbency in the Church of Ireland? Will their continuing connection mean they remain members of the Conference and have to check in annually with the Stationing Committee? Where does this leave the authority of the bishop and is there a real danger of alternative episcopal or quasi - episcopal oversight? The solution that is emerging is not to sever connection but to acknowledge that all its requirements and implications are completely in abeyance as long as an appointment is held in the Church of Ireland. And, once a Presbyterian who has transferred their ministry from one polity to the other retires, it should be up to them to decide which polity they consider to be their essential place of belonging during their years of superannuation.

A few other points concerning their manner of conducting business appeared to me instructive:

- Time is used very efficiently. Business begins precisely at 9am and while the evenings are dominated by worshipping activity, there is no real ‘hanging around’ during a very full day.
- While the conference met in a spacious church joined to a hall where there was space to view displays and to consume complimentary tea and coffee, there was simply no attempt to provide catering. One could bring one’s own food into the hall or buy modest snacks from a horse-box style stall in the car park outside. Apart from that, culinary matters were left to oneself. On the other hand, the church does contribute to the travel costs of Conference members.
- There seemed to be little of the highly distracting neo - parliamentary walking about in the course of sessions which we witness at the synods: the C.of I. seems to regard such resort to ambulatory exercise almost as part of our ancient rights and freedoms.

All in all, one knew one was in the presence of special friends in a church which perhaps in spite of itself readily reveals its Anglican parentage. And despite many upbeat plans for mission and outreach, and its traditional commitment to a social Gospel, it is a church very conscious of its own smallness. Key people are clearly carrying out a remarkable plurality of voluntary roles. The Covenant with the Church of Ireland is perhaps valued for slightly different reasons than would be pertinent to us. It gives a sense of a wider belonging within the Reformed family, particularly in less populated areas. It provides an umbrella under which several joint initiatives can be attempted which they could not do on their own but to which they can contribute gladly and distinctively.

It was a joy to address the Conference as it opened and, being a stuffy Anglican, to offer a modest reflection just ahead of Pentecost on Cranmer’s collect for that Feast. Cranmer saw ‘right judgment in all things’ as a supreme if understated spiritual gift. It was fascinating to observe the manner in which the Conference seeks collectively to make right judgments. In a turbulent world where unexpected issues are always confronting us and where the church itself finds an agreed response difficult, the words of Wesley’s apparently eccentric opening hymn are prophetic, realistic yet determined.

*What troubles have we seen, what conflicts have we past,
Fightings without and fears within, since we assembled last!
Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love*

I left the Conference for Limerick finding myself singing the hymn which included such words of defiant realism in the car.

Michael Tuan, Limerick & Kildare
The Rt Rev MAJ Burrows
Chair

The Methodist Church in Ireland Annual Conference Report of Attendance

The Methodist Conference with the theme ‘Compelled by Love’ was held in Thomas St. Methodist Church in Portadown from the 5th – 7th June 2025. Bishop Burrows and I attended as representatives of the Church of Ireland.

Election and Installation of Rev Alan Wardlow as President of the Conference and of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

This took place on the Thursday evening the 5th June. The Church was filled to capacity for the occasion. After a brief address by the outgoing President Rev Dr John Alderdice, then the formal proceedings took place to nominate, elect and install Rev Alan Wardlow as the new President. After his installation Rev Alan

Wardlow gave his inaugural address on the theme. He used Paul as an example of someone who set out as an apostle but felt *compelled* to preach and tell others about Jesus Christ (1st Corinthians 9 v 16.) He told us how people like Gypsy Smith and John Wesley, when they put their trust in the Lord, shared the gospel with others. If all who professed faith would witness and preach then the Church would grow.

The Representative session

The whole conference was based around worship, moving in and out from work of the Governance committees to Bible study and praise. The representative session started with a Bible study, led by Eleanor Hayden, from Acts Ch 3, in which she compared the beggar sitting outside the gate of the temple to where most people are, “outside” the Church. The difference between then and now is that the community came running when Peter addressed the beggar but now, we have lost our sense of expectation.

Greetings to the conference

A number of greetings were given from guests to the conference:

- Rev Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Church in Britain and Carolyn Godfrey, Vice President in Britain, brought greetings and said that they felt inspired by the word “Compelled” and wished the Conference every blessing.
- Dr Oliver Abi Aba, His Eminence from Methodist Church Nigeria told us that there was approximately 2 million members in the Methodist church in Nigeria, where all the services were loud and members loved to dance and praise the Lord. He reminded us that the World Day of Prayer service for 6th March 2026 has been written by the women in Nigeria.
- Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe, spoke of his role as co-chair of the Covenant Council. He gave an anecdote from his school days at Wesley College when he told his friend that the only difference between the Methodist church and Church of Ireland was no Bishops in the Methodist Church. He quoted from the Collect for Pentecost that the Church was to exercise the right judgement.
- Bible society – representative from the Bible society showed a video showing the growth of the Church in Cuba and their hope to put a Bible into every person’s hand.

Resolutions of the Governance Board

The Governance Board Consists of 15 trustees and a major component of the Governance Board’s work consists of monitoring and mitigating risks to the Church. The current top identified risks are:

- Decline in Membership;
- Financial Challenges;
- Decline in number of candidates coming forward for ordained ministry;
- Divided opinions on human sexuality;
- Safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults;
- Filling voluntary positions in local churches.

These risks are addressed throughout the year in a variety of ways by individuals, teams and committees.

Speakers from some of the committees spoke about their work. We heard about the work of the Social Responsibility Committee. This was very interesting as we were told about the work with those in poverty, the effect on children, school absence due to basic hygiene products, lack of foster carers and the increased use of food banks.

We were told about the Environmental policy and how the Methodist Church formed an Environmental Action Group in 2024 to be sustainability advocates in Churches, taking care of property, reducing energy use, waste management and obtaining grants to mitigate costs. It also highlighted the damage to seabeds in the Pacific and Cook Islands because of the mining of minerals needed for car batteries. God created our environment; it is our job to take care of it.

This was followed by a bible study from Rev Dr Martyn Atkins from Cliff College, who spoke about the Pentecost from Acts ch.2 and how the Holy Spirit makes movement and used the analogy if God drops of pebble in a puddle, watch the ripples.

Returning to business, the Connexion team – the Mission team of the Church and how they support missionaries with service grants and their work with other mission partners. Every Youth and Children strategy has struggled since covid, and the team are listening to the children before they reach the planning stage.

As at any business conference, there is amendments to the resolutions, discussion follows and then the conference representatives can vote. Many of the resolutions were similar to those of C of I.

On the Friday evening there was a service of ordination for Fadzanayi Jongoro and Andrew Topley. Each candidate gave a brief account of his/her call and present experience before their ordination.

All in all, it was a very interesting experience, the interspersed worship was meaningful and the speakers on each resolution were brief and gave us an insight to the work of the Methodist Church.

Mrs Iris Sutor

The Church in Wales' Governing Body Newport September 2025

The Governing Body met for two days in the ICC Newport at a kairos moment for the Church in Wales. There was joy at the appointment of Cherry Vann over the summer, as the Archbishop of Wales, but there was also a sense of shock, pain and hurt over recent revelations in Bangor Diocese and the immediate resignation of the previous Archbishop.

They gathered prayerfully and intentionally, seeking God at this time, and the two days to the observer were characterised by humility and grace.

With only 146 delegates possibly attending, the gathering felt more intimate than General Synod in Ireland. Seating was arranged with circular tables, allowing for some group discussion and sharing during business. Provision of lunch and dinner at the Convention Centre further enhanced this feeling of collegiality. Headphones were provided for translation when speakers indicated that they would speak in Welsh.

Many of the issues, such as balancing missional funding against dwindling local finance, were familiar. However, the most marked difference came with the second morning given over to provisions for same-sex relationships. Reaching the end of a trial period of providing prayers for a same sex couple after a civil marriage, the Governing Body sought to discern whether to continue or discontinue this provision or go further with the provision of a marriage service.

While an indication would eventually be sought, no decision was being made. This was to be a listening exercise. What followed was a truly humbling and moving morning. Bishop Mary made some simple suggested guidelines. Speakers would not refer to previous speakers. There would be at least 30 seconds of silence between contributions. There would be no applause offered for any speech. Without any adversarial momentum, the morning became a safe space where people spoke their truth, and it soon became the many voices of the composite personality of the Church in Wales.

I was made most welcome and affirmed many times in our Celtic similarities. It was a privilege to be among a church intentionally and prayerfully discerning God's ways among them as they journey forward.

Very Rev Paul Draper

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND COUNCIL FOR MISSION – REPORT 2026

MEMBERSHIP (AS OF JANUARY 2026)

ATTENDANCE FIGURE FOR JUNE 2025 – JANUARY 2026

Rt Rev Ferran Glenfield (3)	House of Bishops / Kilmore
Rev Tim Wright (Hon Chair) (3)	Synod
Rev Colin McConaghie (Hon Secretary) (3)	Synod
Sarah Taylor (Hon. Treasurer) (2)	Kilmore and Elphin
Ms Emma Lynch (1)	AMS (stepped down September 2025)
Ms Jenny Smyth (2)	AMS (stepped down September 2025)
Rev Dr Paddy McGlinchey (2)	CITI
Rev Dr Laurence Graham (1)	Methodist Church
Ven Paul Mooney (2)	Cashel (stepped down November 2025)
Rev Kingsley Sutton (2)	Cork
Rev Jonathan McFarland (4)	Derry and Raphoe
Ven Andrew Orr (0)	Synod
Rev Isaac Hannah (2)	Synod
Mrs Jill Lester (3)	Connor
Mrs Hazel Speares (3)	Mothers' Union (stepped down January 2026)
David Frizelle (4)	Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe
Rev William Jeffrey (4)	Clogher
Rev Henry Blair (0)	AMS (stepped down June 2025)
Mrs Hilary McClay (3)	Bishops' Appeal
Kelley Bermingham (1)	Meath and Kildare
Mr Luke Hawkins (2)	CIYD
Rev Adam Pullen (3)	Synod
Rev Richard Balmer (2)	AMS (Joined September 2025)
Mr Alan Cousins (2)	AMS (Joined November 2025)

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 2025 to January 2026.

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 2025

There have been a number of changes to membership of the Council since General Synod 2025.

Very Rev Henry Blair

The CfM congratulates Henry on his appointment as Dean of Down and Incumbent of Down Cathedral and thanks him for his commitment to the work of the Council. Henry brought a wealth of missional experience especially through his leadership of Sharing of Ministry Overseas (SOMA)

Ven Paul Mooney

The CfM wants to thank Archdeacon Paul for his longstanding membership of the Council and we wish him God's blessings in his retirement. Paul brought to the Council a wealth of experience of the church in the Far East and broadened our understanding of the worldwide church and then 5 Marks of Mission

Ms Emma Lynch

Emma leaves the CfM but will continue her involvement with us through her role with TEAR Fund. She has served the Council faithfully and kept the needs of the poor and marginalised and the need to transform society as a key part of our thinking.

Ms Jenny Smyth

Jenny has retired from CMS Ireland and has left a big hole to fill. Consistently she has faithfully been international in advocating for mission that is both global and local. Her connections with church on this island as worldwide have kept the Council focussed on the task that is still unfinished.

Ms Hazel Speares

Hazel has represented the Mothers' Union on CfM since June 2022 giving us a valuable insight of the work of MU in Ireland and Worldwide. We thank Hazel for her time on CfM and look forward to having a new MU rep in place shortly.

Rev Richard Balmer

Richard has joined the Council as an AMS representative. As the Ireland Team leader with Crosslinks he will continue to help focus our thoughts on the church beyond these shores, church planting across the world, organising mission trips and the importance of high-quality Bible teaching, evangelism and mission.

Mr Alan Cousins

Alan joins the Council as an AMS representative. With experience in senior leadership and a passion for the Middle East and North Africa he brings energy and enthusiasm as well as his commitment to broadcasting with SAT-7.

Rev Colin McConaghie (Council Secretary)

Colin has intimated his desire to step down from his role as Council Secretary. He has been a faithful servant to the CfM bringing wisdom, enthusiasm and a servant heart. His hard work has enabled the Council to undertake several new initiatives, and he has been constant in his desire to see the church grow and engage with local culture and the worldwide church. During the last year he undertook a mission trip with Habitat for Humanity, was awarded this year's 'Voice for Shelter.'

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.

We would encourage those Dioceses that aren't currently represented to prayerfully consider nominating someone to represent them on the Council.

PODCASTS

The Council has published 5 high quality podcasts through the year and they are available on all podcast platforms as Mission Matters, the Church of Ireland Council for Mission podcast. At the start of this year the Council moved to a different hosting platform, but existing podcast can be found easily, and last year's editions are still available.

The Council seeks to hold conversations that are of interest to the church at home in both jurisdictions as well as overseas mission stories. This year the topics covered were a discussion with Mr Chris Wright of Langham Partnership about the five marks of mission, Mr Luke Hawkins of CIYD explored the faith of young people at Summer Madness, Bishop Wilson of South Sudan on his peace mission and Bishop Hassan on Sudan on proclaiming the gospel through suffering shared mission their contexts, and the Quiet Revival with the Bible Society helped understand something of what seems to be happening across these island and beyond.

GLOBAL MISSION PARTNER

In 2024 CfM started a further new initiative with our first Global Mission Partner as we welcomed Rev Arsène Mafurebe Pastor of St Marc's Parish, Nyabutusti, Gitega Diocese, Burundi.

Given the success of the project CfM decided to continue to promote global partnerships through both receiving and sending mission partners who would both bring and share ideas and experiences as well as learning from their hosts in the ever-changing world of global mission. the partnerships enable CfM to foster global church relationships across the Anglican Communion, which helps to advocate the equality and complementary nature of mission at home and throughout the world

In partnership with AMS the Council invited Rev Frank Bernardi, Rector of St George's Anglican Church in Tunis and an associate mission partner with one of its members, the Intercontinental Church Society to come to Ireland as our 2025 project partner. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstance the project was postponed until February of this year.

Rev Bernardi shepherds both an English-speaking expatriate community and a local Arab-speaking congregation, from a Muslim background. His ministry is driven by a twin passion to foster contextualised and culturally authentic expressions of worship, and to develop indigenous leaders. Before moving overseas, Frank served in urban ministry and church planting in the inner city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

He and his wife, Anne, are married with four children and have committed their lives to sharing the Gospel in North Africa. Anne leads an economic empowerment initiative, addressing one of the region most pressing needs - access to employment and job training.

CfM will present a report of Frank's time in Ireland at General Synod. The Council is grateful to AMS for their support in organising this visit, Mr Alan Cousins of SAT-7 for undertaking much of the practical arrangements and to CMSI for sharing their expertise and practical experience

2026 will see the first of our sending projects as we offer the opportunity for a recently ordained clergyperson to travel overseas to meet with and share ideas with fellow Christian communities. As we prepare this report plans are being made to send Rev Mike Buchanan, Curate Assistant Rathfarnham Parish, Dublin to Cairo in Egypt in partnership with CMS Ireland in summer of this year.

Egypt is geographically placed as a key area through which displaced people flee to Europe or Asia. It is also a safe haven for people fleeing from war in surrounding nations, presently significantly from Sudan. Christians in Cairo have, over the past three decades, been responding to newcomers in very large numbers coming to make their home in Cairo or stay there for short periods before moving on. The Anglican Church in Cairo therefore has significant experience of reaching out to and compassionately caring for refugees and migrant populations.

We believe that a Sabbatical in Cairo offers a fresh and encouraging insight into how the church can respond to the opportunities and challenges of immigration. Such a placement would include time serving with the team at Refuge Egypt, hearing the stories of the varied groups of people who benefit from the skills building programmes and food bank there. You would also visit the medical outreach units specifically designed by the Diocese to serve migrant populations, take part in the church services for different language groups, offer encouragement at the refugee schools developed by the Diocese and have the opportunity to learn from those who are responsible for the strategic development of this outreach to refugees.

The Sabbatical could also include teaching at the Nuba Mountain Bible Institute which supports clergy from Sudan, contributions to the academic life of students at the Alexandria School of Theology and learning time with the Centre for Christian Muslim Understanding.

We look forward to Rev Mike Buchanan reporting back from this project at General Synod 2027 as well as sharing his experience with the CfM and others.

GENERAL SYNOD MISSION LUNCH

After a break of a few years the Council invites everyone at Synod to the Mission Lunch during the lunch break in business of on Friday 8 May in the hotel. Mrs Hilary McClay of Bishop's Appeal as well as the Council Chair are, at the time of submission finalising the invitation to a speaker who it is hoped will engage the heart and mind as well as providing food for the stomach.

BURSARIES

The CfM continues to offer a bursary grant to support ordinands from the Theological Institute who chose to go overseas as part of their placements. In 2025 CfM took the decision to widen this bursary to include those in training for Pioneer Ministry.

In 2025 we awarded a bursary to Rev Ross Barrett, the licensed Pioneer Minister in Cashel, Ferns & Ossory. Ross is ministering in the Lismore Union of Parishes, Co. Waterford and is based in St. Anne's, Cappoquin. He is actively building new relationships, reaching out, and serving people in the local area, with the long-term hope of gathering a new worshipping community. This renewed expression of church, one that offers sustained support, nurtures faith and hope, and helps build resilience in the community. The bursary will support Ross in overseas mission in the Philippines and other places which forms a part of his training programme.

LITURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2026

MEMBERSHIP ELECTED 2025

Chair – Most Rev Michael Jackson 3/4
Vice Chair – Ven Ricky Rountree 3/4
Very Rev Nigel Dunne (Hon Secretary) 3/4
Very Rev Susan Green 4/4
Rev Alan Rufli 4/4
Ven Dr Peter Thompson 3/4
Rev Canon Peter McDowell 0/4
Rev Adrian Dorrian 3/4

Rev John McLoughlin 0/4
Very Rev Abigail Sines 3/4
Rev Julie Bell 4/4
Rev Nigel Pierpoint 3/4
Very Rev Lynda Peilow 2/4
Mrs Jacqueline Mullen 4/4
Mr John Morris 4/4

Co-opted Members:

Ven Ricky Rountree
Rev Cameron Mack 3/4

Rev Dr Michael Kennedy 2/4

Consultants:

Ms Rachael Murphy 0/4
Rev Andrew Neill 0/4
Rev Martin Steele 1/4

Church of Ireland Theological Institute Observer:

Dr Bridget Nichols (2017) 2/4

Church of Ireland Theological Institute Student Observer:

Dr Ashley Morgan (2025) 3/4

Methodist Church Observer:

Rev Ruth Patterson (2017) 3/4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the last Report the Committee has met twice online, at a one day in-person meeting and in a two-day residential setting.

The objectives for the coming year will be:

- to complete the remaining resources for children's engagement with and participation in worship both in church and at home;
- to add more prayers to the ongoing provision for the 18-35 age group, to continue circulation via social media and to create small printed 'prayer card' packs;
- to continue making available liturgical resources online and to improve access to them with the completion of the new LAC website;
- to complete a set of prayers for use in the context of the legacy of the Troubles;
- to complete a set of resources for Racial Justice Sunday;
- to engage with the now clearly identified Diocesan Liturgical Officers and to organise another series of regional 'roadshows' to update clergy and lay readers on more recent material published by the Committee;
- to keep under review the Weekday Lectionary prior to publication of the 2026/2027 Sunday and Weekday Lectionary;

- 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 further significant work on the provision of the *Journeys* resource for use with children in the home and in church in partnership with Rev Julie Bell. The first volume was launched at General Synod last year (covering from Advent Sunday through to the Day of Pentecost) and has now been circulated to incumbents in all dioceses. There have been considerable delays in finalising both the preparation materials (for online access) and the printing of the home resource on which the committee is spending more time than was originally anticipated. Work is also continuing on the provision of the second phase of material for insertion to the folders circulated last year which is to provide for Ordinary Time.

Following the publication of prayers for use by the 18-35 year old age group in late 2024, the associated *Take a Minute* prayer cards were distributed to some third level chaplains and to churches/cathedrals that are open more than one day a week. Due to high demand a second print run and distribution was needed last autumn. In an effort to make this prayer resource more accessible on the ground (and alongside individually themed Instagram prayer posts) the committee is currently working on a set of printed prayer cards tailored to specific issues and needs that may be encountered by this age group and which will be distributed in a similar fashion to the *Take a Minute* resource.

The publication of the new settings of the Canticles, developed by Ven Peter Thompson and the music sub-committee of the LAC, which had been delayed due to increases in printing costs last year, were published in late 2025 and have been distributed to incumbents in each diocese. Further copies are available from the online bookshop. Work is under way to provide online musical recordings (of basic melody lines) to support the use of this resource. Meantime, the *Singing Psalms* resource has now been uploaded to the Church of Ireland website. The committee is grateful to Ms Jacqueline Mullen for proofreading the texts and for her ongoing work on the online commentary on *Singing Psalms*.

Rev Martin Steele was co-opted as a consultant member of the committee in 2025 and continues to undertake the laborious and detailed work on the Sunday and Weekday Lectionary which continues to be available online, in printed booklet format and in the Church of Ireland Directory. It is hoped that the printed booklets and the online pdf will be available much earlier this year. The committee is aware of some ongoing technical issues with the provisions for Sundays on the Church of Ireland website and is seeking a solution with the website maintenance team.

The committee's Digital and Typesetting sub-committee continues to work on the construction of a dedicated website for the LAC and is encouraged to hear that the tendering process for the new Church of Ireland website is under way. The Hon. Secretary and Rev Alan Rufli continue to support this process via their membership of the Central Communications Board. The worship section of the current website is one of the most frequently used, therefore it is important that the new site will be able to meet the technical demands of managing a large and complex portfolio of material.

The LAC produced material for use on Racial Justice Sunday including a Service of the Word and some propers for the Eucharist which were completed at the end of 2025. A draft of further material to be tailored more to the Church of Ireland's context is to be drawn up and will then be sent for review by the Primate's Reference Group and CITI student body. Our thanks to Rev Philip McKinley for his input to this work at the residential meeting last November.

The committee began a new strand of work seeking to support liturgical provision in the context of Pioneer ministry. We were delighted to welcome Rev Rob Jones to our residential meeting last November to begin the identification of what might be needed as projects develop. Some work has begun to assess what might be the essential elements to any act of worship which may occur in these diverse contexts and what guidelines might be useful for those working on the ground.

Following a significant piece of work to identify existing Diocesan Liturgical Officers (DLOs) the committee is happy to report that there is at least one DLO functioning in each diocese and is currently organising another series of regional ‘roadshows’ to update clergy and lay readers on material published by the Committee in the last six or seven years. It is hoped to make available online some of the presentations given at these as an ongoing awareness and training resource to all who preside at worship. The current DLOs are:

Armagh:	Ven Dr Peter Thompson
Cashel, Ferns and Ossory:	Rev Arthur Barrett
Clogher:	Rev Tim Irvine
Connor:	Rev Cameron Mack
Cork, Cloyne and Ross:	Rev Canon John Ardis
Derry and Raphoe:	Rev Adrian Dorrian
Down and Dromore:	Rev Stuart Armstrong
Dublin and Glendalough:	Rev Ken Rue, Rev Alan Ruffli
Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh:	Rev Canon Edward Yendall
Meath and Kildare:	Rev Lesley Robinson
Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe:	Very Rev Dr Richard Marsh

FUTURE PLANS

Our future plans include:

- Continue working towards the provision of a dedicated LAC website while also working with the design of the new Church of Ireland website.
- Continuing to work with our Children’s Ministry Sub-committee and Rev Julie Bell on the completion of the new *Journeys* resource to support liturgical ministry with children.
- The printing and circulation of themed prayer cards for the 18-35 age group.
- Completing the uploading of further support material for the Canticles and Singing Psalms resources.
- Adapting and/creating more material for Racial Justice Sunday.
- Continuing to work with the Pioneer Ministry Leadership Team to develop guidelines and resources for use in a diversity of contexts.
- Working with the Diocesan Liturgical Officers and the organisation of regional ‘roadshows’ to further engagement with and use of more recent material.
- Working with other committees of the General Synod, supporting the production of liturgical material relating to their work.

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. It also encourages other committees of the General Synod to seek its assistance in developing liturgical material relevant to their work. The Honorary Secretary can be contacted by email at honsec.lac@gmail.com.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY REPORT 2026

Membership

House of Bishops

Rt Rev David McClay (Chair) (4/4)

General Synod – Clerical

*Ven Elizabeth Cairns (3/4)

*Very Rev Paul Draper (3/4)

** Rev Lesley Robinson (3/4)

General Synod – Lay

**Captain George Newell (4/4)

**Ms Hazel Uprichard (3/4)

**Mrs Judith Cairns (2/4)

Director of Theological Institute

Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (4/4)

Central Director of Ordinands

Rev Canon Nicola Halford (1/4)

* **Appointed at General Synod 2024**

****Appointed at General Synod 2025**

Pensions Board

Mrs Judith Peters (2/4)

The Representative Church Body

Dr John Graham (3/4)

Very Rev Nigel Crossey (4/4)

Honorary Secretaries

Rev Canon Gillian Wharton (4/4)

Standing Committee

Rev Rob Jones (3/4)

Co-opted

*Rev Emma Gibson (2/4)

*Rev Canon Michael Alastair
Graham (4/4)

*Dr Scott Brown (4/4)

Introduction

The Commission on Ministry has continued its work with a focus on supporting and equipping those engaged in ordained and lay ministry across the Church of Ireland. This year has seen the development of new initiatives aimed at clergy wellbeing, the continuation of retreats for vocational discernment and spiritual renewal, and the planning of regional gatherings to encourage church growth. In all our work, we have sought to respond faithfully to the needs of those serving in ordained and lay ministry, recognising the challenges they face and the opportunities that lie ahead. Through prayerful reflection, collaborative planning, and practical support, the Commission remains committed to nurturing the life and mission of the Church.

Advent Retreat

The annual Advent Retreat, organised by the Commission on Ministry, was held from 28th to 30th November 2025 at the Manresa Retreat Centre, Clontarf. The retreat, themed “Shall God’s wonders be known?”, led by Very Rev John Mann. The Commission had another meaningful time of reflection, prayer, and renewal. After reviewing and reflecting, the Commission decided to have a retreat for all licensed lay ministers across all dioceses in the month of October 2026. Two one day conferences will be organized in 2 venues.

Vocations Retreat

A vocation retreat was conducted on 20th–22nd February 2026 at the Manresa Retreat Centre, Clontarf. As in previous years, the retreat offered those exploring ordination in the Church of Ireland a space for discernment, prayer, and practical guidance. Rev Nicola Moy was the Speaker, with 22 people in attendance. The Commission is confident that this retreat would continue to foster a deeper understanding of vocation and provide a supportive environment for those discerning God’s call.

Clergy Retirement

The annual clergy retirement course was held on 12th and 13th November 2025 at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast. The programme included expert input on pensions and retirement planning, with clergy having the opportunity to meet one-on-one with members of the Church House Pensions Team. Special attention was given to the complexities of cross-border pensions, and the course aims to provide practical support and encouragement to those approaching or recently entering retirement. Twenty-nine clergy attended along with their spouses. The feedback from the attendees was very positive. The next retirement course will be conducted in the Republic of Ireland. The course fostered a strong sense of fellowship and support among participants, affirming the Church's commitment to those approaching or who recently entered retirement.

Clergy Support and Wellbeing

A new initiative, the Clergy Support and Wellbeing Programme (THRIVE), takes place from 27th–28th April 2026. This residential course was designed for clergy between three years post-first incumbency and ten years pre-retirement, though others may attend with episcopal recommendation. The programme will address challenges such as family pressures, ministry demands, and vocational expectations. Stress, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, financial topics, particularly housing planning were addressed. The programme was framed around the theme of “Thrive” rather than “Survive,” and it is hoped to run it as an annual event.

Growing God's Church

Following discussions at the House of Bishops, the Church Growth Conference has been reimagined as two regional one-day events under the title “Growing God's Church: Rooted in His Word, Responding to His Call.” One conference took place in the Northern Ireland and the other in the Republic of Ireland. Each began and ended with worship and included plenary sessions exploring the biblical foundations of church growth. Alongside the plenary sessions, a range of practical seminars were offered. These were designed to equip both clergy and laity for faithful and hopeful ministry today. These seminars explored nine key areas of parish life, focusing on:

1. Growth through Evangelism
2. Growth through Stewardship
3. Growth through Prayer
4. Worship and Church Music
5. Leading you your context.
6. Community Engagement
7. The Bible - Read, Mark, Learn
8. Buildings: not a burden but a resource for mission and church growth, also, practical advice on permissions from the Representative Church Body
9. Communication: in the church and community.

The Commission is committed to supporting parish-level growth and mission through these gatherings.

Future Planning: Archdeacon's Supporting Programme

The Commission on Ministry has taken the responsibility for convening Archdeacons annually for a day focused on professional development and peer support, similar to support offered to other ministry groups.

Conclusion

The Commission on Ministry has focused this past year on developing and delivering residential gatherings that support clergy and those exploring vocation. The introduction of the Clergy Support and Wellbeing Programme marks a significant step in addressing the daily challenges faced by clergy in ministry. At the same time, the Commission continues to nurture vocations, encourage lay ministries, support clergy in retirement, and contribute to the wider mission of the Church through initiatives like the Church Growth Conferences. Recognising different faces of ministries, we remain committed to

equipping all clergy and those involved in lay ministries to serve with confidence, compassion, and vision in the transforming power of the Gospel.

CHURCH OF IRELAND MARRIAGE COUNCIL

REPORT 2026

MEMBERSHIP

Appointed by the House of Bishops

Member of the House of Bishops: Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson (Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory)

Elected by General Synod

Rev Carlton Baxter (Chair) 2/5
Rev Billy Burke 5/5
Mrs Kay Clarke 3/5
Ms Heather James 4/5
Rev Ian Linton (Co-Chair) 5/5
Rev Dr Leonard Madden 4/5
Very Rev Diane Matchett (Sept 2025) 4/4
Mr Daniel McDonald (Nov 2025) 2/3
Ms Esther Simpson 4/5
Dr Catherine Smith (Sept 2025) 4/4

Mothers' Union Representative

Mrs Patsy Devoy (Resigned March 2026) 5/5
Mrs Clare Stewart (March 2026) 1/1

In Attendance

Ms Aisling Sheridan (Administrative Secretary)

New Initiatives

2025 has been a very busy year for the Marriage Council, with four new members joining, and several very successful events.

Webinar – On 21st October, the next in the Council's series of webinars was facilitated by Rev Canon Judi McGaffin. The topic was Blended Families, and a lively discussion was generated, which we hope is just the start of a new path for the Council to explore.

Vision Day – The Council members met for a full day meeting on 4th November in CITI, to assess what is working well and plan for the coming year. Our facilitator was Ms Dianne Morris, and it was a truly inspiring and energizing day. It is planned to hold this day every second year.

2026 looks to be just as busy, starting with a seven-week online Marriage Enrichment Course run in conjunction with Alpha Ireland.. It is also hoped that the Council will also run an annual Marriage Preparation Course online that will be open to all.

Marriage Preparation & Counselling

After many years of receipt of TUSLA funding, in 2024 the Council took a decision to discontinue applying for this funding. Marriage preparation and counselling services are now being paid from an increased allocation of central church funds. The Council continues to offer six free counselling sessions per couple while funds last. Clergy are encouraged to contact Ms Aisling Sheridan, Synod Administrator on aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org for further information.

Most counsellors have been making their services available online since the Covid-19 pandemic. Members of the Marriage Council meet regularly online with the panel of counsellors to discuss any issues that arise in how counselling services are provided. 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 Heather James (Southeast)
- Ms Sylvia Helen (Cork)
- Ms Kristina Silovs (Monaghan)
- Mr Shawn Jamieson (Southwest)
- Ms Lynne Heber (Belfast)
- 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 information leaflet are available at the Synod Reception desk, from Church House Dublin and from aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org.

Future Plans

Plans for 2026 include holding further online seminars of one hour each on the following topics:

- Retirement – learning to spend more time together;
- Divorce/separation – supporting through the journey.

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.

New Members

The Marriage Council has welcomed four new members in 2025:

Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson (Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory)
Very Rev Diane Matchett
Dr Catherine Smith
Mr Daniel McDonald

You are all warmly welcome and we look forward to working with you over the coming year.

PIONEER MINISTRY COUNCIL - REPORT 2026

Membership

Rt Rev David McClay (Chair)
Mrs Hilda Connolly
Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott
Rev Captain Isaac Hanna
Mr Joe Kelly
Mr Robert Neill (resigned as RB member, continuing as co-opted member)
Ms Stella Obe (resigned)
Mr Alan Williamson
Mr Henry Algeo
Mr Ian Horner
Mrs Rosemary Brown

In attendance – Pioneer Ministry Leadership Team

Rev Robert Jones – National Director
Ven Barry Forde – Operations Lead
Miss Abby Garner – Administration and PA
(Rev Canon Phil Potter – Consultant and Lead Accompanier -not in attendance)

Introduction

Pioneer Ministry continues to grow under the Terms of Reference and Development Plan agreed in 2022 and since formal launch in February 2023. With new pioneers coming forward for training each year, parishes and dioceses developing pioneer projects, diocesan hubs and advocates developing ways of contextualizing pioneer ministry in local contexts, we are excited about what God has been doing and look forward to all that He is leading us into. We are grateful for the opportunity to address how best to safeguard, nurture, grow and adapt to that which is new and about which we are still learning, as well as issues pertaining to medium and longer-term sustainability, scalability and leadership. During 2026 the Pioneer Leadership Team (PLT) will be reviewing the journey so far with a view to bringing forward strategic plans and proposals to enable pioneer ministry to continue to grow and flourish.

Through the development and planning phase in 2022, the formal launch and appointment of Pioneer Ministry, the PLT, and the Pioneer Ministry Council (PMC) in 2023 and the subsequent work of growing Pioneer Ministry, we have been working to five core objectives:

1. Establishing and embedding governance and leadership structures.
2. Integration of pioneer into culture and structures of the church so that it is recognised, resourced and funded.
3. Create and develop Pioneer Ministry Hubs in every diocese.
4. Identify, train, deploy and support volunteer and employed pioneers.
5. Establish and support new pioneer communities and churches.

This report will summarise the progress in each of these areas alongside making observations on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

1. Governance and Leadership

The PMC and the PLT form the core of the ministry's governance structure. The Leadership Team — comprised of Rev Rob Jones and Ven Barry Forde, supported by Miss Abby Garner and consultant Rev Canon Phil Potter—reports to the Council, Representative Body, and the House of Bishops. The Council wishes to express its gratitude to Mrs Ingrid Brennan for her tenure on the Leadership Team, and to welcome Abby who has taken on this mantle.

The Council has overseen the cycles of pioneer selection, deployment, and training in both 2024 and 2025, and will have completed this task for 2026 applications by the time Synod meets. The Council continues to observe the need for adaptation in accommodating a wide range of needs among applicants. These included both new full-time pioneers and existing volunteers seeking training support.

Changes in Council membership are also noted: the Council expresses thanks to Mr Robert Neill who has served on the Council as the RB appointee and are delighted that he will continue to serve as a co-opted member. Further, we are thankful to Mrs Stella Obe for her contribution to the work of the PMC. We welcome Mr Henry Algeo, Mrs Rosemary Brown, and Rev Ian Horner as new members.

The Council wishes to express its gratitude to the parish of Holy Trinity Rathmines, Dublin, and the Diocese of Connor, for the secondments of Rev Rob Jones and Ven Barry Forde into the Leadership Team. In particular, Council is indebted to the parish of Holy Trinity and its Select Vestry in enabling much of the daily administration of the leadership team to take effect. Emerging out of, and being connected to, a local community of faith that has grown within a historic parish as a new congregation and expression of church, is a constant witness to how pioneer ministry might serve the whole Church of Ireland, ancient and new. We recognise the blessing of having a leadership team rooted in context, both in Dublin and Belfast, and seek to grow this across the Island. We are also, however, mindful of not presuming too much upon a single parish to facilitate the administration of pioneer ministry and recognise the need to explore a structure for leadership and operations that can run finances, perhaps employ new staff, and be shaped to fit a leadership team beyond the current secondments. This exploration will form part of our internal review in 2026.

The leadership team wishes to express its appreciation for the support of the staff at the RB for their guidance and assistance, and further to the House of Bishops for continuing to engage with pioneer ministry and help shape its future.

2. Diocesan Pioneer Ministry Hubs

Pioneer Ministry Hubs, or teams, are groups of people within each diocese who will work to advocate, champion and support pioneer ministry in their own setting. It is vital that pioneer ministry is contextualized and shaped to fit our diverse contexts. To date 14 Hubs have been established (see map below) at different stages of development across the Island. Each diocese is supported by a Pioneer Ministry Advocate who serves as the primary liaison for pioneering efforts. Throughout the year the leadership team engages with hubs and advocates across the island, and in June we met at CITI for a time of update, sharing, envisioning, and encouragement.

In November 2025 we hosted our second National Gathering in Mullingar. The first of two days was a time for the advocates to gather, building on a similar time set aside in 2024. It was a blessing and encouragement to listen to how progress has been, and is being, made in each hub and diocese. This time also provides an opportunity for advocates to share ideas with one another.

On day two we were joined by 132 people from across the whole church – clergy, lay, bishops, representatives from Standing Committee and the RB. We heard from our Pioneer Ministers, had time for discussion around tables, listened to presentations by the leadership team and were led throughout by the wisdom and insights of our keynote speaker, Rev Dr Michael Moynagh. With attendees from all 4 corners of the island, Michael provided great encouragement and practical ideas of how we might reach those with little or no connection to church. Michael drew on material from his ‘Godsend’ book, a resource that is being utilised by weekly online gatherings throughout Lent 2026, facilitated by the leadership team, which attendees signed up from across the Church of Ireland

Council is delighted to report that Dr Joanne Miller, Derry and Raphoe, will be providing additional support one day per week as a member of the PLT to promote the work each Pioneer Advocate and across all the Pioneer Hubs.

3. Identify, Train, Deploy and Support Volunteer and Employed Pioneers

2024 and 2025 marked a significant operational milestone: the Church of Ireland's first and second intakes of pioneers-in-training. In total, 14 new licensed pioneers have begun their training in September 2024 and 2025 through a new tailored course delivered in partnership with the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and Church Army. New licensing services have been developed with Diocesan Bishops, reflecting the local character and context of each ministry. This early success reflects an encouraging appetite for pioneering across a range of settings. We are currently working with the Liturgical Advisory Committee on further developing the licensing services and also on other Pioneer Ministry related liturgical ideas Through Hubs and Advocates, with the introduction of Godsend, and the availability of other resources including those developed by Church Army. It is our hope to see pioneer permeate right down to local parish level, as interested volunteers and congregations engage with reaching those with little or no connection to church.

4. Establish and support new pioneer communities and churches

Closely related to the identification and deployment of new Pioneers are the ministries they will be deployed into. The newly deployed pioneers have been placed in a diverse array of innovative contexts. Projects receiving full funding from the Representative Body include:

Diocese	Ministry Type	Pioneer and starting year
Meath & Kildare	Pilgrimage and Spiritual tourism	Rev Philip McKinley - 2025
Connor	Church Plant	Rev Peter Meenagh - 2024
	Pioneer Nursing and wellbeing	Mrs Naomi Jennings 2025
	Parish network ecclesial community	Mr Jonny Diamond - 2025
Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe	Pilgrimage and Spiritual tourism	Mr Valerie Raitt - 2024
D&D	Parish Renewal Project	Mrs Lorraine / Mr Nevin Anderson, 2024
	Church Plant	Miss Natalie Trainor - 2024
Dublin & Glendalough	New Pioneer Parish Congregation	Mr Shane McGuire - 2024
	New Pioneer Parish Congregation	Mr Aaron Halliwell 2025

In addition, training-only support is provided to four Pioneer Ministers:

Diocese	Ministry Type	Pioneer
C, F, O	Pioneer Congregation & Cathedral Partnership	Mr Ross Barrett - 2024
C, C, R	Carraig Centre Pioneer Project	Ms Louise Hockey - 2024
D & D	Suitcase Project immigrants / new communities	Mr Tim Burns - 2024
	Titanic Quarter Outreach	Mr Andrew McCaw -2025

These projects reflect the diversity of the pioneer vision: from urban mission centres to rural pilgrimage-based communities, and from refugee outreach to revitalising traditional parishes. Videos and stories of each pioneer and their ministry are now available online, helping to promote awareness and inspire others to consider pioneering in their own contexts. As stated above, it is hoped that locally led, volunteer-driven pioneer initiatives will emerge through the diocesan hubs, extending the reach of Pioneer Ministry well beyond those receiving central support.

We recognise, and welcome, the challenges and opportunities presented by the formation of new communities – liturgical, homiletical, sacramental. We are greatly encouraged by our pioneers who value the need for all of these and who seek to grow communities through worship, word and sacrament. This a sign of seeking to grow deeper, of valuing the means of grace the Lord has provided in growing His church. Through wisdom and engagement within the local parishes and dioceses that are bringing forward pioneer ministry proposals, we are seeking to find ways that honour our valued customs and practices and reimagining how these might best serve reaching those with little or no connection to our customs and practices.

2026 proposals

At the time of preparation of this report the Pioneer Ministry Leadership Team and Council are working on 8 applications for Pioneer Ministry Projects and Pioneers for 2026. We are delighted that there is very strong interest in bringing forward new applications, including from within new dioceses that do not have a funded pioneer deployed within them. see map below)

For information the grant available, payable over 5 years, for ministries commencing in 2025 (with the expectation that applicants will provide the additional funding required to support a full-time pioneer in his or her ministry) is €122,0041 / £106,090 with a further allowance towards housing and expenses of €19,150 / £16,278(payable over 5 years).

5. Integration of Pioneer Ministry into the culture and structures of the Church of Ireland

Since its formal launch in February 2023, Pioneer Ministry has progressed from concept to action:

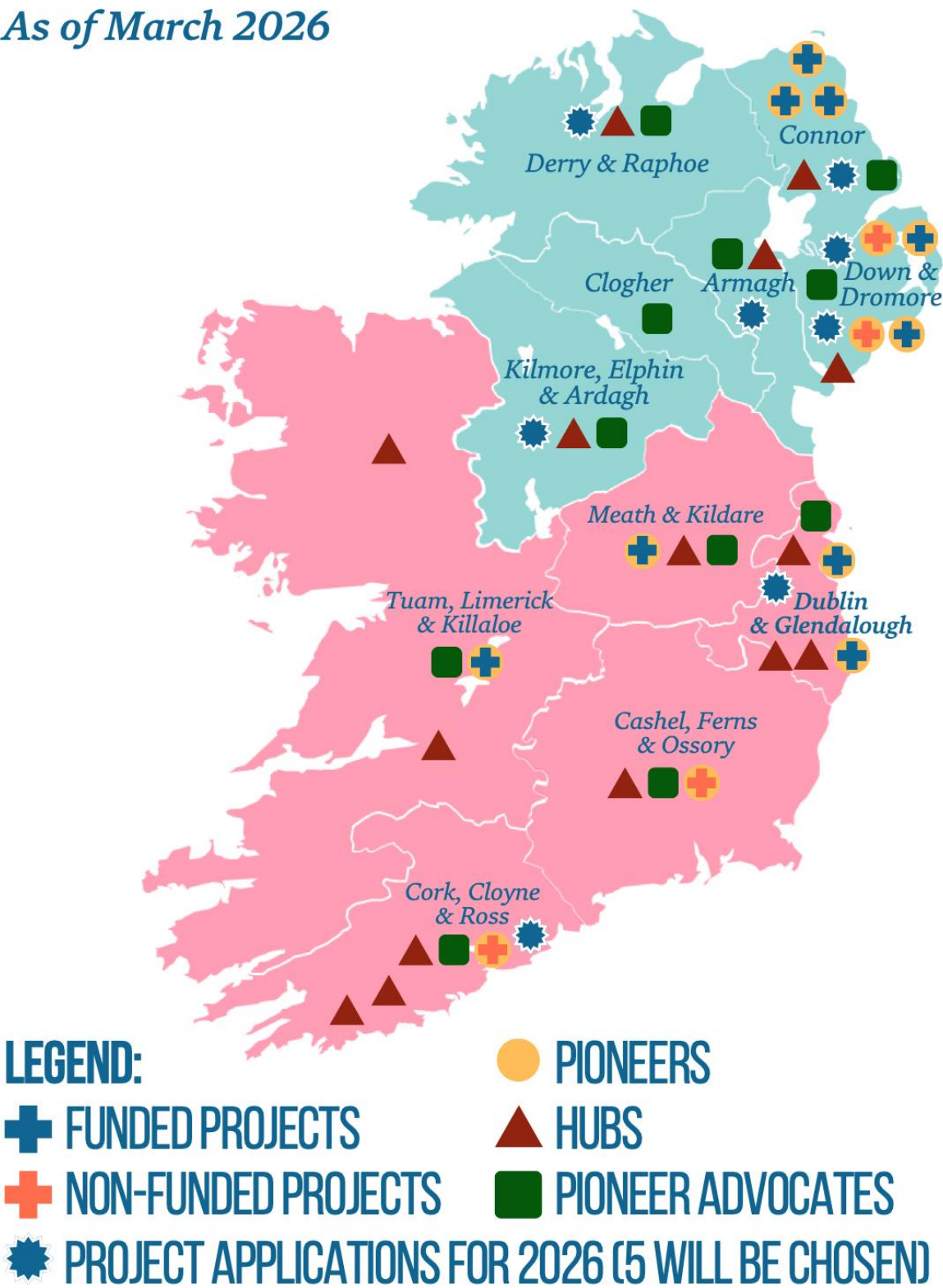
- Endorsed by the House of Bishops;
- Funded by the Representative Body;
- Governed by the General Synod - established Council;
- Supported by trained diocesan Advocates and Hubs;
- Integrated into theological education through a bespoke course;
- Supporting 9 new funded ministries and a further 4 in funded pioneer training.

This reflects not only strong institutional support but a growing recognition across the Church of the need for missional innovation.

Below is a map highlighting progress to date of Pioneer Ministry across the island.

PIONEER MINISTRY PROGRESS

As of March 2026



Summary

This iteration of Pioneer Ministry is still in its early stages, but it is already proving to be a promising and essential initiative for the future of the Church of Ireland. It is helping to build bridges with those previously out of reach, while also sparking energy and creativity within existing church structures.

With the continued partnership of bishops, dioceses, the Representative Body and theological educators, this movement offers a way forward for mission in an increasingly post-Christian Ireland. Members of the General Synod are warmly encouraged to:

- **Pray** for the pioneers, advocates, and hubs;
- **Promote** pioneer culture within their dioceses;
- **Engage** with the Pioneer Ministry Team for training and development opportunities.

The internal review in 2026 will be important in shaping our next steps; leadership, finances, training, Hubs, Advocates, and more. The Council and leadership team are grateful to all those working in step with us. We express our gratitude to the House of Bishops, Representative Body, General Synod and Standing Committee, the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and Church Army, along with our hopes and prayers for the Pioneers, Diocesan Advocates and Hubs. This is an ongoing journey of learning and discovery as, working together, we seek to help the whole church to reach those with little or no connection to church.

To pick up a guidebook, sign up to our newsletter, or to find out more, please go to our website, www.pioneerministry.org along with visiting the Pioneer Ministry stand at General Synod.