

Achievements and Performance

The Trustees offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that we hope our community finds both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. A Drop-In Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month. This club is self-funded and does not receive any grants. It is attended by members of our own church, members from neighbouring congregations, families, and friends. It is well attended with an average of 50 people. There have been two outings over the year visiting Hillmount Garden Centre and Harrisons of Greyabbey Garden Centre with other outings organized later in the year. Speakers are invited to attend at each meeting. Dementia NI, Friends and other organization have given talks. Any donations collected were given to Friends of Cancer. Worship and Prayer A warm welcome is extended to all without distinction who attend our Sunday services. This coming together of the congregation on Sunday mornings at 11:30am for worship is important, for worship nurtures and expresses faith through praise and prayer, scripture and sermon, music and sacrament. In this way people learn about the Gospel, develop their knowledge and trust in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and are encouraged to live out their faith in the local community.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life. Through Christian baptism we thank God for the gift of new life, in Christian marriage a man and a woman exchange their vows in public seeking God's blessing on their union, and through funeral services, friends and family comfort one another in their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and commend the person into God's keeping. At the end of the year there were 33 families on the Church register. There has been one addition during the year, and one was removed either through death or because they moved away from the parish. The average weekly attendance was 28, but this number increased at Harvest and our Christmas carol service and special worship of Praise and Fellowship Sundays with visitors from neighbouring congregations, families and friends. The sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, with an average attendance of 18. During the year we celebrated 0 baptisms and 0 weddings and conducted two funerals.

Pastoral Care Some members of our congregation are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Some are domiciled at home and in care homes. Our minister has visited all such and celebrates Communion with members who have requested it in their homes. He also distributes gifts to the elderly and housebound at Christmas. He also gives pastoral support to families in times of crisis. Mission and Charitable Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. We support missionary, charity and disaster appeals in addition to agencies of the Congregational Union of Ireland, such as:

Whitehead Congregational Church

Report of the Trustees' for the year ended 31st December 2023

In Compiling this Report the Trustees have had regard to the Northern Ireland Charity Commission's Public benefit requirements statutory guidance.

Objectives and Activities

In setting objectives and planning for its activities, the Trustees note that the charity has given due consideration to general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit, and to its supplementary public benefit guidance on the advancement of the religion.

These benefits are demonstrated through informal feedback from members and their families, members of other churches and the public, members of the church committee at their stated meetings, opportunity being provided generally at the annual congregational meeting. The Committee ensured that there is no likelihood of the charity's purpose leading to harm to anyone and that any personal benefit is entirely incidental and integral to its fulfilment of its charitable purpose. The charity fulfils its objectives by providing benefit to its members and the public by enabling ordinary people to live out their Christian faith as part of our local community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and confidence in the Christian faith.
- Provision of pastoral care for people of the congregation.
- Mission and charitable support.

The charity undertakes numerous activities to further its purposes. Information regarding these is publicly displayed on the church premises, Facebook page and on the church website. Public access is made known using printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

Public benefit Statement

The direct benefit which flows from this purpose is the provision of Christian religious activities open to all. The benefits are evidenced by the conduct of regular services of Christian worship and the maintenance of an inclusive Christian community. There is no harm arising from these benefits.

The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is in relation to those in paid employment within our congregation who receive benefits because of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits.

The Charity's beneficiaries are all those members of society who wish to be part of or associate with a Christian organisation, their families and other individuals that the Congregation is in direct and indirect contact within the community.

Whitehead Congregational Church

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- The Orphan Society
- non-perishable food collected at Harvest service for the local Whitehead Storehouse for the relief of poverty.
- agencies such as Barnabas Fund and Embrace Middle East work to bring hope and aid to churches in areas of religious persecution.
- Royal British Legion poppy fund and Royal Airforce Association.
- Gifts of toys for the Salvation Army's annual Christmas Appeal
- a registered Cardiac Arrest Defibrillator is located on the front of the church building for public use in emergencies.

The church has good relationships with other churches in the town and held joint services with them including during Lent and Holy Week and a Civic Carol Service. The church also participated in the annual Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph. It is also shared in a Rota of services in local care homes.

Financial Review

During the year the Income amounted to £24,726 (2022: £25,482) and the expenditure was £27,832 (2022: £23,627) as detailed in the Annual Accounts.

Reserve Policy

The amount of reserves (all unrestricted) amounted to £203,971, the composition of which is detailed in the Annual Accounts.

The Church premises are Insured for £2,798,321 as at 31st December 2023.

The trustees are confident that the congregation can meet whatever emergency expenditure it can anticipate. There are no material liabilities as at 31st December 2023.

Structure Governance and Management

The method of appointment of Trustees members is set out in the Church's Constitution. Its membership consists of the minister and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. Members of the congregation are eligible for election to the Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the congregation including deciding on how the funds of the Trustees are to be spent and meet on a regular basis during the year. The Trustees met at times during the year.

Whitehead Congregational Church

Report of the Trustees' for the year ended 31st December 2023

Name of Charity

Whitehead Congregational Church

Charity number

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: NIC103170

Principal Address:

33 Chester Avenue, Whitehead. BT38 9QL

Points of Contact:

The Secretary, Mr D Stevenson, 19 Donegall Rise, Whitehead. BT38 9NL

Trustees

The Charity Trustees (being those in a position of governance) are the Church Committee.

Members who served on the Committee at any time from 1st January 2023 until 31st December 2023 being:

Rev Chris Barron,
Mr. David Stevenson,
Mrs. Joan Moore
Mr. Ernest Clarke,
Mrs. Linda Todd
Mrs. Heather Carroll
Mr. Max Scott,
Mr. Sam Larkham
Ms. Irene Thompson
Mrs. Hazel Larkham

Principal Officers:

Rev Chris Barron, Minister
Mr. David Stevenson, Secretary
Mr. Ernest Clarke, Treasurer

This report was approved by the Trustees on 12th February 2025 and signed on its behalf by:-

Mr. David Stevenson, Secretary



Mr. Ernest Clarke, Treasurer

