

RATHCOOLE 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

Rathcoole Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Rathmore Drive
Rathcoole
Newtownabbey
BT37 9BN

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104481)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Norman Creaney
Dermot Keaveney
William George Lunn
David Henry McCormick

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister: VACANT Reverend Alan Carson Vacancy Convenor
Clerk of Session: Norman Creaney
Treasurer: Roy Rainey

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Roy Eakin (Retired Bank Official) 18 Farm Lodge Road, Greenisland, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, BT38 8XH

BANKERS

Ulster Bank, 2 Farmley Road, Glengormley, BT36 7QU

SOLICITORS

Magennis & Creighton Solicitors, 572 Shore Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 0SL

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 Session 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 congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held at least every other month.

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. Rathcoole 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 of the active ministers of congregations within its bounds, a ruling elder appointed by each congregation, ministers who have retired from active duty but are still members of the presbytery and a small number of others whose work and/or ministry is overseen by the presbytery.

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.

Rathcoole 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.

Rathcoole Presbyterian Church aims to be a worshipping, spiritually maturing community of God's people living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Our purpose is to care for and equip our members, and to spread the Good News to those who do not know the Lord in our own area and further afield. The Mission Statement of Rathcoole Presbyterian Church can be summed up as – "To Know Jesus, Make Him Known and Share His Love".

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation holds regular Bible Study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including Kids for Jesus, Girls Brigade, Mothers and Toddlers, Bowling Club, Craft Class, Ladies' Outreach, Men's Fellowship and Friday Club for Kids.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and 6.30pm. During the week we meet for worship and Bible Study providing an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we observed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper four times. At 31 December 2023 there were 35 communicant members and 150 of families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 40.

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 other volunteer visitors. We sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

Mission and outreach

We organised a shoebox appeal in support of Samaritans Purse.

The congregation made donations to missions and missionaries including Majed Tinawi, Open Doors, Asia Link, Scripture Union and Belfast City Mission.

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.

Presbytery

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

General Assembly

The General assembly met in June 2023. The minister and one ruling elder attended.

Property

During the year the church property was maintained in good condition.

Organisations GB held gatherings for girls, which included singing, prayer and bible stories.

The Craft Class continue to meet weekly.

Parents and Tots continue to meet weekly.

Ladies' Fellowship meets on first Wednesday of each month and bring together women from the congregation with guests and speakers. Several non-congregation members from the local community attend these events.

Kids for Jesus meets every Sunday morning during sermon of the main church service.

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 congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 78 contributing families during the year 2023 (78 in 2022) donating a total of £35,338 (£38,835 in 2022)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £71,975 compared to £68,344 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased from £45,425 to £45,669

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 15th May 2024 and signed on its behalf by Norman Creaney and George Lunn.