

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

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### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the year ended 31st December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes 1 to 26, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31st December 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the trustees' ability to continue as a going concern.

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained in the Annual Report.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' Annual Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### **Responsibilities of the trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, set out on page 23, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 65(2) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

### **Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charity and determined that the most significant are the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and The Charities (Annual Return) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. In addition, the charity has to comply with laws and regulations relating to its operations, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme rules, health and safety and GDPR.
- We understood how the charity is complying with those frameworks by making enquiries of the trustees and management of the charity to understand how the charity maintains and communicates its policies and procedures in these areas. We corroborated our inquiries through reading minutes of trustees' meetings and correspondence with relevant authorities.
- We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by considering the risk of management override and by assuming the recognition of certain elements of voluntary income, income from charitable activities, and investment income and the impairment of Council of Social Witness care homes property carrying values to be fraud risks. Our testing of such income included agreeing specific transactions to source documentation and the receipt of payment in bank statements, testing certain manual journals, and reading minutes, legal documentation and records maintained by the trustees. Our testing in respect of impairment risks related to the Council for Social Witness care homes included evaluating and testing the trustees' assessment of the fair value less costs of disposal of the care home properties compared to their carrying values. This included assessing the objectivity and competence of the external valuer who provided these valuations.
- Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify noncompliance with such laws and regulations. We read the minutes of trustees' meetings to identify any non-compliance with laws and regulations. We also made enquiries with the trustees and of management of the charity regarding compliance with laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2015. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

ERNST & YOUNG LLP

Statutory Auditor

Belfast

31 July 2024

Ernst & Young LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006