

Annual Report and Accounts

1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023



Christians on Ageing
Registered Charity number 289463

Registered address:
The Depository
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Christians on Ageing

Christians on Ageing – a voice for older people

The story of older people is the story of their unique life journey. They have lived through war and peace, have known hope and failure, and have found, and sometimes lost, friendship and love.

For many, their Christian faith has been the context within which they have lived and in which they will die. They have handed on the gospel message to the next generation but are also living it day by day. Their story is not just about the past; they are part, in the here and now, of the Churches' proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They are a valued and precious resource. They want to give as well as receive.

Christians on Ageing is one of their voices.

Statement of Purpose

We work for a society in which older people are heard, supported and valued.

Our activities aim to:

- collaborate with Christian and other agencies with similar visions
- inform and facilitate debate on issues of concern for older people
- celebrate the gifts and potential of later life
- influence policy-makers, service providers, paid carers and practitioners

We deliver these activities through conferences, publications, commentaries and informational resources, focusing on faith, spirituality and flourishing in later life.

Our vision and values

Christians on Ageing – registered as 'Christian Council on Ageing' – is a voluntary, national, ecumenical member-based organization. It is a resource to the Churches and to other bodies and individuals concerned with the needs, especially the spiritual needs, of all older people.

Christians on Ageing believes that the spiritual needs of older people are often not appreciated or met by the Churches, nor is the potential contribution that older people can make to the Churches being fully realised. It recognises the contribution that the Churches have made, and continue to make, in providing care and support for older people.

Christians on Ageing complements the activities of other voluntary agencies such as Faith in Older People, Anna Chaplaincy, and Age UK and the work of central and local government in health and social care.

Our current prime areas of interest and action are:

'Cherished not forgotten' - activities that relate to excluded older people for whom the church can play a role, such as:

- in illness and disability
- for people in hospital, nursing or residential care
- those living with dementia and their carers
- people who are digitally, socially or economically disadvantaged
- those who are isolated or lonely
- older prisoners

Mission and ministry in later life - activities that inform/support those who contribute lay and ordained, by sharing information and good practice, and promoting training and vocation related to ministry with older people.

Later life discipleship - activities that contribute to:

- understanding older people's spiritual growth and faith development
- promoting a positive image of older Christian's spiritual roles as elders and mentors
- encouraging intergenerational learning

Patrons

Rt Revd Dr Esme Beswick, MBE
Joint Council for Churches of All Nations

Revd Lynn Green
General Secretary, the Baptist Union of Great Britain

Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith
Bishop of St Albans, the Church of England

Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler
Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Methodist Church

H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster, the Roman Catholic Church

Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh
Russian Orthodox Church

Mrs Elaine Cobb
Director of Older People's Services, the Salvation Army

Revd Dr John Bradbury
General Secretary, United Reformed Church

President

To be appointed

Vice-Presidents

Revd Dr Albert Jewell
Tony Flynn
Revd Dr John Lansley

Executive Committee

Chair:	Dr David Jolley (until September 2023)
Acting Chair:	Revd Dr Keith Albans (appointed September 2023)
Vice-Chair:	Vacancy
Honorary Secretary:	Ms Barbara Stephens
Treasurer:	Sister Maureen Murphy FMSJ
Elected Members:	Revd Dr Keith Albans (appointed acting Chair in September 2023) Revd Dr Joseph Cortis Dr David Jolley (from September 2023 following resignation as Chair) Miss Marion Shoard Dr Joanna Walker
Appointed members:	Charles Kwaku-Odoi
Appointed Advisor:	Gerry Burke

Executive Committee report

Chair's Report

A statement of the aims, vision and values of Christians on Ageing is printed in all copies of our magazine 'plus' and is included elsewhere in this Annual Report.

The year was marked again by changes, internationally, in the churches, partner organisations and at Christians on Ageing.

New blood had come to the Executive Committee in the persons of Charles Kwaku-Odoi and Keith Albans. They have experience and knowledge of areas we are keen to explore further. My change of health and serious prognosis has meant that I have not been able to contribute fully. Keith kindly agreed to take over responsibilities as Acting Chair immediately after our conference in September 2023. His strength and wealth of knowledge, vision and connections are proving to be transforming. He will be nominated to become Chair of Christians on Ageing from this AGM.

We have been pleased to act on our statement of purpose and take positive steps forward with our current areas of interest. We have continued to make progress through the work of the Executive Committee, which has met quarterly, with many working sessions between times by virtue of zoom.

Working groups: The 'Communications Committee' and 'Older Prisoners Interest Group' have made determined and impressive progress. The Communications Committee takes in the website, the e-newsletter (produced quarterly and circulated to 600+ addresses), 'Plus' (our magazine which is published and distributed to members each quarter), and publications. Through this committee, we are undertaking a systematic review and revision of all aspects of communication. The Older Prisoners Interest Group is working to secure relations with other organisations concerned with improving services and pastoral support to prisoners and older people subject to other aspects of the legal system, including probation. Our interest in people with dementia is undiminished although the future of the Dementia Newsletter remains uncertain.

Conference: Our Conference in September 2023 was held online. This worked very well, with a good attendance of more than 50. We took as our theme **Challenging exclusion in a harsh environment**. Our first speaker was Will Fremont-Brown who had led the project which produced the report from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York: 'Care and Support Reimagined: a National Care Covenant for England', challenging the current state of care and the contributions of the churches. Will's presentation was followed by group discussions of key elements. These were engaging and productive.

Nichola Cadet of Sheffield Hallam University spoke about older people in the care of the probation service. Emily Kenward described her work, Time to Talk Befriending, and Ines Delgado led an enchanting interactive music experience after the lunch break.

Conference Calls: These online calls have been presented each month: 90-minute sessions that are led by an expert/enthusiast for a topic and encourage shared learning among those who attend. Sessions have attracted between 10 and 20+ people from all over the UK, and beyond. Topics have included:

- Gerry Burke: 'A Christian reflections on dying and death'.
- Dr Karen Groves: 'Preparing professionals to help people with issues of spirituality and belief as they are approaching the end of life.'
- Professor Peter Coleman: 'Spirituality of Ageing by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh'
- Reverend Ben Boland: 'Jesus' love in the midst of age and dementia: A practical Christian ministry with older people and people living with dementia'.
- Professor Julian Hughes: 'Ethics and dementia: A Christian Perspective'.
- Sally Mordike: 'Exploring Homefulness in Ageing and Aged Care'.
- Islay Roberts and Sarah Crockett: 'Leading Worship in Care Home settings'.

Summaries of these sessions are agreed with presenters and participants and posted to the Christians on Ageing website.

In the News: We have monitored newspapers and other media sources for topics that are relevant to older Christians. Brief notes were posted weekly on the website until the autumn of 2023 and have now been succeeded by monthly summaries posted to the website. The world situation has been dominated by wars between Russia and Ukraine and now Israel and Hamas, and elsewhere and spreading. We pray for international maturity, respect and love between all peoples. There are national and international crises of economy, with people finding it difficult to fund even basic essentials. We pray for personal maturity and care for each other rather than personal greed. The changes in climate associated with global warming are understood and are becoming daily more evident with extremes of weather and hazards throughout the world. Appeals to change activities to reduce the human contribution to these changes, grow stronger: we pray that these will be heard by people in positions in power – and heard and reflected in action by electorates.

In all of our activities we have sought to collaborate with other organisations in the field, most particularly Anna Chaplains and Faith in Older People. Debbie Thrower has recently retired from her post as founder and leader of Anna Chaplains within BRF. Our thanks and admiration to her. Our best wishes and encouragement to Debbie Ducille who succeeds her.

Membership is an essential component of how Christians on Ageing functions – we are grateful for the support which members provide and remain keen to extend this more widely.

Recent initiatives, which we believe will encourage additional involvement, include Culture Club, and collections of reflections on older people who have influenced members, and brief autobiographical notes by members.

Our publications are a source of strength and have great potential to help and influence church life – we are exploring how this potential can be better realised. Our finances are carefully stewarded by Sister Maureen Murphy. They remain in healthy balance.

Christians on Ageing is living in a time of great and multiple changes – many are beyond our control and we try to be aware and to modify our activities accordingly. We are in the process of remodelling what we do to fit more effectively for mission in this changed environment, always having in mind the founding principles: to be a resource to the Churches and to other bodies and individuals concerned with the needs, especially the spiritual needs, of all older people. We look forward to further developments alongside others who champion the needs and strengths of older people of faith.

I am grateful to members of the Executive Committee for giving their time and support throughout this year and the years during which I have had the privilege of chairing the charity. Special thanks to Keith Albans for taking on this role, to Gerry Burke, Barbara Stephens, Joanna Walker, Maureen Murphy, Joseph Cortis, Marion Shoard, John Lansley, Albert Jewell, Sue Kennedy and the late Jo Kennedy and Graham Hawley, and to Charles Kwaku-Odoi.

We pray for blessing, wisdom, guidance and success in this mission.

David Jolley – Retiring Chair

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is now two years old and has continued with its mission to improve coherence across the charity's methods of communication with the external world. This includes developing and maintaining the website, overseeing the newsletter, reviewing existing publications and commissioning new ones, working with the Chair on conference calls and supporting the editor of 'Plus'.

We are grateful to Gerry Burke who has continued to edit and distribute the newsletter, timed to publicise key events as well as appearing between issues of 'Plus', thus keeping in touch with members and our wider audience more consistently.

We are also grateful for his continued role in website management which, this year, has addressed 'customer journey' issues for publication ordering, and the increased featuring of reports and communications whereby we hope to engage a wider public.

We also acknowledge the continued contribution of Adam Green on technical and future-proofing issues such as blogging and accessibility.

The Committee has spent time this year reviewing its catalogue of publications, using agreed criteria, which has enabled the graceful retirement of a few titles, the updating and revising of others, and the commissioning of new ones.

Concurrently, Honorary Secretary Barbara Stephens has managed the physical move of stock and transfer of e-documents from Sue Kennedy to establish a new COA base in The Depository, Ryde, Isle of Wight, premises she shares with other charitable groups. We now have a location for producing, storing and distributing publications. In a natural progression, publication orders are now being fulfilled by re-designed booklets as they become available.

Some titles have been more extensively revised, such as 'The Spirituality of Ageing' by Metropolitan Anthony, but now with a fascinating update on the life and times of the author provided by Peter Coleman. A revision of the original text has been made by Gerry Burke of his publication 'Dying and Death: A Christian Approach in a Secular Society'. Other titles are forthcoming and plans to update and refresh the look of all publications are in place. A new leaflet has been produced to promote COA membership, to be available in printed and e-formats.

Our quarterly magazine for members, 'Plus', has continued to appear in March, June, September and December. Original articles have been commissioned addressing a wide range of COA's interests including contributions from outside the UK. Our focus tends to be on good practice in various forms of ministry with and for older people, but also takes in commentary on research, policy and the context of ageing today. We offer thanks to David Jolley for his enthusiasm in contributing book reviews as well as articles in his area of expertise of mental health in older age.

Dr Joanna Walker

Older Prisoners Interest Group

The number of people in prison over the ages of 50 and 60 has increased significantly in recent years, not least because of prosecutions for historical offences only now coming to light. Christians on Ageing has been exploring how it can help the Churches answer the question posed by Jesus: 'when I was in prison, did you come to visit me? '

In our context 'visit' means 'support'. Examples of possible responses include actual visiting of prisoners, supporting the work of prison reform charities, finding out the facts about the criminal justice system, looking after the families of prisoners, and working with prisoners both immediately before and after their release. There is a lot already happening but much of it is perhaps unknown to most congregations. If more of us knew about the needs of prisoners and the range of responses possible (not easy, because of both understandable restrictions and bureaucracy) what difference could we make, not just to prisoners but to society as a whole?

Christians on Ageing produced a small booklet of reflections and prayers a few years ago which was designed to help both older prisoners and prison staff. We hoped that this booklet would reach a good few of the over 5,000 prisoners over the age of 60, however, it sadly failed to achieve our goal due to a variety of reasons/issues. This can be partly due to our lack of knowledge about the complexity of making material available to prisons without using approved routes and getting the agreement and co-operation of prison authorities.

We have recently experienced successes through our contact with the Prisoners Group of the St Vincent de Paul Society. We are not giving up. We have recently looked afresh at our aspirations.

Over the next few months we are hoping to develop ideas on how we can encourage Christian congregations with prison establishments nearby to identify ways of working with those locked-up long-term, as well as those nearing release and possibly having nowhere to go and no one to be with. We are fortunate in having had really useful discussions with professionals involved in prisoner support, including the work of probation, and Christian-based projects in some prisons.

Our current strategy:

- Every effort is being made to contact senior members of the Government, other political parties and leads from the main Christian Denominations with criminal justice in their portfolio.
- Responses received will hopefully provide links with prison chaplains where specific provision is currently available for older people.
- Scope the denominational churches within the geographical boundary of that specific prison.
- Disseminate information about specific services.
- Encourage engagement in such initiatives albeit apart from prison visiting, which is challenging to enrol on and indeed fulfil.
- Publish stories about our efforts as we go along over the next year.

If you know of examples of work already being done locally or regionally, we would really like to hear from you. Write to info@christiansonageing.org.uk - we will be happy to preserve confidentiality wherever necessary.

Revd Dr Joseph D Cortis

Membership

Membership numbers fell significantly in 2023. At the end of the year, the Council had 106 individual members and 22 members representing organisations, compared with 132 individual members and 27 members representing organisations at the end of 2022.

The Executive Committee is taking positive action to reverse this trend. Our new membership leaflet will provide a means for promoting the work of Christians on Ageing and we plan to reach out to church communities in local areas. We also envisage that the new membership initiatives will attract fresh interest.

Annual membership of the Council costs £18.00, both for individuals and representatives from organisations. All members receive the charity's quarterly magazine 'Plus', distributed either in hard copy by post or digitally by email.

Dr Joanna Walker is the editor of 'Plus'. The publication, exclusively produced for members of 'Christians on Ageing', has continued to carry a wide range of articles, keeping people in touch with issues and concerns that have relevance to the work of the charity.

We would welcome greater engagement with members. Please do get in touch if you would like to be more involved.

Financial Report

Statement from the Treasurer

2023 was an unremarkable year for the finances of Christians on Ageing. Our total income of £5748 and expenditure of £5059 left us with a surplus of £689. Our Gift Aid claim had not been received by the year end so is not shown. This has since been received and would have left us with a surplus of over £1000.

We have begun the process of updating our design and artwork which will eventually include PLUS. We have the funds available for this work and hope as a result to increase our sales.

During the current year we plan to switch from HSBC to the Co-Operative Bank as we believe this to be more in tune with our ethical principles as a Christian organisation.

Sister Maureen Murphy, FMSG

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts
Report to the Trustees of the Christian Council on Ageing
On Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2023
Registered Charity no. 289463

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Christian Council on Ageing for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Daniel Smith
For and on behalf of John A. Porter & Co
74 Dickenson Road
Manchester
M14 5HF

22 February 2024

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL ON AGEING
Registered Charity No 289463

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the Year ended 31 December 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Incoming Resources</u>				
Voluntary Income				
Subscription Income	1,987		3,078	
Donations	2,610		634	
Tax Credits			<u>402</u>	
		<u>4,597</u>		4,114
Income from Charitable Activities				
Sales	190		361	
Conference Income	<u>89</u>			
		279		361
Investment Income		<u>872</u>		<u>197</u>
Total Incoming Resources		<u>5,748</u>		<u>4,672</u>
<u>Resources Expended</u>				
Charitable Activities				
PLUS	1,767		1,418	
DG Newsletter				
Website				
Branch Expenditure				
Trustees' Travel Expenses				
Printing, Stationery & Advertising	75		83	
Post & Telephone	67		97	
Graphic Design & Artwork	674			
Subscriptions & Insurance			150	
Publications Purchased				
Publications Support				
Prayer Books for Prisoners				
Promotional Expenses				
Research				
Donations	2,000			
Bank Charges	<u>63</u>		<u>76</u>	
		4,646		1,824
Governance				
Trustees' Travel Expenses	67		90	
Meeting Rooms				
Conference	90		34	
Examiner's Fee	206		198	
Secretarial Support				
Other Expenses	<u>50</u>		<u>190</u>	
		413		512
Total Resources Expended		<u>5,059</u>		<u>2,336</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		689		2,336
Funds brought forward		25,088		22,752
Funds carried forward		<u>25,777</u>		<u>25,088</u>

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL ON AGEING
Registered Charity No 289463

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31 December 2023

2022			2023	
£	£		£	£
		Current Assets		
4,988		Cash at Bank	5,685	
<u>20,298</u>		COIF	<u>20,298</u>	
	25,286			25,983
		Current Liabilities		
<u>198</u>		Sundry Creditors	<u>206</u>	
	198			206
	<u>25,088</u>	Net Current Assets		<u>25,777</u>
		Represented by:		
	25,088	General Funds		25,777
	<u>25,088</u>	Capital Employed		<u>25,777</u>

Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee of Christians on Ageing by:

Revd Dr Keith Albans and Revd Dr Joseph D Cortis

Dated: 4th March 2024

Contact us

For any enquiry, please contact: Barbara Stephens
Honorary Secretary

By post to: Christians on Ageing
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23 Nelson Street
Ryde
PO33 2EZ

By telephone Mobile: 07774 935905

By email: secretary@christiansonageing.org.uk

Through the website: www.christiansonageing.org.uk



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