

SEAVIEW CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104453)

SEAVIEW CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

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

Seaview congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
94 Shore Road Belfast BT15 3QA

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104453)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Edward Hyndman
David McCormick
George McCrory
Gordon Spratt

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Edward Hyndman
Clerk of Session	David McCormick
Treasurer	Gordon Spratt

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Simon Hopper Hopper & Co 6 Doagh Road Ballyclare Co Antrim BT39 9BG

BANKERS

Northern Bank Limited t/a Danske Bank Donegall Square West Belfast BT1 6JS

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 once in each of the months of January, February, March, April, May, September October and November in each year.

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. Seaview 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 of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

Seaview 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 plan expressed in its purpose in the following words "We seek to glorify God and to share Christ with others through worship, teaching, fellowship and lifestyle". The key words in the statement expressing our aim as a congregation are "to glorify God and to share Christ" and the words which follow describe how we seek to achieve it. In our Sunday services we together engage in worship, are taught and teach from the Bible, and find fellowship with one another. These elements are also found in the meetings of the organisations of the congregation. We seek to encourage those in the community around us to join with us in Sunday services and to attend our organisations. Lifestyle concerns how we express our faith individually and collectively in how we live and how we relate to those who are not members of the congregation and with whom we share the message of the gospel.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed on three 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 as Communicant Members of the congregation. We welcome all who in sincerity profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to participate in the Sacrament. The congregation holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School
- Girls' Brigade
- Christian Explorers
- Men's Fellowship
- Teaching English Classes

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00 am. Evening services did not resume following the removal of the restrictions arising as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. During the week the Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. Members of the congregation and its organisations participate in leading elements of Sunday worship from time to time and a rota of readers read the scripture lesson Sunday by Sunday. Video services are made available for members to access over the internet.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at one service of thanksgiving. For much of the year we were unable to hold funeral services.

At 31 December 2023 there were 42 communicant members and 103 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at morning worship was 48.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are usually visited on a regular basis by the minister or elders, and a flower ministry delivers flowers to such members and also to those who have been bereaved.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation through each of its organisations engages in outreach throughout the year to and within the local community, mainly by providing activities, friendship and fellowship appropriate to the ages of those attending the organisation. The congregation also supports the Presbyterian Orphan Society.

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 the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals. The congregation supports a number of worldwide mission organisations by way of donations to a fund named the Interdenominational Mission Support Group the donations to which fund are distributed annually. The congregation through Christian Explorers supports an annual "Shoebox Appeal" in which small gifts are sent to children and teenagers in needy parts of Europe.

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.

Property

At the end of 2023 it was identified that the boiler in the manse belonging to the church would require replacement and that some other work to the heating system would be required. That work is due to be carried out early in 2024.

Organisations

The organisations of the congregation and an outline of their activities are as set out below.

Sunday School: The Sunday School meets during the Sunday morning service in the vestibule of the church and is for children aged up to approximately twelve years of age. Numbers of children attending vary from week to week, but 2023 were not usually more than eight. The programme is varied and includes singing, prayer, Bible stories, missionary stories, art, craft and drama. The teachers seek to convey to the children that Jesus loves them and desires to be their Saviour and friend.

Girls' Brigade: The Girls' Brigade meets on Monday evenings and is for girls of pre-school age up to the age of eighteen. The organisation meets in sections distinguished by age and each section provides activities appropriate to the ages of the girls within it. In addition to the weekly activities within the halls the girls also engage in activities of the wider Girls' Brigade organisation such as games and competitions. An annual enrolment service at which girls and officers are formally enrolled is held in the church and the organisation puts on an annual display at which their work during the year is demonstrated to parents, friends and members of the congregation.

Christian Explorers: The Christian Explorers meets on Wednesday evenings and is an organisation provided for children aged 4-12 years. The programme is gospel-based and is intended to help children to develop physically, mentally, creatively and spiritual. Its elements are worship, games, a Bible story, and crafts and puzzles as well as refreshments. Most of those attending are from outside the membership of the congregation.

Men's Fellowship: The Men's Fellowship meets on alternate Friday evenings. Its main activities are indoor bowling, an epilogue slot in which one of the members reads a portion of scripture which is then discussed, and light refreshments. The meetings encourage a warm sense of friendship between the

members. In 2023 meetings took place on a somewhat sporadic basis due to illness and unavailability of members.

English Classes: Those attending are divided into groups depending on their level of English. All those attending the classes also join together for a time of refreshment , chat, building friendships and exchanging news.

Bible Study: This group generally meets on Thursday evenings with attendance generally in the order of twelve or so. The meeting provides teaching, an opportunity for discussion of the Bible, and also includes a time of prayer.

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, either by direct contributions through envelopes or by standing orders. The number of contributing families in 2023 was 68 compared to 67 the previous year, although the number of individual contributors increased from 69 in 2022 to 74 in 2023. Contributions in 2023 through Freewill Offerings totalled £55,903, which was an increase of £2,904 over the previous year. This was due to a combination of more people contributing to the weekly offering and an increase in the contributions made by existing members.

Total income in 2023 was £81,996, an increase of £10,265 compared to 2022. This increase was due to the increase in weekly offerings, contributions to an appeal for money to pay for repairs to our Church Property, and a new fund that was set up to cover the costs of events such as Coffee mornings and Church lunches. Total expenditure for 2023 was £91,936, which was an increase of £2,856 over the previous year. This increase was mainly due to increases in our electricity and heating oil bills and increases in assessments from the Presbyterian Church.

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 19 day of March 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Rev Edward Hyndman

David McCormick

Edward Hyndman, 19 March 2024

David McCormick, 19 March 2024

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SEAVIEW CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**