



*Orthodox Church of The
Nativity of the Mother of God*

*Archdiocese of Thyateira in the
Ecumenical Patriarchate*

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1082272

Black Country Orthodox Trust, in pursuit of its aim to advance the Orthodox Christian faith, operates the Orthodox parish at Palfrey in Walsall in the West Midlands, under the jurisdiction of the Greek Archdiocese of Thyateira Great Britain and Ireland, to serve the Orthodox faithful of whatever nationality who live in the Black Country and local areas, and to be an Orthodox presence in the whole community.

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Report of the Trustees	1-6
Acknowledgements	6
Legal and Administrative Information	7
Report of the Independent Examiner	8
Receipts and Payment Account	9
Statement of Assets and Liabilities	10
Notes to the Accounts	11-12

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

The Charity Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2022. The financial statements comply with both the Charity's Constitution and the Charities Act 2011.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Charity are the advancement of the Orthodox Christian faith as contained in Holy Scripture, as practised in the life of the Church, as confirmed by the ecumenical and local councils and as interpreted, preserved and taught by the Great Church of Christ, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

To carry out these objects, the Charity runs the Orthodox parish of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Palfrey, Walsall, and works for the Orthodox Church in the wider community and for an active part in the whole local community. Within the structures of the Orthodox Church, the parish is in the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Thyateira, Great Britain and Ireland, by whom it is currently charged to conduct the services and other matters primarily in English, so as to be accessible to Orthodox of all backgrounds and to enquirers.

Public Benefit

The trustees continue to give regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit (Charities and Public Benefit) in relation to the charitable purpose of the charity. In the opinion of the trustees, the objectives of the charity as detailed above fall within the remit of 'for public benefit'.

The purpose of BCOT is to run the affairs of the Orthodox parish of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Walsall, in the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It owns the church building and the former church house next door in Dale Street, and under the Archdiocese supports the clergy and the pastoral and liturgical life of the parish. The Trustees have the first responsibility for these matters. Day-to-day practical affairs are dealt with by the Parish Committee which reports to the Trustees. The clergy take care of the pastoral and liturgical needs of the parish.

The Trustees held seven meetings in this period, four of them being virtually. The primary focus of these meeting was on returning the church to 'the new normal' following the Covid pandemic; the further development of the Church House and the ongoing need to find a successor for Fr. John to enable him to fully retire.

The trustee board had the following changes in 2022: Maria Tsilika was removed from the trustee board in line with the BCOT Constitution at the trustee meeting on the 20.10.2022, following repeated absence (more than 3 times) from meetings without an apology and Georgina Nankivell stepped down from her role as secretary of BCOT in December 2022 and retired from all her trust responsibilities. At the end of December 2022 Mihaels Ispas also resigned from her role as treasurer, Brandon Scott-Omenka & Florina Clewer from their roles as trustees and Anne Perks from her role as chair. Mihaela, Brandon, Florina and Anne remained members of the trust and from January 2023 assumed the following roles: Mihaela – Trustee, Brandon – Chair, Florina – Secretary and Anne – Treasurer.

Clergy The priest in charge was Father John Nankivell, who has served the parish since it was founded in 2000. Father Emilian Bratu, the assistant priest, continued serving in our church on Sundays until the beginning of June, after which the Archdiocese sent him to serve another

parish in Leeds. He continued to do baptisms in Walsall on Saturdays until autumn. During Fr. John's absence due to his operation from late November until the end of the year, the Sunday services were performed by a rota of cover priests.

Church life. The main services are in English but the community comprises many ethnicities. Following the easing of the Covid restrictions the number of parishioners attending the services increased to similar numbers as before the pandemic. During the course of the year, the parish kept contact both informally and liturgically with the local Orthodox communities of all jurisdictions. At the beginning of Lent, we were grateful to welcome the new bishop for the Midlands - Bishop Maximos - in our parish for the first time. Easter was held in the normal way, at midnight, for the first time since 2019.

The Pandemic In the early part of the year The Trustees and the Parish Committee gave much consideration and managed the lifting of the restrictions of the Covid 19 pandemic in a measured way. This was fully achieved by Easter.

The Parish Committee organised housekeeping and managed the stewardship of the church until the Covid restrictions were lifted and also on Easter night. It arranged hospitality for visitors and gifts for the children on St Nicholas's Day, as well as a to stock the stall offering books, icons and other church items for sale in aid of its charities. The Parish Committee has also reinstated refreshments after the Sunday services from Easter onwards.

Following the start of the crisis in Ukraine in February 2022, a collection was organised for a charity in Romania which has existed since 2016 to support Ukrainian refugee orphans.

Community life The church hall was let to local people throughout the year. The parish supported the Nash Dom Community Hub by announcing its collections for Ukraine and their need for volunteers, including offering the hall for fundraising events.

Charity Property The Charity owns the church building in Sun Street Walsall and the church house (the former vicarage) at 63 Dale Street Walsall. It acquired the freeholds of both church and church house and their grounds from the Church of England in 2005.

Under the freehold purchase of the church house, when development takes place, the Trust is required to pay the Diocese of Lichfield a set proportion of the agreed increase in value conferred by the development. An overage payment of £6,000 was paid to the Diocese of Lichfield in late 2022, which was the agreed figure calculated from the new value of the property. The amount paid released BCOT from any further financial obligations to the Diocese of Lichfield in reference to this development of the church house

The church was valued for insurance at £3,583,314 from December 2021 to December 2022 and at £4,080,760 from December 2022 to December 2023; its contents were valued at £35,466 approximately and £40,746 for those dates. The church house was valued for insurance at £520,761 and £598,471 respectively for those dates. Loss of rent from the Church House was valued for insurance from December 2022 at £66,706.

Work on the property

Church With the apse work complete the focus has been on finalising the internal lighting set-up and installing new lights where required. A new rope for the church bell has also been installed.

Church House During 2022 and to date, the six flats in the church house have been occupied by tenants, providing BCOT with stable income. Flats 1, 3, 5 & 6 had uninterrupted tenancies during 2022; flat 2 was let from March onwards and flat 4 had a change of tenants in May. The Trustees, after careful consideration, decided that the refurbishment of Flat 7 in the church house, which was suspended during the main operation, should continue, and work commenced in May 2022. The works in Flat 7 were completed by the end of the same year.

Finance

During this period income received was £117,717 (£123,261 in 2021), payments were £145,523 (£95,489 in 2021) – a considerable increase in payments due to the development of Flat 7 in the church house. The closing balance at the end of this financial period was £12,347 compared to £40,153 at the end of the previous period.

The year-end accounts show an outstanding liability of £41,000 due to the private loans (£65,000 in total) taken in 2020, respectively 2021 to enable BCOT to finish the development of the church house. Regular monthly payments to clear this pending debt have been set-up since the beginning of 2022.

The six flats in in the church house provided continuous income throughout the year.

Reserves Policy

The trustees continue to review the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risk to the organisation, a reduction of income. At the end of December 2022, the total reserves were £12,347, all of which were unrestricted.

The long-term financial strategy of the trustees remains their intention to increase the level of the reserves by continually reviewing overheads and increasing income not only through rent from the property but by securing charitable donations and increasing fundraising activities.

Update January to October 2023

The trustee have held 7 meetings in 2023 so far, out of which two were virtually.

The main focus this year has been on finding a successor for Father John who has officially decided to retire from the role of priest in charge in our parish. The trustees have managed the handover of Father John's 'domestic' responsibilities and will continue to support the transition of the new priest.

Easter was held in the normal way - at midnight - with very good attendance. The stewarding volunteers did an amazing job of managing the crowds.

A collection was organised this summer for the local Acorns Children's Hospice and a considerable amount of money was raised.

Three 'bring and share' parish meals were organised and managed this year so far by the volunteers manning the weekly tea and coffee rota.

They have also arranged hospitality for Bishop Maximos's visit, which came to see our parish in September to give us the great news that a new priest – Fr Theodoros - will be placed permanently in our parish from the beginning of November.

The annual church membership was restarted at the beginning of this year, for the first time since the churches were closed during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The works on the church house are now complete and all flats, including flat 7 since the middle of February, are let and are providing stable income which will support the salary of the new priest.

Conclusion

Due to the completion of the development works on the church house, this period has been financially challenging. The income has been made up primarily by donations, baptisms and the rents from the Church House. We are grateful that our church was able to return to normal following the pandemic and to our parishioners for their continuous support.

From the middle of the year, since Father Emilian was sent to serve another parish in Leeds, the responsibility of continuing to serve our parish fell solely on Father John's shoulders, hindering any immediate retiring plans and bringing much dismay to both his family and BCOT. The Archdiocese reassured us that they are doing all they can to find a replacement priest as soon as possible.

The trustees are fully dedicated to the further development of our parish and remain continuously aware of all its needs in serving its objects and are eternally grateful to all who contribute towards this goal and thankful to Almighty God for all His blessings.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Black Country Orthodox Trust is an unincorporated registered charity based in the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall in the West Midlands. It is governed by a Constitution approved on 7th May 2000 and was entered on the Register of Charities by the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 4th September 2000.

Organisational Structure

The charity has a committee consisting of at least three but no more than thirteen individuals. The committee may consist of a chair, up to nine elected committee members and three members co-opted by the committee members to hold office until the next AGM. The charity trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity.

Recruitment and Appointment of Committee Members

All committee members are required to be members of the Church prior to being recruited as a charity trustee. One third (or a number nearest one third) of the elected committee members must retire at each Annual General Meeting (AGM) and new committee members are elected to replace those retiring from office. Every committee member must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee before they are eligible to vote at any meeting of the committee. The board of committee members is well represented by a wide range of individuals from various aspects of the church community.

Trustee Induction and Training

Whilst there is no formal induction process in place, all new committee members are invited and encouraged to visit the offices of Black Country Orthodox Trust in order to familiarise themselves with the organisation and the context within which it operates. The trustee will discuss the following aspects of the organisation with the new committee member and answer any questions arising.

- The role, responsibility and obligations of the charity trustees
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts
- Future plans and objectives of the charity

In addition to the above, a copy of the latest Annual Report is given to all new committee members along with a charity trustee role description, a copy of the constitution, the Charity Commission's Trustee Handbook, the organisation's main policy documents and the latest financial statement

Risk Management

The trustees continue to monitor any potential financial and/or governance challenges that they may face. Whilst the trustee body has not formally conducted its own review of other major risks to which the charity may be exposed to, systems have been established to mitigate any identified risks.

The risk of not being able to adequately fund the charity is the biggest risk, which is why the trustees are keen to increase their money unrestricted reserves as a contingency for any emergencies. As and when required, trustees review, amend and update working procedures to help eliminate risks.

Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with Health and Safety for all visitors whilst on charity property. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. Disclosure and barring checks are made on all members of staff and potential new volunteers where appropriate. General Data Protection Regulations are adhered to as well as Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection policies regarding all work with children and families.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The trustees must hold a minimum of six meetings a year, there must be a quorum of three trustees present at each. Seven meetings have been held during 2022; out of which four were virtually. The Annual General Meeting was held in church on Sunday, 11th December 2022.

At each meeting trustees receive regular reports from the clergy and other groups. In 2019, a subcommittee named the 'Parish Committee' was established to manage the day to day "housekeeping" of the church. The trustees reviewed and updated procedures and attended as necessary to regulatory matters and oversaw the management of the activities of the Charity as described above.

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its financial position at the end of that year.

In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that the charity will not continue in existence.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity (Accounts Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on the 15th October 2023 and was signed on their behalf by

.....

Brandon Scott-Omenka, Chair

.....

Florina Clewer, Secretary

Acknowledgements

Black Country Orthodox Trust would like to thank all of the faithful who support the parish with their donations, both great and small: and also to thank our Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain (together with his staff) for his pastoral care and oversight of our parish and to ask for his continued prayers.

Those directly involved in parish and community work were:

Father John Nankivell, priest in charge

Father Emilian Bratu, assistant priest

Father Stephen Maxfield, cover priest

Father Panteleimon Maxfield, cover priest

Georgina Nankivell, secretary of BCOT in 2022 and choir leader

Tatiana Vasiliou, Sunday school teacher

Oxana Costin, contracted to clean the church

Farook and Rukayya Albertus, contracted to manage the church hall bookings in the community

Boria Malazona and his team, who completed the building work on the church house

Thanks are due to all of these. Thanks also go to servers, singers, doorkeepers, workers in the office and the premises and many other volunteers and supporters for the skills, commitment, time and prayers that they have contributed throughout the year, and to those who give financial support.

Special thanks go to the Parish Committee and their team for all the hard work put into managing the housekeeping of the parish.

Legal and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Black Country Orthodox Trust
Charity Status: Unincorporated
Registered Charity Number: 1082272
Registered Office and Operational Address: 1a Sun Street
Walsall
West Midlands
WS1 4AL
Telephone Number: 01922 633451
Email Address: blackcountryorthodoxtrust@gmail.com
Website: www.orthodoxwalsall.org.uk

Charity Trustees:

Chair: Brandon Scott-Omenka (trustee until Dec 2022)
Treasurer: Anne Perks (chair until Dec 2022)
Secretary: Georgina Nankivell (stepped down Dec 2022)
Florina Clewer (trustee until Dec 2022)
Trustees: Tatiana Vasiliou
Irina Rollins
Mihaela Ispas (treasurer until Dec 2022)
Gregory Wittwer
Maria Tsilika (removed from post Oct 2022)

Independent Examiner:

Bev Richardson M.A.A.T.
Charity AID Accountancy Services
Woodland Lodge, Dunston Business Village
Stafford Road, Dunston, Staffordshire, ST18 9AB

Banks:

HSBC Bank
The Bridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 1LN
Co-operative Bank
P.O. Box 250, Southway, Skelmersdale, Yorkshire, WN8 6WT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

I report on the financial statements of Black Country Orthodox Trust for the year ended 31st December 2022 which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act 2011
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Bev Richardson M.A.A.T.

Date: 15th October 2023

On Behalf of
Charity AID Accountancy Services
Woodland Lodge, Dunston Business Village
Stafford Road, Dunston, Staffordshire, ST18 9AB

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

Receipts and Payments Account for the period 1st January 2021 – 31st December 2022

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2022 £	2021 £
<u>RECEIPTS</u>					
Donations	1	85,482	0	85,482	97,883
Charitable Activities	2	28,546	145	28,691	23,584
Fundraising	3	1,385	117	1,502	1,794
Investments	4	2	0	2	0
Other Receipts	5	2,040	0	2,040	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS		117,455	262	117,717	123,261
<u>PAYMENTS</u>					
Raising Funds	6	365	0	365	820
Charity Running Costs	7	17,429	0	17,429	25,173
Church & Hall Costs	8	26,439	145	26,584	17,889
Church House Costs	9	60,339	0	60,339	27,778
Activities & Events	10	13,392	117	13,509	11,748
Governance	11	3,297	0	3,297	12,081
Other Payments	12	24,000	0	24,000	0
		145,261	262	145,523	95,489
<u>ASSETS & INVESTMENTS</u>					
Fixed Assets		0	0	0	0
Investment		0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0
TOTAL PAYMENTS		145,261	262	145,523	95,489
Net incoming resources		(27,806)	0	(27,806)	27,772
Transfer between funds		0	0	0	0
Cash funds from last year		40,153	0	40,153	12,381
TOTAL CASH FUNDS		12,347	0	12,347	40,153

BLACK COUNTRY ORTHODOX TRUST

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2022

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
CASH FUNDS			
HSBC Business Account	3,756	0	3,756
HSBC Saver Account	1,236	0	1,236
Co-op Community Account	7,190	0	7,190
Petty Cash	165	0	165
OTHER MONETARY ASSETS	0	0	0
INVESTMENT ASSETS	0	0	0
ASSETS RETAINED FOR THE CHARITY'S OWN USE			
Church			358,314
Church Contents			35,466
Church House			520,761
LIABILITIES			
Independent Examination			480
Loan			41,000

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 15th October 2023 and were signed on their behalf by

.....
Brandon Scott-Omenka, Chair

.....
Anne Perks, Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
1 Donations				
Grants & Donations			0	0
Gift Aid Offerings	50,421	0	50,421	58,622
General Offerings	20,386	0	20,386	15,691
Gift Aid Inland Revenue	9,340	0	9,340	17,528
Eon Feed in Tariff	5,335	0	5,335	4,892
Charitable Donations	0	0	0	1,150
	85,482	0	85,482	97,883
2 Charitable Activities				
Contracts	0	0	0	0
Membership	0	0	0	0
Church House Rent	25,601	0	25,601	21,849
Hall Lettings	2,785	0	2,785	1,735
Church Worship Goods	0	145	145	0
Baptism / Marriages	160	0	160	0
	28,546	145	28,691	23,584
3 Fundraising				
Sale of Purchased Goods	1,385	0	1,385	1,612
Special Events	0	0	0	0
Community Food	0	0	0	0
Community Giving	0	0	0	183
Family Giving	0	117	117	0
General Fundraising	0	0	0	0
	1,385	117	1,502	1,795
4 Investments				
Bank Interest	2	0	2	0
	2	0	2	0
5 Other Receipts				
Miscellaneous	2,040	0	2,040	0
	2,040	0	2,040	0
6 Raising Funds				
Purchase of Goods for resale	365	0	365	820
Community Food & Events	0	0	0	0
General Fundraising	0	0	0	0
	365	0	365	820

Notes to the Accounts continued

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2022 £	2021 £
7 Charity Running Costs				
Priest Salary, NI, Pension	13,879	0	13,879	17,995
Priest Expenses	160	0	160	0
Insurance	1,673	0	1,673	6,443
Health & Safety	243	0	243	0
Bank Charges	389	0	389	0
IT & Telephone	137	0	137	364
Stationery, Printing, Postage	309	0	309	371
Travel	639	0	639	0
	17,429	0	17,429	25,173
8 Church & Hall Costs				
Utility Costs	7,022	0	7,022	5,828
Church Maintenance	5,922	0	5,922	173
Hall Maintenance	715	0	715	246
Capital Works	1,996	0	1,996	6,459
Apse, Icons & Nartex	775	0	775	0
Church Worship Goods	2,500	145	2,645	1,498
Cleaning Costs & Materials	2,536	0	2,536	1,316
Grounds Maintenance	4,973	0	4,973	2,369
	26,439	145	26,584	17,889
9 Church House Costs				
Utility Costs	3,412	0	3,412	4,235
Maintenance	121	0	121	719
Capital Works	56,406	0	56,406	21,960
Cleaning Costs & Materials	400	0	400	865
	60,339	0	60,339	27,779
10 Activities & Events				
Worship Requisites	11,941	0	11,941	9,695
Community Food	223	0	223	553
Community Giving	0	0	0	600
Family Giving	1,228	117	1,345	900
	13,392	117	13,509	11,748
11 Governance				
Governance Costs	35	0	35	35
Independent Examination	480	0	480	480
Professional Fees	2,782	0	2,782	11,566
	3,297	0	3,297	12,081
12 Other Payments				
Miscellaneous Costs	0	0	0	0
Loan Repayment	24,000	0	24,000	0
	24,000	0	24,000	0