

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a 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 Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

First Antrim congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Church Street, Antrim
BT41 4BA

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104951)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

J.A. Alexander	T. R. H. Latimer
K.A. Alexander	Rev. S. J. Lockington BA BD
J.N Allison	H. McC. Matchett
A. Brownlee	W.H.McFadden
A.A. Chestnutt	R.P. McKibbin
R.P. Clarke	Mrs N. McKnight
D.C. Clyde	D. W. McMahan
L.T. Creighton	J. Orme
A. McM. Cuthbert	B.A. Simpson
D.K.Elliott	D.A.Thompson
M.R. Finlay	P. McFetridge
I. Hamill	R. McKeown
M.W. Herbison	S.McCormick
R. Kirkpatrick	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. S. J. Lockington BA BD
Clerk of Session	T.R.H. Latimer
Treasurer	G.Ferguson

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Hopper & Co
6 Doagh Road
Ballyclare
BT39 9BG

BANKERS

Ulster Bank
8 Market Square
Antrim
BT41 4AT

SOLICITORS

Anderson Gillan Barr
32 Church Street
Antrim
BT41 4BA

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

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 congregations. 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 on a monthly basis between September and June.

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. First Antrim Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Templepatrick Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

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 each 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

First Antrim 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 congregations mission purpose is for the fame of Christ, to be disciples and make disciples in Antrim and beyond.

Jesus offers this promise in John 10:10

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”

This promise is full of meaning. ‘Full Life’ in Jesus is the greatest need of all who don't believe in Him and the ultimate purpose of all who do.

OUR VALUES AND MISSION

1. Prayer and the Word of God are central to the life of our Church.
2. Our Worship should be God honouring, joyful and uplifting.
3. We value togetherness, developing community in our Church family. We strive to be a friendly Church.

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

4. We long to see each member equipped to be an everyday disciple.
5. Evangelism at home and abroad is integral to who we are.
6. We seek to communicate the Gospel clearly and creatively to contemporary society.
7. We seek to show practical concern for all in need.
8. We are strategically placed in Antrim Town centre and need to maximise the opportunity to engage with the community. This will require us to reimagine our building strategy and our mission.
9. We need to be future focused. Whilst we learn from the past we do not dwell there. We lean and are led forward to the years ahead.
10. We will focus our resources on our mission to be disciples and to make disciples.

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 Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School (Friends of God Club)
- Youth Club
- Elevation (Teenage Group)
- Boys' Brigade
- Girls' Brigade
- Chat 'n Chew
- Craft Class
- Friendship Group
- Presbyterian Women
- Mens Ministry
- Ladies Bible Study – 2 groups
- Mens Bible Study – 2 groups

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 10.30am and 6.30pm. During the week the Small Group Ministry provides an opportunity for members to meet together

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. Alongside these, regular prayer meetings are held throughout the week on a range of subjects.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at 5 Sacraments of Baptism, we conducted 0 marriage services and gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 285 (2022:295) communicant members and 384 (2022:395) families connected with the congregation.

The average week attendance at morning worship is 196 (2022:176).

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 members of the congregation.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation engages in local evangelism through a range of organisations including the following:

Boys' Brigade
Girls' Brigade
Christians Against Poverty
Chat 'N Chew
Youth Club
Annual Holiday Bible Club
Men's Ministry
Presbyterian Women
Regular community outreach meals
Shared outreach events with other Antrim Churches
Bible Study Groups
School Uniform Bank
Little Legends (Mums & Tots Group)

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

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 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 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.

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Organisations

Organisation	Summary of Activity	Regular Attendance Level
Boy's Brigade	Meets weekly on a Monday night. We work with boys between the ages of 4 and 18. We have a varied programme of activities to fulfil our object of advancing Christ's Kingdom amongst boys and promoting habits of obedience, reverence, discipline and self-respect.	36
Girl's Brigade	Meets weekly on a Wednesday night. We carry out a wide range of activities to help girls develop spiritually, physically and emotionally, learn new skills and make new friends.	50 girls aged 3 yrs – 18 from a variety of backgrounds
Youth Club	Meets weekly on a Friday night. We provide a safe environment for secondary aged students to socialise and play sports. Each week there is a short epilogue led by a guest speaker.	20 regulars
PW	Meets monthly on a Tuesday night, 7 times per year. Each meeting is led by a special speaker and supper is provided. Ladies increasingly enjoy being together.	40-70 ladies, breakfast 100 +
Elevation	A group for young people of secondary school age, meeting on Sunday evenings. We develop friendships amongst young people and give them the opportunity to learn from the Bible in a relaxed environment.	Between 15 + 25 young people
Friends of God Club (Sunday School)	A group for 4 to 11 year olds meeting during Sunday School to learn and develop individual relationships with God	20
Craft Class	Ladies from different surrounding towns come to learn various crafts. We provide companionship to the senior ladies and aim to spread the Gospel of Jesus	18 ladies
Friendship Group	Meets on a Tuesday, once a month from 1:45-3:30pm. The aim is to provide friendship and fellowship, promoting interaction for the benefit of people in the town. We have a short time of worship, have a guest speaker covering various topics, and enjoy afternoon tea. One or two outings are planned each year which members enjoy.	70+, aged 50+
Monday morning Bible Study	Ladies meet for 1 ½ hours to study the bible, have refreshments and enjoy being together. Creche is also provided for the ladies who have small children. We meet for 6 weeks before Christmas and 12 weeks after.	15-30 attend

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Tuesday morning Bible Study	Ladies meet for 1 ½ hours to study the Bible, have refreshments and enjoy being together, we meet for 6 weeks before Christmas and 12 weeks after.	15-30 attend
Wednesday Bible Study	Gentlemen meet for 1 ½ hours in two groups, one in the morning and two in the afternoon to study the Bible and enjoy being together	AM 10-15 attend PM 25-30 attend
Little Legends (Mums & Tots Group)	Meet on Wednesday mornings for 1 ½ hours, for children to pre-school age to get together and have fun while the parents chat and enjoy fellowship	20

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.

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

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 208 contributors during the year (2022: 234) donating a total of £146,493 (2022: £134,290).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £421,609, compared to £499,287 in the previous year, mainly due to decreases in donations/gifts.

Total expenditure in the year was £389,570 (2022: £998,561). The major part of this decrease relates to the extensive refurbishment of the Church and halls in the prior year.

A decision taken by Session at a meeting on 23rd March 2021 has resulted in the balance of the PMS investment now being written off as irrecoverable. A small balance held in the Missionary and Student Fund has since been identified and written off this year.

An amount of £13,655 previously believed to have been donations has now been reclassified as interest free loans in this year's accounts. This is reflected in the SOFA as a prior year adjustment and included in Balance Sheet creditors at 31st December 2023.

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees review the financial position of the Charity on a monthly basis. A report submitted by the Treasurer to each stated meeting provides up to date financial data. This allows income and expenditure to be compared against the figures at the equivalent point in the previous Church year.

The Trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves that it is appropriate to hold taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the current policy of the Trustees to hold at least 6 months normal expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £146,591 (excluding fixed assets) which represents a fair level of reserves when compared to the six-monthly expenditure of around £85,000 [Excluding any one-off building work]. The Trustees consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent of the ongoing financial support of members.

RISK REVIEW

A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of ongoing financial support from members. These risks are mitigated by the Trustees, and the Congregational Committee, regularly monitoring the various activities of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregation and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently

FIRST ANTRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Funds will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregations and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2015)”.

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 on 26th May 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Harry Latimer

Clerk of Session

Rev. Stephen Lockington

Minister