

FISHERWICK CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Charity for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Objectives and activities

a. Policies and objectives

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees have 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 Christian religion.

b. Strategies for achieving objectives

To continue to meet as a community in person or online on Sunday mornings.

To meet as a Kirk Session, Congregational Committee, and various sub-groups to plan for the future.

c. Activities undertaken to achieve objectives

The charity fulfils its objectives by providing benefit to its members and the public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

d. Public benefit declaration

The direct public benefits which flow from the purposes and activities 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 growth and development. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community through pastoral care (including the poor, sick, disabled, and bereaved). The above benefits are delivered by the church ministers, staff, officers of the church and members through public services and a range of programmes and weekly activities. Public access is made known through the use of notice boards, printed material, websites, social media, and online services.

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.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

e. Main activities undertaken to further the Charity's purposes for the public benefit

The charity undertakes many activities to further its purposes. These are open to anyone of appropriate age and/or gender to access, without regard to whether they are part of our congregation.

During 2023 our organisations have once again been meeting in person.

Our regular activities included the following:

- Sunday worship services;
- Wedding and funeral services;
- Prayer meetings;
- Children and youth activities;
- Church choir;
- Praise bands;
- Easter Mission and Summer Club for primary school aged children;
- Badminton and Table Tennis clubs;
- Indoor bowling;
- Babies and toddlers group;
- Girls and Boys Brigade youth organisations;
- Fellowship small groups;
- Coffee and Chat – a weekly group for older adults;
- 'Daylight' stand offering free hot drinks for students and others during term time;
- Presbyterian Women's group, who organise events including fundraising events for mission and charities;
- Prayer Ministry and Deeper prayer ministry;
- Friends Across Borders, supporting immigrants and asylum seekers;
- Peaced Together: a creative arts course for women, exploring the journey from brokenness to hope;
- Griefshare; grief support group ministry.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

Achievements and performance

a. Main achievements of the Charity

The Rev Andy Galbraith continues to lead the congregation as our minister. He teaches God's Word, administers the sacraments and oversees the work of the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee, in addition to providing pastoral care to those in need.

Andy is assisted by Sheena McIlwrath as our Pastoral Assistant. Sheena provides excellent pastoral care and support to many of our elderly members.

During the last year the church has been blessed by the arrival of Michael Ferguson as our new Youth and Children's Associate. Michael has begun a great work in engaging with our children and young people, encouraging our youth and children ministries volunteers, and developing a vision for leading young people into Christian discipleship.

Michael also liaises with local schools and gets the opportunity to lead school assemblies, engage with Scripture Union in schools, and has led teaching at school residential weekends.

During 2023 we were delighted to partner with two of our local neighbouring congregations (St Brigids Roman Catholic and St Bartholomew's Church of Ireland) to run a joint Alpha course that gave members of the community an opportunity to explore the Christian Faith. This course moved around all three congregations and developed great relationships between the teams.

We are very thankful for the many church officers and volunteers (too many to name) who help keep the community of Fisherwick working well. We could not do everything we do without the willingness of so many who volunteer their gifts and time so willingly.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

b. Review of activities

Fisherwick's Vision statement is, 'The whole gospel, for the whole person, within the whole church in the whole world'. It is based on the core belief that as disciples of the risen Lord Jesus, the good news of Jesus should impact our relationship with each other, the wider church family, and the wider world.

The Whole Gospel

Through our Sunday services, small groups, and prayer meetings our Minister and visiting speakers have continued to tell us about the love of God and help us grow into mature disciples.

Our special Christmas and Easter services were attended in person or viewed by many online. Many of our elders helped lead and preach during the year and we have been encouraged and refreshed by their ministry. Our Music Director, Neale, the choir, and the praise bands enriched our worship throughout the year, but especially at Christmas and Easter.

The Whole Person

Our Minister, pastoral staff and elders provided pastoral care on an ongoing basis in the local area, nursing homes and local hospitals. Funerals and weddings continue to be a way to offer compassion and care to many at the most important times in their lives.

Much care and love has also been expressed in meeting together through 'Small Groups' and prayer groups and the congregation has been encouraged to contact those they miss meeting on a Sunday morning.

The Whole Church

As a congregation we believe that we are more than the sum of our parts. This means that we value the sense of shared identity and fellowship that exists when we gather Sunday by Sunday as a church family. We also recognise our role as part of the wider church of Jesus Christ. This means we participate fully in the work of the South Belfast Presbytery, we support the South Belfast Foodbank, and we work in partnership with Queen's Chaplaincy and Friends International in reaching out to local and international students who are studying in our district.

The Whole World

We have continued to support Armond and Anace who are working in Peru. We have supported the work there in prayer and financially. We also continue to support our friend Wilfred Abia who started the 'Integrated Health for all Foundation' which helps the poor in the Cameroon.

We have also supported Christians in other countries persecuted for their faith through regular prayer and by financial donations.

c. Fundraising activities and income generation

The charity is principally funded through voluntary donations, bequests and gifts from the congregation and fundraising activities.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Financial review

a. Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the accounting policies.

b. Reserves policy

The reserves policy of the charity is to develop and maintain unrestricted reserves not designated for a particular purpose at a level equivalent to 6 months incoming resources without prejudicing the ongoing activities of the organisation.

Total reserves held by the charity at the end of the year are £3,064,779 (2022 : £3,226,872) of which £2,471,944 (2022 : £2,653,890) are restricted for a specific purpose, £585,273 (2022 : £535,878) are in unrestricted funds and £7,562 (2022 : £37,104) are endowment funds. £2,469,866 of all reserves at 31st December 2023 are tangible fixed assets held for the ongoing delivery of the Church's charitable activities.

The reserves are needed to meet the operational costs of the Church on an ongoing basis. The primary indicator of the level of reserves are the expenses of the general fund. During the year general fund expenses were £286,132, further additional expenses of £46,938 were incurred in relation to other unrestricted funds and funds designated for a specific purpose.

As at 31st December 2023, the Charity held unencumbered unrestricted reserves which had not been designated for a specific purpose of £389,548. This amount represents approximately 16 months running costs and the Trustees are satisfied that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the Charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. It is noted that running costs in 2023 were higher than the previous year, in part, due to the increase in utilities and general inflation.

c. Principal funding and financial performance

The charity is principally funded through voluntary donations, bequests and gifts from its congregation and fundraising activities.

Income from donations and legacies from contributing families and grants totalled £346,586 (£302,541 in 2022).

Total expenditure increased from £498,596 in 2022 to £538,067 due to a charge for depreciating the COP Project building, additional salaries and the increased costs of running the Church building and rising energy costs. Expenditure on COP is being capitalised into a separate category of leasehold improvements on the balance sheet of the Church and depreciated accordingly.

The church recorded an overall deficit for the year of £162,095.

The General Fund of the church ended the year with an deficit of income over expenditure and transfers of £10,315 and a closing surplus of £92,436.

The main charitable objective of the church is the advancement of the Christian religion and it is considered that all direct charitable costs and support costs are incurred in furtherance of this purpose. Direct charitable expenditure increased from £211,843 in 2022 to £228,875, and support costs also increased from £285,578 in 2022 to £305,854 during the year. As noted, a depreciation charge of £186,178 relating to the COP project and running costs are a part of support costs. The COP project depreciation charge should be anticipated at similar levels in future years as COP additions are depreciated. The COP project is considered by the Trustees to be solely for the purpose of enhancing the delivery of the church's charitable objectives.

FISHERWICK CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Structure, governance and management

a. Constitution

Fisherwick Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a registered charity, number NIC104366, and is constituted under a Trust deed.

b. Methods of appointment or election of Trustees

The management of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are appointed under the rules and guidance outlined in 'The Code', which is the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland' published by the authority of the General Assembly in 1980, reprinted with amendments 1992, reprinted with amendments 1997, reprinted with amendments June 2019, 2020 and 2022.

c. Organisational structure and decision-making policies

The Kirk Session has the spiritual oversight of the congregation and, as elders/Trustees, is also responsible for the financial aspects of church life. The Congregational Committee has responsibility for the upkeep of the building, general management, and operational financial planning on behalf of the Kirk Session. The elders are ex officio members of Congregational Committee, so the two bodies work together. Both the Kirk Session and the Congregational Committee have a series of 'Ministry Responsibilities' and 'Subgroups' which look after specific areas covering all spiritual and operational matters

d. Vision statement - Fisherwick's values

Fisherwick holds fast to the central beliefs of Christianity as stated (and often used at Communion services) in the Apostles' Creed, which states

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

As a member church of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland we hold that 'the Word of God as contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament is the only infallible rule of faith and practice and the supreme standard of the Church'.

We support and adhere to the Presbyterian form of Church Government and we seek to play our part in the wider church.

At the heart of Fisherwick's own distinctive values is a heritage, a passion and vision which can be summed up in the following statement:

"The Whole Gospel, for the Whole Person, within the Whole Church, in the Whole World".

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:


- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and 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 Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the provisions of the Trust deed. 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.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees on 14 May 2024 and signed on their behalf by:


.....
Gerald Gault
(Trustee)


.....
Peter Lindsay
(Trustee)