

**Scrabo Presbyterian Church
Trustees' Annual Report
Year ended 31 December 2024**

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Charity registration number NIC105122

Principal office 77 Blenheim Drive Newtownards Co Down BT23 4QY

The Trustees

Reverend Gary J. Ball (from 27 June 2024)

Mr R Baxter

Mrs M Cameron

Mr J Doherty

Mrs C Donnelly – to 1 October 2024

Mr A Duncan

Mr R Jackson

Mr D McCracken

Accountant Graeme Allen Chartered Accountant (FCA)

Scrabo Presbyterian Church Trustees' Annual Report Year ended 31 December 2024

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

THE KIRK SESSION

The charity Trustees of the Congregation are the members of its Kirk Session. 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 ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting 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. Scrabo congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ards Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

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.

SCRABO GOVERNANCE

The Kirk Session met frequently throughout the year, especially in the period prior to interviews and the calling of the new Minister.

The congregation actively participated in all of the business of the Ards Presbytery through our Assistant Minister and Representative Elder.

The Congregational Committee met on five occasions, with a considerable amount of time spent on discussions regarding necessary work to upgrade the manse property and the replacement of equipment to care for the church grounds.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

Scrabo 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, 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 is to reach out to the very substantial number of homes in and around the West Winds estate and to seek to be a relevant source of friendship and support. Living out the Bible's teaching of love. This mission is not purely for the minister, the Kirk Session, or Organisation leaders to carry out, but it is the mission of all God's servants within the congregation.

By the grace of God, we aim to be a welcoming, inclusive, caring community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place.

**Scrabo Presbyterian Church
Trustees' Annual Report
Year ended 31 December 2024**

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Charity registration number NIC105122

Principal office 77 Blenheim Drive Newtownards Co Down BT23 4QY

The Trustees

Reverend Gary J. Ball (from 27 June 2024)

Mr R Baxter

Mrs M Cameron

Mr J Doherty

Mrs C Donnelly – to 1 October 2024

Mr A Duncan

Mr R Jackson

Mr D McCracken

Accountant Graeme Allen Chartered Accountant (FCA)

Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2024

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.

As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for public worship each Sunday morning at 10.30am. The attendance at Morning Worship throughout the year increased to an average of 72 each Sunday morning. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed in April, September and November and at the end of the year there were 93 communicant members.

A Sunday evening Bible Study group (renamed *Digging Deeper*) met each week alongside the continuing wide range of organisations and activities, catering for all ages and interests.

A fortnightly Prayer Group met to pray for situations and people in the community and across the world. Many prayers were offered for God's leading in the search for a new Minister.

In the absence of a permanent Minister the congregation was in the care of the Vacancy Convenor, Reverend Alvin Little. On 27 February the congregation was given formal Leave to call a new Minister and on 27 June, Reverend Gary J. Ball was installed as Minister of Scrabo, with both the Worship Area and the Eagleson hall filled to capacity with church members, visitors and community representatives.

In the remaining months of the year, particular effort was directed to communication of the church's mission, not only to its members, but to all the families living in the parish. A leaflet was delivered to every home setting out the range of activities on offer, and a Christmas card was similarly delivered in December. The church's website and Facebook page were regularly updated to provide information and news. On 23 June at a special Service, Mrs Francine Magill, a long-time member of Scrabo, was licensed as a Probationer for the full-time ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

The congregation provided pastoral care and support to nine families who experienced bereavement during the year.

At 31 December there were 130 families connected with the congregation, a small increase on 2023.

Pastoral Care

Families in the congregation were regularly kept in contact with the Fellowship by:

- The visits of the Minister and Elders; there is also a well-established informal communications network, through which members keep in contact and provide support to each other through telephone and WhatsApp messages.
- The Streaming of Worship Services using various internet platforms continued during the year for families who are unable to attend.

Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2024

Mission and Outreach

The congregation supports a number of initiatives at local, national and international level:

- A distribution of groceries collected at our Harvest Service was made to a local hostel, the local Nursery and individual families who needed encouragement.
- Scrabo continued to provide financial support to the Debt Counselling service provided by *Christians Against Poverty*, whose work benefits families within the parish.
- As in previous years, Scrabo supported a number of national and international initiatives through the various agencies of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and leading Christian Mission organisations. Substantial support was given to the Church's *United Appeal for Missions* within Ireland and abroad. Scrabo also provided gifts to nine charities and projects at home and abroad.
- At Christmas, gifts were made to the Presbyterian Church-wide *World Development Appeal* and to the local Newtownards Salvation Army project to distribute toys to families with limited resources.

While this support from Scrabo took the form of financial gifts or gifts in kind, there was also much prayer support, for both local family situations and international crises. during the regular in-person Prayer sessions.

ORGANISATION ACTIVITIES

Presbyterian Women and the **Women's Fellowship** had their usual programme of meetings with guest speakers and social activities. Scrabo members participate in a **Men's Breakfast** throughout the year which is held in both Movilla and Scrabo churches.

The **Boys Brigade** continued to attract a large number of boys to their weekly activities each Thursday while the **Girls Brigade** continued to provide their programme on Tuesday evenings. The work of both Uniformed Organisations was formally recognised at their respective Enrolment Services, the B.B. at Sunday worship, and the G.B. at a special Parents Evening in the Worship area.

The **Parent & Toddlers Group** met on Wednesday mornings, and the Friday Drop-in **Oasis coffee morning** remained popular as an opportunity for many in the local area to maintain social contacts. Oasis provides significant grants to local charities from the contributions received.

A new group called **Connect** was established in June as a means of providing an easy way for people to be involved in the church for the first time, and to enhance relationships through a wide-ranging programme of educational, leisure and fun activities. It was encouraging for a new group, that attendance exceeded 30 on some occasions.

The annual **Holiday Bible Club** was organised in the first week of July. This was widely publicised and an encouraging number of local families became involved – many with little or no connection with Scrabo church. A large number of Volunteers of all ages from the church ran the successful programme, which concluded on the Friday evening with an outdoor Fun Night which provided food and games, was open to all, and had the usual large attendance.

Scrabo congregation continued to work alongside the nearby West Winds Community Church, with both Ministers leading an Open-air Carol Service at the local shops in early December.

Scrabo Presbyterian Church

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2024

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, which supports general overheads, property and missions. A number of families do this through direct bank-to-bank gifts. There were 83 contributing families during the year donating a total of £89,291 (85 families donating £81,985 in 2023). In addition, a number of families contributed generously and anonymously to the Loose Offering collection each Sunday.

Total Income of the congregation during 2024 was £179,172 compared to £137,067 in 2023.

Total expenditure in 2024 was £156,012 compared to £119,480 in 2022.

These figures represent a welcome increase in generous giving at a time when the congregation incurred a number of one-off costs on its properties.

**Scrabo Presbyterian Church
Trustees' Annual Report
Year ended 31 December 2024**

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 Congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 208 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.

GOING CONCERN

The activities of the congregation are dependent on the continuing contributions from its members. The Trustees are of the opinion that the congregation has sufficient reserves at the date of the approval of the financial statements to meet commitments which will arise in the year ahead, and to fund the ongoing activities and other financial commitments. A Building Fund is being maintained with a view to undertaking a major scheme of refurbishment to continue to meet current building standards and provide an enhanced quality of meeting spaces within the property. Discussions with the Presbytery Architect continued during the year and a number of surveys were conducted to identify the priority items of work to future-proof the church building and to provide an estimated cost for what will be a substantial refurbishment. A number of improvements were made to the appearance and décor of the manse building which is now in an excellent state of repair.

RISK REVIEW

The Trustees regularly review a range of major risks. Systems and procedures have been put in place to identify and manage these. The principal risks are in relation to reputational damage, and also financial risks associated with the expectation of continuing financial support from members. These risks are mitigated by the Trustees and the Congregational Committee who regularly review the activities of the congregation and the associated costs, and approve of specific expenditure while encouraging generous giving by the Church members and informing them as to how their financial gifts are applied. The Trustees are pleased that since the arrival of our new Minister, there has been an increase in participation in all of the church activities and in financial giving.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees monitor the level of unrestricted reserves, taking account of current and ongoing commitments. Funding of the current range of activities is dependent on the continued financial support of the Church members.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025 and signed on its behalf by



Reverend Gary J. Ball
(Minister)

Date 18/03/25



John Doherty
(Clerk of Session)

Date 18/03/25