



ANNUAL REPORT
1ST JANUARY 2022 - 31ST DECEMBER 2022

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1.0 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

The trustees of Strean Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are pleased to submit their report for the period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

1.1 Mission Statement

“To know Jesus Christ and to let His Light shine.”

By:

- a) Sharing a living faith in Him and growing in that faith through discipleship, spiritual growth, Bible teaching and prayer.
- b) Lovingly caring for each other and reaching out with the good news of the Gospel.

That our Father in heaven might be glorified (Matt. 5:16)

Our Values

We believe:

- That we exist as a congregation to serve and worship God, to glorify Him and bear witness in the world to His son, Jesus.
- In the power of the Gospel to transform lives and communities.
- In the power and necessity of prayer.
- That sound teaching of God’s Word is central to worship and all of church life.
- That we should be involved in sharing the Gospel in both local and global outreach.
- That as a church family we should show God’s love to each other.
- That children and young people are an integral part of the Church. Our desire is that as they grow up in our fellowship they will come to respond to the love of Christ.
- In being open, welcoming and outward looking.

Mission Plan

Over the five years from 2019 to 2024 we propose to:

- Help every member of the congregation grow spiritually.
- Encourage involvement in church life for every member of the congregation.
- Encourage participation in regular teaching and Bible Study.
- Encourage corporate and individual prayer.
- Develop pastoral work and pastoral team ministry.
- Provide assistance to and opportunities for the many young families in our congregation to become involved in service and, where appropriate, leadership.
- Provide support and encouragement to our youth and children’s leaders.
- Investigate and foster ways to ensure continued involvement of young people through teens and twenties.
- Build on existing relationships with other churches and the local community.
- Extend our existing involvement with "overseas" mission.
- Encourage growth of small group ministry.
- Increase the focus on social witness and outreach within our local community.

In order to put this plan into action we will:

- Ensure that we have in place the appropriate personnel, resources, facilities and finance to facilitate our mission plan.
- Monitor, evaluate and review each of the listed objectives annually, so that they continue to be relevant and effective in helping us to live out our mission statement.

The strapline to incorporate all aspects of our mission statement is, “Let His Light Shine”.

1.2 Church Organisations and Events

We have various and complementary groups and organisations catering for the varied and complete range of our congregation and needs. Some organisations continued with restrictions due to the covid pandemic until Easter 2022 but we were delighted to be able to return to a full programme of activities in the autumn. In April, forty of our young people plus leaders went on a residential activity weekend at Delamont Outdoor Learning Centre, 20 miles away. We were also able to have a Holiday Bible Club, which took place over 4 evenings in July with 70 children attending.

We started a new drop-in on a Thursday afternoon, in July. This was in response to the increasing cost of living crisis and to prevent isolation and loneliness. It is open to the community and also members of our congregation.

Average numbers attending each organisation is in parenthesis:

- Discovery Sunday School (15)
- Discovery Tots crèche (2)
- Youth Fellowship (15)
- Craft Class (30)
- Girls' Brigade (60)
- Tots and Toddlers (40)
- Boys' Brigade (50)
- Small Bible study groups (20)
- Football & Fellowship (10)
- Badminton (15)
- Indoor Bowls (20)
- Presbyterian Women (30)
- Men's Fellowship, including a monthly breakfast (15)
- Youth Club (100)
- Thursday drop-in (8)
- Residential Youth Weekend (40)
- Holiday Bible Club (70)
- Summer Blitz 3-day activity programme for teenagers (40)

1.3 Challenges and Future Vision

The Trustees have worked hard to provide a Church and an organisation which is working as it should in an efficient and effective manner. Session approved the 2021 Accounts at a Session meeting on 3rd April 2022 and they were adopted at the A.G.M. on 6th April 2022. Our main desire is for the Church to grow and for our Bible knowledge, discipling and mentoring of the congregation, particularly with new converts, to be the main thrust of the way ahead.

A decision was made by Session in 2022 that external users of our halls would be charities working in our local community, and not businesses. In addition to the Child Contact Centre that meets weekly to allow estranged families supervised contact, the North Down & Ards Women's Aid group started a weekly support programme in April in our halls for victims of domestic abuse.

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Our weekly activities continued to grow in numbers. We were also able to have our Antiques & Collectables Fairs in May and October, and our Christmas Sale in December. We had a “Sausage Sizzle” and display of memorabilia for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s 70th Jubilee in June and a Family Fun Night in September.

In June we provided a lunch for a group of refugees from Ukraine who attend English speaking classes in a Community Centre a few minutes’ walk from Strean Presbyterian Church. After discussion with the English class teacher, who is also responsible for Community Programme Planning, a need was identified for the newly arrived Ukrainians to meet each other to share their experiences.

As mentioned in section 1.2, the Welcome Area is open on a Thursday afternoon as a warm space with hot drinks, free Wi-Fi, books, newspapers and board games, and friendly volunteers are available to chat. We are registered as a “Warm Welcome Space” and in July we also signed up with FareShare Go to provide free short-dated food. Unfortunately, the supply of the food from our local supermarket was not reliable and after a trial period we made the decision not to continue with the FareShare programme.

1.4 Target Areas

The following are some “Target Areas” for our immediate focus of both the challenges and opportunities that lie before us. These were developed and agreed by our governing body, the Kirk Session, in the first year of Rev. Jeff McWatters’ tenure with the congregation in 2017. These areas were reviewed on an ongoing basis by Session throughout 2021: -

Prayer

- Through the Holy Spirit to encourage prayer within the congregation and organisations so that members see the value of prayer in its different styles and formats

Preaching

- To preach the Gospel faithfully ensuring adherence to God’s Word and ordinances. Our vision is that this will be in a relevant and contemporary fashion to engage all who worship in Strean.

Pastoral

- To ensure Strean has an effective, compassionate and loving Pastoral Care ministry. This would be working with and utilising our existing team, adding new members, and encompassing gifts within our fellowship.

Mission Outreach

- In conjunction with Session and the Mission sub-committee, to create an effective strategy for both local, community based outreach and a sustainable programme for evangelism and mission activities. This would include steps to provide engagement within those families and individuals who connect with the social events in the Church.

Youth

- To encourage young people who associate with Strean to grow spiritually and encourage them to actively participate in the life of the congregation.

1.5 Minister's Report – Rev. Jeff McWatters

For Strean as a church 2022 was a time to start and reconnect after the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our folks were very nervous about meeting together in person and so the livestream of our Sunday services continued to be very important. From a minister's point of view, I would compare it to starting in a new charge, with lots of people to get to know and new ministries to be explored. Being able to run our children's and youth activities in the summer was such a blessing. These ministries had really been missed by our young people.

Being able to worship together in our building on a Sunday was emotional for a number of our members. Loved ones had passed away in the previous months and we had been unable to gather and give thanks as we normally would have. Friends had missed being together. But through all of the challenges that had been faced, we knew that God was with us and we continued to reach out into the community around us at every opportunity. Our Session made a very definite decision about our social witness and supporting those charities working with those who are vulnerable. Jesus helped people in very practical ways and we are to model our behaviour on Christ's.

We continue to be a group of people, committed to sharing God's love with the community that we are in.

1.6 Church Committee Report – Mr Brian Nixon

We were delighted that during 2022 the restrictions due to the covid pandemic were gradually eased, allowing a full programme of activities and events to resume. The Sausage Sizzle in June, to commemorate the 70th Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 's reign, was a great success. In addition to our other weekly activities, a new drop-in on a Thursday afternoon was started in July. This was in response to the increasing cost of living crisis and to prevent isolation and loneliness. It is open to the community and also members of our congregation. Although numbers are low it is supported by some regular visitors who are very appreciative of the opportunity to meet with others in a relaxing, warm and welcoming safe space.

The congregational subcommittees continued to fulfil their roles throughout the year, and effectively ensured the continued running of church services and activities. Significant repairs were carried out to the Adgey Hall floor in August. Several broken boards were removed and replaced with new maple wood to match the remaining floorboards. All were then sanded and finished before application of new badminton and football lines. The other major work carried out in 2022 was the installation of the Electricity Substation in our West Street car park. The works took approximately 8 weeks to complete, during which time there was significant disruption to the West Street car park. The final stage to reseal the car park will take place shortly as the weather is now dryer and warmer.

1.7 Serious Incident Reporting

During the year to December 2022, no serious Child Protection incidents were reported to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Social Witness Department, which is responsible for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

No reports were made to the Information Commissioner's Office.

1.8 Public Benefit Statement

The trustees of Strean Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Society in the year to 31st December 2022. In evaluating public benefit, the trustees note that communicant membership of Strean Presbyterian Church is open to all who have a personal faith in God as Creator and Saviour. Whilst we would encourage those with personal faith to join our congregation we also serve God within our community and offer a warm welcome to everyone who comes in to attend services or other activities, irrespective of their personal faith.

2.0 Finance Report

2.1 Financial Review

General Account (No. 1 Account)

This is our housekeeping account, out of which all expenses relating to the everyday running of the church e.g. salaries, heat, light, insurance, offices costs and all payments to Church House, PCI are made. Income during the year from Free Will Offering amounted to £77,074 (a 9% increase on the previous year), and Gift Aid claimed from HMRC for 2021/22 tax year generated £14,889. Gift Aid from previous years that was claimed and received in 2022 added an additional £14,701 to the income. Income from the Thomas Streat bequest investment was significantly higher than in 2021, but more similar to previous years. We were able to meet our financial commitments including the Church House assessments and Presbytery Fees of £65,489.

Property funds

The Property account is used to upkeep our church, Halls and the manse. Income of £11,372 was received into this account from congregational giving (monthly envelopes and online giving), which is similar to 2021. Other income was received from 50% of the income from the Harvest Gift Day, split with the Mission Fund. In terms of both the Missions and Property accounts, we were delighted to be able to hold the normal two Antique Fairs and the Christmas Sale in 2022, as covid restrictions eased. The Fundraising Committee was able to transfer the sum of £2,250 to the Property account.

The major expenditure in 2022 was to repair and resurface the Adgey Hall floor at a cost of almost £5,000.

Missions

Mission outreach from Streat congregation is funded from this account. Income is obtained from a number of sources, chiefly monthly envelopes and online donations (raised £9,515). With the return of Sunday services and weekly activities the monthly drop off days are no longer as necessary. 50% income comes from the Harvest Gift Day envelopes, and from the Antiques Fairs and Christmas Sale as mentioned above. A total of £18,417 was allocated to cover the wide range of mission and charitable causes supported by Streat, including our requirement for the PCI United Appeal of £8,643. Five of the 2021 allocations were delayed and paid in the first four months of 2022, amounting to £2,525. The Fundraising Committee was able to transfer the sum of £1,250 to the Missions account.

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2.2 Accounts for the Year ended 31st December 2022

Receipts & Payments Account

RECEIPTS	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL 2022
Freewill/ Envelopes & Gift Aid	£104,636	£33,558		
Bequests/ Investment Income	£3,388	£1,339	£29,038	
Special Collections		£8,766		
Loose collections	£2,213			
Fundraising		£3,500		
Organisation Income	£1,700	£1,089		
Income from external users	£3,120	£18		
Grants		£650		
Other income	£2,120	£24		
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£117,177	£48,944	£29,038	£195,159
PAYMENTS	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL 2020
Staff Costs	£56,895			
General Assembly & Presbytery Costs	£20,998			
Church, Halls & Grounds		£10,716		
United Appeal		£8,643		
Donations to Missions/ Projects		£13,595		
Other expenses	£36,404	£75		
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£114,297	£33,029	£0	£147,326

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2.3 Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Assets

Investments £1,082,321

Current Assets

Bank and Cash Balances £ 133,336

Total Current Assets £1,215,657

Liabilities

Bank Overdrafts £ 0

Non-bank Loans £ 0

Total Current Liabilities £ 0

Net Assets £1,215,657

Fund Balances

Unrestricted Funds £ 82,436

Restricted Funds £ 50,900

Endowment Funds £1,034,547

Total Fund Balances £1,215,657

Name of Bank Account

Danske Bank No 1 A/C (General Account) £ 82,436

Danske Bank No 3 A/C (Property) £ 43,268

Danske Bank No 4 A/C (Mission) £ 7,632

Balances from Organisations £ 16,549

Total £ 149,885

2.4 Notes to the Accounts

Trustees' Expenses

No expenses were paid to any of the Trustees during the year except to reimburse them for purchases made on behalf of the charity.

Accounting Policies

Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 permits a charity to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities where gross income in the financial year does not exceed £250,000, therefore receipts and payments accounts and a statement of assets and liabilities has been prepared and presented for the year ended 31st December 2022.

All Income, including grants and investment income is recorded when received.

All Expenditure is recorded when paid.

Gift aid reclaimable on donations is included in the amounts of income once received.

Independent Scrutiny

The Accounts were audited by Stanley Woods & Co, Registered Auditors and Accountants and a copy of the "Statement of Income and Expenditure and Independent Examiners Report" is included in the accounts.

Cheques not cleared at bank at 31st December 2022

There were a small number of cheques issued by the church which had not cleared at the bank by 31st December 2022, but they were all cleared by 31st January 2023 and included in the 2022 Accounts.

3.0 Reference and Administrative Details

3.1 Charity Details

Charity Name: Strean Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Charity Number: Registered Charity in Northern Ireland, NIC 105064

Principal Address: West Street, Newtownards, Co. Down, BT23 4EN

Trustees as of December 31st 2022:

Rev. Jeff McWatters (Chairman)	Mr Wallace McKee (Clerk of Session)
Mr Brian Nixon (Church Secretary)	Mr Stuart Faloon (Deputy Clerk)
Mr John Black	Mrs Fiona Boyle
Mr Stephen Boyle	Mr Philip Causby
Mr Alan Frazer	Dr Carl Harris
Ms Janet Johnston	Mr John Scott
Mrs Roberta Wilson	Mr Samuel Young

Bank: Danske Bank, High Street, Newtownards, Co. Down, BT23 7HS

Auditors & Accountants: Stanley Woods & Co., Alexander House, 49/51 Church Street, Newtownards, Co. Down, BT23 4AN

Insurance Broker: TL Dallas (NI) Ltd., 63 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 6SA

3.2 Governance and Staffing

On 31st December 2022 the Kirk Session consisted of 14 Ruling Elders, each having been previously voted for by the eligible voting members of Strean Congregation. Each Ruling Elder is also a charity trustee of Strean Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In November 2022, the Clerk of Session, Mrs Fiona Boyle, resigned after serving for 5 years, and Mr. Wallace McKee was elected as Clerk of Session. Mr Stuart Faloon was elected as Deputy Clerk in December 2022.

The Kirk Session is responsible for the spiritual welfare and pastoral care of members of the congregation. They hold scheduled business meetings approximately five times a year. Following the promotion of three elders to Elder Emeritus in 2021, two elders were elected by the congregation in November 2022. It was decided at this stage to postpone the training, installation and ordination of the two new elders until a second election could be held in 2023 to elect an additional six elders.

The Church Committee is responsible for the practical affairs of the church and works through seven subcommittees: finance, reception, property (manse and church), hospitality, audio-visual and information technology, publicity and communications and fundraising. The committee of 13 members who were elected in June 2021 continued to serve as committee members throughout 2022.

3.3 Related Organisations

Strean, a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission NI (Charity Number NIC 105064); the contact person for the charity is the Clerk of Session, Wallace McKee.

The Accounts and Annual Report for each congregation must be submitted for approval to the Presbyterian Church In Ireland by 31st May each year. The Minister and a Representative Elder from each congregation usually attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in June each year.