



First Dunmurry  
NS Presbyterian Church

**Reports and Financial Statements**  
**Year ended**  
**31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

Sunday Services	Morning 11.30am Evening, as arranged
Church for Children & Young People	11.30am meet in Church and transfer to McCleery Hall
Communion	Celebrated in May and November
Baptism	By arrangement
Session	Meet prior to Communion and other dates as arranged
Committee	Monthly
Women's League	As arranged.

## **Honorary Secretary's Report 2023**

### **Church committee meetings:**

During 2023 the committee met on eleven occasions. Our committee is very active in ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of the church, hall, glebe, graveyard other buildings and grounds. This year there has been much remedial work to ensure that the church and grounds which we as a denomination have inherited will continue for future generations. The committee is also committed to ensuring that all members enjoy a sense of community and throughout the year a number of social and devotional events were held.

### **Church and environs maintenance:**

The grounds and graveyard surrounding the church are a wonderful asset which require regular upkeep. We are grateful to those volunteers who give their time to plant bulbs and shrubs and regularly undertake a general tidy up. The planters around the church require particular attention to ensure the blooms continue throughout the year. It is thanks to these volunteers that the grounds always look so well preserved.

### **Swift Boxes:**

In early spring, following a talk and instruction from the RSPB, swift boxes were installed on the side of the McCleery Hall. A swift caller was also installed and within weeks swifts were noted flying over the church and grounds. Through time we hope that these endangered birds will find a home in our church grounds.

### **Rev. McMillan Library:**

Throughout the year Mrs Sue Steers and her team of volunteers have continued to catalogue all the books and pamphlets which the Rev. McMillan left to the congregation. The library collection of books and documents is large and unique with the library opening planned for late 2024.

### **Church events:**

Throughout the year a number of devotional and social events were held. Members of our congregation along with those of other local churches participated in the World Day of Prayer service which was held in the neighbouring Presbyterian Church. Our members also participated in the Dunmurry Churches Together services held at Easter and Christmas.

Throughout the year Dunmurry NSPCI was represented at the Bangor Presbytery meetings and the annual Synod meeting. During the year Rev. Dr. D. Steers and secretary Mrs M. Graham met with representatives from Rosemary Street, All Souls and Mount Pottinger churches (the 4 churches) with the aim of collaborating on a range of initiatives to promote the denomination and meet socially. A series of events including quiz nights, walking tours and a reading of all the names of those who lost their lives during the Troubles as listed in the book 'Lost Lives' was agreed for 2023/24 with each church taking the lead for an agreed event. It is the intent that this initiative will be on-going and extended more widely within the denomination.

### **Rev. McMillan Garden:**

The main highlight of the year was the opening of the Rev. McMillan Garden. After many months of planning and hard work, on a sunny June Saturday, the ribbon was

cut by the McMillan family and the garden declared open. The garden design was created by Frances Gibson and the sculpture by Tim Mulchinock in collaboration with Mrs Sheila McMillan. The service of dedication held in the church was well attended by the congregation and guests from the local community and flower arranging organisations with which the Rev. McMillan had been associated. This is a beautiful space for quiet reflection.

### **Congregational Social Events:**

In August we held our first Church BBQ since covid. Despite the inclement weather it was well supported and enjoyed by all. Thanks to the men who cooked on the BBQ and ladies who supplied the salads. It is our plan that this will become an annual event for our congregation.

In December we held our first Carols by Candlelight service supported by the Harmonic Sounds Concert Band. This service was widely publicised, and we were delighted that so many visitors attended filling the church. It was pleasing to see that many joined us for the supper which followed. Thanks especially goes to Mrs Heather Douglas who sourced and arranged the many candles which decorated the church. It is hoped that this service will now become an annual occasion alongside our Easter and Harvest services when the church is also decorated.

In collaboration with the 4 churches noted above, quiz nights have been held in Dunmurry and thanks goes to John and Sandra Neill for undertaking the demanding role as quiz masters.

### **Warm Space:**

In January recognising that the high cost of heating was causing hardship for many in the wider community, the McCleery Hall was opened to all on Thursday mornings (10am-12pm) offering tea/coffee and a place to have a good chat. This was widely advertised and welcomed by many as a pleasant time to relax and reminisce. The Warm Space was open throughout most of the year, closing for the summer.

### **First Aid Training:**

This essential training, held in the hall, was quickly filled. It was organised by Mrs Emma McCrudden and good to see that we now have so many in the congregation holding first aid certificates.

### **Community Events:**

Where possible, the church and committee support local initiatives. European Heritage Open Days (EHOD):- Following on from 2022, the church opened its doors for EHOD which is held annually in September. This year Rev. Dr. Steers again conducted a tour of the church graveyard identifying a different number of headstones which were to all on the tour a fascinating history of those buried in the grounds. Although visitor numbers were low, we agreed that the effort is worthwhile.

### **McCleery Hall:**

The Bailie School of Irish dance and Yoga with Gill continue to rent the hall and it is good to see this engagement with the local community.

The monthly Gardening Club has also had another successful year with expert guest speakers speaking on a wide range of topics.

Thank you to the many volunteers who support the upkeep and church management.

The weekly Sunday Free Will Offering collections are counted and lodged by Mrs H. Douglas Thanks also to the church treasurers Mrs S. McBride and Mrs K. Yuille for maintaining the accounts.

**Social media:**

The church's Facebook page and website are the envy of many of our sister churches. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank Mrs E. McCrudden for her time given to maintaining and updating weekly uploads and pictures on the Facebook page and website. These media sites are highly viewed and favourably commented on by many. The social media platforms have given Dunmurry the opportunity to reach a wider audience. The wider reach has also been maintained through up-loads of readings, homilies and history by the Rev. Dr. Steers.

**The Glebe:**

Maintaining the Glebe is on-going due to the age of the building. Damp is a persistent problem in the downstairs rooms and requires frequent monitoring and attention. During the year all the library books were relocated to the session room to allow for restorative work to be undertaken in the library followed by redecoration. Having controlled the dampness in the room it is hoped that the freshly painted library, will be an inspiring resource to many when it is officially opened.

**Church catering:**

The catering team under the direction of Mrs S McBride have had another busy year providing refreshments for the various occasions held. The opportunity of meeting up with members of the congregation and other visitors is an important part of church activity and the time given by the ladies team in organising and planning for each occasion is greatly appreciated.

Finally on behalf of the committee I wish to thank the Rev. Dr. Steers and Mrs Steers for their commitment to the congregation and all the members who support the church not only with their time but also financially without all of which the church could not flourish.

**Mrs. Margaret Graham  
Honorary Secretary**