

ABBAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONKSTOWN

CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
IRELAND

Trustees Annual Report for the year
ended 31 December 2023

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104321)

ABBEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONKSTOWN CONGREGATION OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Abbey Presbyterian Church, Monkstown is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The church building is located at 99-101 Monkstown Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 0LG.

Abbey Presbyterian Church is a registered charity in Northern Ireland with registration number NIC104321.

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were:

Alan Carson

Thelma Coffey

Tony Hacking

Deborah McKelvey

Geoffrey Marks

Douglas Ross

Anne Greer

Fiona Cochrane

Jonathan Harkness

Joanne Stewart

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister

Alan Carson

Clerk of Session

Deborah McKelvey

Treasurer

Eleanor Pauley

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Name: Roy Eakin

Address: 18, Farm Lodge Road, Upper Road, Greenisland, Carrickfergus, BT38 8XH

BANKERS

Ulster bank

The Co-operative bank

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its Kirk Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code, the book of the constitution and government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Kirk Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community. The Kirk Sessions has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held 7 times each year or as appropriate.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant on its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be

called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of those who vote.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Abbey Presbyterian Church, Monkstown, congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the North Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of the congregation.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion.

Abbey Presbyterian Church, Monkstown, congregation of the Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures, and exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purposes is by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others; - is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible; - is relevant to people of this time and place.

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.
- An open church, open to God, to each other, to our community-and open to new things.

- As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on several occasions during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lords Supper. The congregation has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School
- Youth Groups
- Mothers and Toddlers
- Bowling Club
- Girls Brigade
- Boys Brigade
- Presbyterian Women
- Coffee morning weekly with lunch also weekly
- Women and Mens Ministries

During 2023 Sunday worship continued each week with organisations running a full and varied programme.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11am. On alternate Wednesday evenings there is a gathering together

for a time of prayer. On the first Sunday of each month prayer ministry is offered following the morning service of worship, there is also a prayer meeting prior to the service on the first Sunday of each month.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of love and companionship celebrating a wedding of 2 young people one of whom had grown up in the church. We also gave thanks for faithful service and sought to comfort those who

had been bereaved during the year.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister, elders or by one of the congregations pastoral visitors.

Mission and outreach

Session members are responsible for Local Mission and Overseas Mission and have formed very active sub-groups. We also have Men and Womens Ministries who arrange special programmes which are advertised and congregation members give personal invitations to family, friends and neighbours. The congregation supports a local foodbank.

The Local Mission Committee continued to host the Wednesday morning coffee gatherings offering tea/coffee, scones and a chat to anyone who wished to come along. The Friday lunch gatherings also continued with people coming together for soup and fellowship, both the lunch and coffee mornings are open to all across church and community, the lunch is supported by the local Tesco store who donate bread for us to enjoy on these occasions. A new initiative commenced in September 2023 as any monetary donations received during the coffee morning on the 4th Wednesday of each month are donated to a local charity. A visit of every household in a new housing development within the church boundary was undertaken by the Minister and Community Evangelist, a small gift was given to each home alongside a welcome to be a part of the church.

We were fortunate to have a PCI Impact Team join with us for a Holiday Bible Club in July 2023, this was well attended. We also assisted with SPARK Newtownabbey which took place in August 2023.

Community Evangelist Michaela Tuccillo, has continued to assist the congregation in reaching beyond the church building to those in the local community with many links formed across the area. The congregation have worked alongside this staff member to visit door to door, befriend and welcome new people to the church, we have welcomed a few new members following the relationships built by Michaela as she gets alongside people within the community.

The Global Mission Committee continued to support any from the congregation who travelled to any other countries on mission trips. As well as this support a partnership with the Presbyterian church in Tullamore continued with support from our members for their Holiday Bible Club as well as a group travelling to Tullamore to provide some much needed practical support to the congregation there as they addressed issues with buildings and gardens.

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on a denominational basis beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The United Appeal Fund provides financial support for mission personnel at home and overseas, assists congregations with the deployment of locally based staff, enables church planting, provides grant support for the upkeep of church premises, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation also contributes to special appeals.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June 2023.

Organisations

Sunday

Creche meets during the morning church service for pre-school children to attend with a rota of volunteers. There is a wide range of age appropriate toys for them to play with.

Sunday School/Children's Church meets during the church service with identified leaders and Sunday School teachers. The children are primary school age and engage in bible stories and activities.

The young people meet during one service per month, this is preceeded by a youth breakfast. There are also outings planned for the young people with all being welcome to attend.

Drop In meets on a Sunday evening for periods across the year. This meeting is held for the local teenagers some of whom used to gather around the church building on a Sunday evening. These young people are largely unchurched, coming into the building is a new experience for most of them. Activities include football, pool, baking and there is a very willing team of helpers led by Michaela Tuccillo who are available to chat with those who attend. An epilogue at the close of the evening takes place with those wanting to stay for this remaining to hear something of the love God has for them. This meeting is surrounded by prayer with members of the Prayer Committee meeting to pray for the young people who gather during the time of the Drop In meeting. We have seen how prayer changes things and have seen encouraging changes with some of the behaviours of the young people.

Monday

Indoor Bowling meets during the winter months. The team in Abbey participated in various competitions.

In the summer, there is a ladies walking group on Monday evenings followed by refreshment and an epilogue.

Tuesday

Girls Brigade (GB) caters for children between the ages of 3 and 18. Badgework and the GB scripture course were amongst activities.

Wednesday

Coffee morning as described earlier.

Presbyterian Women s (PW) is a fellowship for the ladies in Abbey, to support the work of missionaries overseas, and deaconesses in Ireland, while also trying to reach the women on our doorstep. Meetings were less frequent across 2023 given some leadership challenges however we continue to have a very dedicated group of women attending when they can. Abbey PW supports financially and prayerfully the work of missionaries and deaconesses as well as worthy charities and also gives generously to the work of mission in Abbey and the running costs of the church.

Thursday

Abbey Tots, Mother and Toddler group, catered for toddlers and their parents/grandparents/childminders. There is a range of activities including ride on toys, soft play area for babies, shop, kitchen, cars, trains, books, carpentry, dolls house, dolls and prams, slide, seesaw and table top activities. There is an optional time for singing and playing usual activities. A team of caterers serves tea, coffee, toast, fruit and drinks.

Boys Brigade (BB) had some interesting badgework classes including cooking and baking, awareness of environmental issues. The boys are divided into Anchor Boys, Junior Section and Company Section.

Friday

Lunch meetings as outlined earlier.

Community

A local youth football team use the Sports Hall. Abbey Community College also uses the Sports Hall on a regular basis. The buildings have been used by THRIVE and also the local Boxing club and school when needed.

Men's Ministry.

A few varied activities are planned as part of the ministry and outreach to men. Food is always involved. Our hope and prayer is that through these events relationships may continue to be built up or new ones established and more outsiders be drawn in to meet others and hear about how to meet Jesus.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching.

In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need (including the sick, disabled and bereaved).

Generally the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members, or are facilitated through presbyteries or are organised and delivered centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by central resources in almost all cases. Public access is made known through the use of noticeboards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

The benefits are demonstrated through regular evaluation of the services and informal and ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with, the community in which

pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregations main source of income is members contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering.

The income and expenses of the Abbey and its organisations are reflected in the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the congregations total income does not exceed 250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the congregation s transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time its financial position. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 16th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Joanne Deenan

Anne Greer