

**BALLYHOLME PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**For the year ended 31 December 2022**

**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105128)**

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The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Ballyholme Presbyterian Church congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
46, Ashley Drive  
Bangor  
BT20 5RD  
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105128)

**CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Peter Lyle	Joan Hunter
David Adgey	Susan Adgey
Simon Liggett	Steven Hamilton
Hazel Larmour	John Luke
Tom McAvoy	William McCoubrey
Mervyn Menown	Hilary Millar
Ronald Patton	Lesley Reid
Francis Russell	Rosemary Rutledge
Muriel Smyth	Stuart Stevenson
Audrey Titterington	Michael White

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister	Rev. P.C. Lyle
Clerk of Session	Mrs. Joan Hunter
Treasurer	Mr. A. R. S. Stevenson

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Mr Dean Coulter  
77 Green Road  
Ballyclare  
BT39 9PH

**BANKERS**

Danske Bank, Bloomfield Shopping Centre, Bangor  
Ulster Bank, Springhill Shopping Centre, Bangor

## **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 ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month excepting July and August.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member, a contributor to the Free Will Offering and a regular attendant at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Nominated members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of those who vote at a special congregational meeting.

### **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. Ballyholme Presbyterian Church congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ards Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty from congregations within the Presbytery, an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of the congregation and other invited representatives.

### **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

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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, a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation and other invited representatives from various areas of church life.

## **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

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

Ballyholme Presbyterian Church 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.

The congregation's mission purposes are by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming 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.

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.

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## **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 and activities including: -

- Sunday School
- Parents and Toddlers
- New Horizons
- Presbyterian Women
- Youth Council
- My Church
- Men's Group
- Badminton
- Sunday Crèche
- Youth Fellowship
- Praise Band
- Bowling Club
- Pre-School Group
- After Service Tea/Coffee
- Flower Guild
- Prayer Ministry
- Making Mornings
- Ramblers
- Soul Star

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and prayer**

2022 saw a return to full in person, non restricted services of worship. This was a huge relief and joy following the Covid years. Through the year we saw our numbers growing back towards pre-pandemic levels. The musical elements of the services were led primarily by a worship band who had brought us through all of the online lock down services. They were also supported by an organist who came to play on average once per month and also for any Weddings and funerals which the church hosted. In spite of the in person return we maintained a weekly streaming of the service on our YouTube channel which allowed for others to view during the week. This decision was taken in consideration of older members who did not feel confident enough to come into such a large crowd and also the possibility that there may be those watching who for whatever reason would not feel comfortable entering a church building. We also maintained our nightly evening prayer posts on Facebook, allowing participants to be led through a short act of worship. This was also emailed to the whole congregation on Monday morning.

The after service refreshments saw a significant increase in numbers with a majority of the congregation staying on each week for tea/coffee and chat and for increasingly longer periods. This time seemed to really provide people with much needed conversation and company.

During Easter Holy Week it was great to meet in person once again with the other churches in Ballyholme as we shared Holy Week Services in Ballyholme Methodist Church and our traditional

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Dawn Service on Ballyholme where we were joined by other churches from outside the Ballyholme area.

In the spring we commenced an Alpha Course which ran very successfully through until early May. This comprised of weekly meetings during which we watched the video presentation and then had discussion based around the issues raised. About 2/3 through the course we had a full day event focusing on teaching around the subject of the Holy Spirit. Such was the success that participants requested follow up which was facilitated through the Life Explored Course.

By the end of the year Communion, baptisms, Harvest and our Christmas services had all returned to their pre-pandemic practice.

**Pastoral care**

Pastoral care also saw a return to pre-pandemic practices through the year as Home visits were permitted by the Church authorities and hospitals and Care Homes began to facilitate pastoral visits once again. Some lock down practices such as recording a funeral service and making it available on YouTube have continued as families embraced it to allow family in other parts of the world or who were unable to attend to watch. The major challenge has been to encourage the congregation to inform us of illness as during Covid this had fallen away significantly. By the end of the year we were starting to see improvement in us being notified.

Our prayer Ministry continued with the recommencement of the in person Prayer Group which is on Tuesday mornings. This worked hand in hand with an online Prayer Time using the Zoom platform. Members of the congregation can request prayer for themselves, family members or friends. They also pray for the work of the congregation as a whole.

**Mission and outreach**

As with many things the limits of mission and outreach were curtailed due to Covid regulations. However, in another sense, our outreach stretched much further through the online platforms of YouTube and Facebook streaming our services each week. Most of our groups and organisations who use our facilities during the year were unable to meet until we reached the autumn when some started to recommence their activities.

Our Youth work saw significant growth as young people enjoyed the chance to meet together again. Our team has been very creative in their approach and this has paid off as those coming along started to bring along their friends. In the autumn they also started to attend The Gathering, an inter church event based in First Bangor Presbyterian. They also had some trips to other events such as Summer Madness, Ice Hockey matches and other such fun events. Such has been the encouragements from this part of the work that at the end of the year we appointed a Youth Worker to take up post at the start of 2023. This we look forward to with a great sense of anticipation.

We have continued to be part of new community group that has developed in the area called Love Ballyholme. One of our young men sits on the Committee. The group ran a number of community based events through the year culminating in a much larger Christmas Tree switch on event in

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December. At this choirs from Ballyholme Primary and St Columbanus College performed. We are very encouraged to be a part of something that is so community based.

Prior to Christmas we sent out Christmas Cards to the surrounding neighbours with an invitation to our Christmas services and we did see visitors joining with us over the period. We also joined with the neighbouring churches in singing Carols in the village the week before Christmas.

Our support of emergency appeals, Christian Aid, Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child and Water Aid , Salvation Army Christmas Appeal and Storehouse North Down have all been supported by the congregation.

We also are the home Church for a family serving in Senegal with Wycliffe Bible Translators. They visited home and church in the summer of 2022.

**Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Ards Presbytery at which we are represented by our minister and one of the elders who also served on the Business Committee of the Presbytery. As Presbytery oversees the work of the congregations it is good to participate in the wider work of the church and hear about the local work of Presbyterian Churches.

**General Assembly**

The General Assembly met in June 2022 in Assembly Building in Belfast. The congregation was represented by our Minister and Clerk of Session.

**Property**

None

**ORGANISATIONS**

**Music Ministry**

The Praise Group has been going from strength to strength this year and we are delighted that we have had some new recruits join us. Cherry is regularly leading praise on piano while Ellie has moved from being an occasional to a regular member of the Praise Band. We were delighted that Ellie performed her own composition 'I can see' on a number of Sundays during this year.

God has blessed our congregation with musically gifted people and we are always on the lookout for others to join the Praise Group so if you feel that God is leading you to make use of your talents to play and/or sing in church, come and have a chat with any of us.

The Praise Group is supported in the Music Ministry by June and Christopher on the organ playing on Sundays when the Praise Group is not available and we are appreciative of the support June can provide at funeral services during the week.

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**Prayer Ministry**

Prayer Ministry meet every Tuesday morning at 11.00am. There are two prayer request boxes, one in the Church Reception area and one in the Halls Receptions area.

All requests are strictly confidential and we pray at least one month for each one. There is spoken prayer and silent prayer and we know our Heavenly Father hears and answers each one according to His will.

We have much to thank God for and much to seek His love and guidance for.

A very warm welcome is extended to all to come and join us, we would love to have you.

**Zoom Prayer Time**

The Zoom Prayer Group continues to meet, as the name suggests, on the Zoom platform every Thursday night at 8.10pm. We continue to have one member who joins us from Texas in the United States. It is an additional prayer time to the Tuesday morning group.

We pray for the congregation in all it's needs - the ministry of the congregation, the bereaved and ill, the work of the Elders, the finances of the church and the various groups and organisations who meet regularly through our Church. We also pray for the wider Presbyterian Church and world affairs.

We see this to be a vital part of our church as we believe God's Spirit moves us to pray and responds to the prayers that we bring to Him. We have been inspired by some very clear answers to prayer during the year and many blessings have flown from this committed time.

Prayer is the engine room of the church, without it, we run on empty. We encourage all our members of our congregation to see this vital role and consider joining with us.

**Sunday School**

**Little Acorns**

Ballyholme's younger Sunday School has undergone some big changes over the past year, the first of which is the change in name to 'Little Acorns'. We are also extremely grateful to have two new leaders join our team both Eileen and Sue have been wonderful assets to the team.

Our numbers have continued to grow each week and it has been a real blessing to see more and more young children come through our doors and we love to welcome each child every week to hear about their news and encourage the beginnings of their journey of faith.

We have continued to induct a play-based curriculum which allows our young children to explore the stories in the Bible through accessing a range of different play activities aimed at encouraging their imagination and curiosity skills.

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Our aim in Little Acorns Sunday School continues to be to get our young children excited and interested in learning about the Bible and to understand just how much they are loved and valued. December 2022 also saw us back on the stage for the first time post Covid in our Nativity performance which was a joint debut with the older Sunday School and Soul Star – we all had great fun and again a big thanks to all the leaders for helping us bring it all together as well as some special help from Rachel and Jillian.

I continue to be very grateful to the church and all the members for recognising this and supporting us in Sunday School. Every prayer, word of encouragement or smile is always greatly received and appreciated. I also wish to extend my gratitude to the parents of our young children for their support and to all leaders for their hard work and enthusiasm.

**Junior**

Our Sunday Schools are prayed for every week in our church prayer groups. We ask for blessing in the lives of our children and families, we pray for guidance as we plan and deliver teaching which, in our increasingly secular age, needs to be clear, relevant and robust. Therefore, we have been rejoicing this year, not only at the growing numbers returning after covid-19 restrictions, but in the attention and engagement of our children to the curriculum we deliver. Our Sunday School classes are full of interested, curious and questioning children, keen to listen and to be challenged in their faith as we have explored amongst other things, stories from the Minor Prophets, Paul's missionary journeys and learning the books of the Bible by heart. Our sessions are explorative and interactive and as the children get older we try to make the teaching contextual too - our P4-P7 classes have been joining the congregation to observe our communion services and using their knowledge of the books of the Bible to find the passages read each Sunday Service.

We have loved introducing some of crèche children into Sunday School and must highlight the joy it has been to welcome our beautiful new Hong Kong members each Sunday, it is wonderful to have them as part of our church family now.

Another matter for prayer this year has been to grow our teams of teachers. We are so thankful that many have volunteered to help and be called upon, when necessary, to support the regular team. All of these volunteers bring valuable skills and an ability to get alongside the children in a meaningful way.

It was great to be able to hold our annual Nativity in person again this year and to have some very skilful acting and singing to help us celebrate Christ's coming into our world. How wonderful to have the problem that we couldn't fit all of our children on to the stage at the one time - blessing indeed! It was fantastic to have Soul Star (Bible class) join us in the narration and music roles, and we thank them for being such good role models for the younger children coming behind them.

Several of our families took up the challenge to take "Blaze" the bee on holiday with them, and it was lovely to see the pictures of where he got to. We hope that this very valuable way to explore what God is doing in churches in other parts of the world will continue this year.

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We give thanks to God for each child who comes along and we thank families for supporting us too. Looking ahead, we are excited at the opportunities we have here in Ballyholme as we partner with parents in the task of helping to lead boys and girls to love and serve Christ and his church.

**Soul Star**

At present Soul Star meets most Sunday mornings during the service. It is for young people from year 8 and above. There are up to ten young people attending, though this varies from week to week. The purpose of Soul Star is to provide an opportunity for the young people to read and study the Bible, discover more about Christianity and develop their relationship with God. It is also a great opportunity for them to ask questions and talk through issues and challenges that they are facing at this stage in their lives.

We have recently started a new course called Origins 24/7 prayer. The content includes short videos to watch, questions and discussion. A relaxed and informal atmosphere is encouraged, aided by hot chocolate and snacks!

It is super to see the young people returning each week and warmly welcome any young person who would like to come along.

**Youth Fellowship**

2022 was a busy year at Youth Fellowship with the group carrying out many different activities throughout the year with plenty of opportunities to encounter God.

Early in the year a few members from YF went on a youth weekend to Moira along with Ballyholme Parish where we stayed in St John's Parish Hall.

In February we were joined by Kings Youth Fellowship and Aisling from Scripture Union who delivered a workshop on how to be a Christian in school, we finished the night playing video games - a lot of competition on Mario Kart!

In March we went on a trip to the Dundonald Ice Bowl along with Kings YF, we had the choice of either ice skating or crazy golf. Over 30 young people enjoyed this outing with minimal injuries sustained.

We had a visit from Love For Life running a programme over 3 weeks called "Game on". The programme is designed to guide young people as they build healthy relationships. They are encouraged to play the leading role in respecting themselves and others in all their relationships. In May they returned to have a night with parents to empower them and address 'growing up' issues. We explored practical methods of communication and how to understand healthy boundaries for relationships.

At YF we really enjoy a night of baking and this year we made cheesecake in an Easter egg and made a range of pastry treats throughout the year.

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At the end of June the church had a family BBQ. Afterwards, YF stayed on for an hour and acted like big kids on the bouncy castle. We shared some of our highlights from the previous school year, this was a really special time together.

At the start of the summer a group of 4 young people went to Summer Madness (a Christian festival) that was held in Portglenone. During the festival Pete Greig was sharing from 24/7 Prayer on how to pray and we enjoyed different activities around the campsite including canoeing and going to different seminars. We would like to give a massive thank you to Bangor Elim for allowing us to join them for meal times and providing our food while we were there.

When YF started again in September we went on a day Trip to Greenhill YMCA (Outdoor activity centre) in Newcastle. We had a great day catching up and getting to do some incredible activities including bouldering up Bloody Bridge, Zip Line and Archery. We even got the leaders into wetsuits and on the zip lines.

In October we took a trip to see Circus Extreme in Belfast and we were all amazed at the many different stunts that were performed and we did lots of laughing at the clown.

In the run up to Christmas, two members of our congregation joined us who had been in Belarus in 2013 handing out shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. They showed us pictures from their trip and instructed us on how to pack shoe boxes. As a group we completed a few shoe boxes.

Love Ballyholme (a local community group) were looking for young people to help Santa as his elves for the Christmas light switch on in Ballyholme. A few of our YF members were able to help out and were an incredible help to Santa as they passed out candy canes to children in the crowd.

One of our highlights from the past year is the night when we arrived at the church for YF and it had snowed. We had a snow ball fight for the first half of the night followed by watching a Christmas movie which really got us in the mood for Christmas.

On the last night of YF in December we finished off the year with a pizza party and the members from making mornings kindly made us some knitted gifts.

Throughout the year we continued to attend The Gathering, an event held in First Bangor. This year we made it to four of their events on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

I would like to thank all the leaders who have given up their Sunday nights to invest in our young people and parents who have helped out at various times. If any young people would like to find out about joining in the fun or adults interested in volunteering at YF please contact me.

### **Mens Ministry Group**

Our new Mens Ministry Group commenced in April with an informal gathering for tea, coffee, treats and chat. During the year we had a wide variety of speakers including Paul Blair (Vascular Surgeon), Mark Robson (TV Presenter and Sports Commentator) and our own Stephen Cameron, speaking about the Princess Victoria disaster. We also enjoyed a very informative walking tour of Ballyholme

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led by local Architect and Historian, Ken Best. The year was rounded off with a very enjoyable Christmas Dinner at The Esplanade Restaurant. Thank you to everyone for attending the meetings and I would encourage all the men in the congregation to come along – you will be most welcome. Special thanks to Graham for providing the tea and coffee and to Ruth for a regular supply of treats !

**Flower Guild**

During the year, donations were made to the flower guild and a small number of people arranged the flowers at the front of the church for Sunday Services. The onward gift of the flowers is very much appreciated by the recipients and so these small acts of kindness reflect our fellowship as a church family. These flowers were used to mark a variety of life events, some celebrating a happy occasion-notable birthdays (including 100!), 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries, those recovering from illness or families who have recently been bereaved.

We would like to thank all those who donated funds and flowers throughout the year and especially the small group who are committed to arranging and distributing the flowers in church. Over time we have had reduced contributors to this work and so we welcome new donors.

We had special flowers for services celebrating Baptisms and at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The donations at harvest rather than flowers, fruit and vegetables were generous gifts of food and supplies for Storehouse.

We have received many heartfelt thanks for the gift of the flowers after a church service and we thank all those who have enabled that to continue.

**Events**

Events were re-introduced to the Church calendar in the second half of the year and by the end, half a dozen opportunities to meet, share and enjoy were delivered. Some of the established events remained the same and others changed completely.

The events team supported Youth Fellowship's Family BBQ in June: cooking food, serving drinks, face painting and organising a visit by an ice cream van.

In September the funeral of Her Majesty the Queen was shown in the church hall, and attendees could take the opportunity to watch the TV coverage of this historical occasion on a 'big screen'.

In October, Events reinstated serving slices of apple tart following the Harvest service, and mince pies after Carols by Candlelight on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

Instead of the Christmas Fair, the team supported both a sale of handmade work, and a pantomime performance. The Making Mornings Winter Craft Sale in November was the first for a couple of years. The events team sold tea and coffee alongside brisk sales of the hand-crafted decorations, accessories, toys and gifts.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December the church hall was transformed with theatre style seating, stage lighting and film posters on the noticeboards, whilst interval refreshments were prepared. Later on 2<sup>nd</sup> Skin Theatre Company's performance of Aladdin was very well received.

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Thanks must go to the depleted Events team for producing such a successfully regenerated Events schedule, and to all those who donated and supported.

**Storehouse North Down**

Storehouse has seen a big increase in demand over the last 12 months. The cost of living crisis and the rise in energy bills has left a lot of people struggling. In 2022 we gave out 2,205 Hampers to a value of £156,973.95. This included 499 Christmas hampers to a value of £29,963.04. We try to include enough food, cleaning products and toiletries to last an individual or a family for a whole week so each hamper consists of an average 7 bags of shopping. Therefore over the year we have given out approximately 15,435 bags of shopping.

2022 also saw the war in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees arriving in Northern Ireland. North Down YMCA is working closely with the Ukrainians and we have been supplying food parcels to them on a regular basis through referrals from them.

In addition to these hamper values we also give out fresh food as we are still supported by the farmers in Newtownards and still receive best before fresh food from Marks & Spencers. Just recently we have also struck up a relationship with Mash Direct who are now donating their pre pack vegetables to us on a regular basis. So our hampers continue to have a good selection of fresh food as well as non-perishable food.

This year the Post Office and Hendersons donated £10.00 One for All gift cards which we were able to give out with each of our Christmas Hampers.

We have continued to be very generously supported by Churches, Businesses, Schools and individuals and are very grateful for everyone's support.

**Thursday Badminton Group**

Join us on Thursday mornings between 10am-12 noon for a bit of exercise, a lot of fun and a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. All welcome male and female.

**New Horizons**

Since our re-opening in March 2022 after the Covid pandemic, we have been really encouraged. Now a group of enthusiastic members meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Several new members bring our numbers to around 20.

We were greatly saddened recently by the death of one of our foundation members – Helen Gault. Along with Rev Andrew and Philippa Todd, Helen and Jack Gault formed the group in 1986. Helen was always anxious to help and attended meetings until her health prevented that. She will be much missed and pray for her family members at this sad time.

Unfortunately our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to visit the Mayor's Parlour had to be postponed due to the death of our late Queen. It will now take place in March 2023. Other meetings were Consumer Affairs giving very welcome advice on conserving energy. November meeting was very popular – and illustrated talk on Belfast Department Stores of the past.

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In December our Christmas Party had to be cancelled due to Arctic conditions. However we are looking forward to a representative from Adopt-a-Child at our January meeting to speak about conditions in Guatemala. Our Adopt-a-Child Lesbia lives there and we support her every month and get letters from her. The scheme improves conditions for the whole family and I know it is very much appreciated.

It is said: 'If you educate man you educate an individual, if you educate a woman you educate a whole nation.'

It is important for us to pray and support our members and most especially for all our brothers and sisters in all parts of the world who are experiencing hardship.

Thanks are due to our hardworking Committee – Audrey (Treasurer), Rosemary (Deputy Treasurer), Eileen, Geraldine, Barbara and Hilary (tea hostesses).

Come and join us new members are always welcome.

### **Making Mornings**

Making Mornings meets weekly on a Wednesday morning from 10am-12md in Primary Room.

We were delighted to get back to some form of normality following the restrictions that the pandemic had caused over the previous two years.

Making mornings experienced a very busy and exciting 2022 with lots of new ideas and plans for a craft sale sometime in the near future.

Despite no significant increase in our members, we still had a steady attendance each week.

Throughout the year we continued to produce and sell a variety of unique items and build up a good stock for a hoped for church craft sale. We were delighted and more than ready to be able to join forces with the Events team to host a Coffee Afternoon and Craft Sale on the 19<sup>th</sup> November.

This turned out to be a fantastic opportunity to raise £863.50 from the sale of our crafts alone and combined with the tea and coffee that the events team provided, a total of £1025.50 was able to be given to our own church funds.

We also like to support other charities both local and overseas and a further donation of £100 went to the Ukraine appeal, £75 to our local Storehouse and £25 to our Youth Fellowship. We also donated crafted items to Salvation Army Christmas appeal and Samaritans purse shoe boxes.

Despite everyone working hard, we still had some good fun and joined in celebrating the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a coffee morning at the Heritage Centre and walk round the Walled Garden.

We met weekly from January to June in the upstairs room, but as most of us found the stairs a challenge we requested the use of the Primary room when we returned in September after the summer break. This has been a great success and has allowed us to facilitate all our members.

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We ended our year in early December with our Christmas dinner in Donaghadee where we joined forces with the helpers of Parent and Toddler group and enjoyed a Christmas feast.

Unfortunately the weather and Christmas holidays did not allow for us to meet up again until the New Year.

Although we remain a small group, the commitment and generosity of all our members is truly amazing. Each member brings their unique talent to the group which we pool together to enable us to support our own church but also the local community and charities further afield. In so doing we enjoy a great friendship and fellowship that cements our group and makes it so special and what we create a true labour of love.

Anyone with an interest in crafting please feel free to come and join us for a cuppa and share in this small but productive team.

**Bowling Club**

The Indoor Bowling Club meets on Tuesday nights at 7.30 pm. This has always been a very enjoyable night and this year was no exception. We welcomed three new members and are hopeful there may be more. The club has spare bowls if anyone would like to come along and try some bowling.

**Parent & Toddlers**

In March 2020 Parent & Toddlers came to an abrupt end due to Covid. Two years later in May 2022 we opened our doors for a few weeks before the summer holidays. Our numbers attending quickly grew! Parents, childminders and grandparents were glad to get back, for them it was a sign of normality returning after Covid and their children were able to socialise with their peers once more. We closed again in the middle of June with a party and each child received a gift.

September quickly came around, our doors once again opened and the hall quickly filled with parents and toddlers.

Friday mornings during term time between 10.15 and 11.45am is a hive of activity with toddlers and babies enjoying a good range of toys, crafts, jigsaws and physical equipment while their parents/carers relax and chat. At 10.45am the children sit down to their snack while their parents enjoy a cuppa and their own delicious eats. The morning ends with parents and children joining together singing rhymes. Thanks to those who are so willing to help with this activity.

Our year ended with a Christmas party and of course Santa's arrival, much to the delight of everyone attending.

During the year we were able to provide flowers for the Communion Table, contribute to Heat and Light and at Christmas in place of our weekly donations we made a collection for charity and were delighted to give £100 to Kidz4School Tanzania.

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Our aim is to provide an atmosphere of caring and friendship. We believe as leaders of the group we can display the love of Jesus in a practical way by caring and commitment to those who attend.

Thanks to everyone who help to make Parent & Toddlers a success, from the dedicated team who turn up every Friday to work with the children and adults, the ladies who help with refreshments, our Treasurer and those who turn up at the end of the session to help clear up the hall. All help is greatly appreciated.

We thank God for the way He has blessed our group and pray for His continued blessings as we endeavour to do His work.

**Preschool**

The children returned from their Christmas Holidays full of news of Santa and Christmas presents.

The staff returned minus our Deputy leader who had moved to England at the end of December 2021. We were very fortunate that Andrea who had previously been an Assistant already held the qualification necessary to fill this post and following an interview process with the Management Committee and by Social Services she commenced in the role.

Our year continued as normal exploring different themes each week and making good use of our outdoor play area.

Our first Welcome Day for 2 years was held in June and the new intake for September were able to visit and meet the staff. We were also able to go on our annual outing to Springvale Farm.

The P1 teachers came to see the children once again to chat to the children who were transferring to Ballyholme Primary School. Our last day of term was 29 June and we said goodbye to not only the children but to our Assistant Jackie who was retiring to look after her grandchildren, she will be greatly missed. A recruitment process took place in June and Adel was appointed as our new Assistant.

We welcomed Adel to the group in late August when new children started. The parents were once again able to come into the building with their child to settle them in. It was great to meet parents face to face informally and hear the buzz of chatter in the reception area as they dropped off and picked the children up instead of the regimented lines in the car park we had during the Covid pandemic.

The children settled and they started to make friends and got to know the Preschool staff. Very quickly we started to prepare the children for the Annual Nativity we were allowed to hold it in the Church and the parents could come and see their child preform for the first time in 2 to 3 years and was enjoyed by all. Ellie came to sing, and everyone was blown away by her voice. Santa came on the last day of term for our Christmas Party.

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We are grateful for the support we receive from Kirk Session and Church Committee, the Management Committee members and the Honorary Church members who voluntarily serve each year.

It was a busy year and we have seen thankfully some type of normality return and we really hope that this continues. There is nothing like face to face contact with parents and long may this continue!

**7<sup>th</sup> Bangor Rainbows**

Rainbows continue to grow in numbers and this year we currently have 27 girls on our register. It is wonderful to be able to see first-hand how the girls grow emotionally (and physically) during their 3 years with us.

We continue to make great memories on Friday evenings in the lower hall where we have great fun playing games, making crafts and of course making lots of friendships! We have continued to focus on badge work this year and to date the Rainbows have gained their Construction badge and will be working towards their Agility badge before the end of the academic year.

We continue to be ever grateful to Ballyholme Presbyterian Church for the use of their hall and for the support from the congregation.

Special thanks also have to go to all of the dedicated team of leaders who have shown great commitment and enthusiasm, rarely missing a Friday night.

**7<sup>th</sup> Bangor Brownies**

All three leaders were back at the start of 2022, so work on the Skills for the Future badge started in earnest. During the meetings the girls learnt about DIY tools, what makes a good hand scrub (when your hands are oily from making choc chip cookies), how to sew on buttons and how to 'sign' the Brownie Bells using Makaton (a language which uses symbols and speech to help people with a learning disability to communicate).

They also enjoyed designing a badge for 100 years of Girlguiding Ulster, decorating biscuits for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and lots of games.

Thinking Day, Girlguiding's annual celebration, is on 22 February. The Brownies' (along with the other Girlguiding groups) participation in a church service, on a mutually suitable date close to this one, had been well established. Although returning to larger groups meeting was still being discouraged, 2 Brownies joined the morning service on 6<sup>th</sup> March and read:

John 1 Chapter 5 verses 13 to 15:

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence we have in approaching God that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him.

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The death of the patron of Girlguiding her Majesty the Queen might have overshadowed the start of a new Brownies year on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Instead it was acknowledged by all the girls working to a high standard on a collage of her image.

The badge work for this term's meetings had the girls working on the Influence and Make Change stages of the Take Action badge.

100 years since the start of Girlguiding in Northern Ireland was acknowledged by the girls working for the badge specifically commissioned for this commemoration. Tasks in each of the sections: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, had the girls playing games from previous decades and making dream catchers, positive message badges and fashion from plastic bags.

Both the visit from the Fire Service and joining with the Rainbows on 14<sup>th</sup> October in the Erskine Hall for a visit by Critters NI were enjoyed by the girls. Meeting the collection of prickly, furry, scaly, feathery creatures and having a go with the huge water hose were activities which won't be forgotten.

This report of another year of Brownies concludes with thanks to the volunteer leaders who plan, prepare, train for and deliver the weekly meetings.

**7<sup>th</sup> Bangor Guides**

Although many organisations were slowly returning to face-to-face meetings, we remained extra cautious and continued on Zoom for several weeks into 2022.

As with 2021, there was no Thinking Day Service in church, as restrictions on large gatherings were still in place. However, I was playing the organ on the Sunday we would have been attending and it was lovely to see two girls from our Brownie Unit doing the Bible readings.

Our Zoom activities included First Aid, art and crafts, quizzes and games. There were plenty of laughs when we got the girls to bring a cuddly toy to one of the meetings so we could hold the Teddy Bear Olympics. Each teddy had to enact various Olympic sports. It started off calmly enough, until one girl decided to use props and from then on everyone's teddy was using props, which got more hilarious as the activity went on.

Anything involving food was, of course, very popular. One evening, the girls made their own tomato sauce and used it as one of the ingredients on a bread roll pizza. On 18 March we held our final Zoom meeting on a St Patrick's Day theme, which included the girls making a soda bread snack after which kitchens were once again returned to parents!

25 March, our first meeting back in the hall, was just a few days over 2 years since our last meeting in 2020 and it was good to see all who had been on Zoom attending. Each girl received an 'I've been a virtual Guide' badge to mark participation in online meetings – a memento to show the grandchildren! It was good to have the freedom to play running-around games and to be able to get into the Guide cupboard again for equipment. Mother's Day gifts were made at this meeting and we

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continued with the Guide programme over the next few weeks, concluding with meaningful Easter activities.

In the summer term we relaxed by blowing bubbles, made jambons, butter and s'mores and completed several fun badges – Butterfly Challenge, Seahorse Challenge and ABC Challenge.

On 2 June, Groomsport Guiding Units invited us to their special night to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which included food, disco, archery, and bouncy castle. It was naturally very sad, when only three months later Her Majesty died and on our first meeting back after the summer break, we held an act of remembrance. The Queen had been a Guide when young and ever since had retained a close relationship with our movement, being our patron up until her death.

One of the last activities we took part in just before lockdown in 2020, was a trip on the train to Lisburn for water fun at Lagan Valley Leisureplex. To celebrate the new-found freedom, we travelled there once again in June 2022. The train journey itself is enjoyable, as most of the girls rarely use this method of transport.

Our customary final evening at Lorne in June before the summer break, with each girl cooking on her own open fire, was highlighted by 4 Outdoor Cooking badges being gained. We finished with Campfire singing round one of the fires and 3 girls said their Promise for the first time.

In conjunction with the Army, Girlguiding Ulster held a Skills Day at Palace Barracks in September. It is a very popular event and is booked up very quickly and in previous years, we have just missed out, so I was especially vigilant this year in watching for the announcement on the Girlguiding Ulster website. We were the first to apply and six of our girls along with the two leaders were able to attend. They took part in Leadership Activities, First Aid, Healthy Camp Skills, and Fixing Activities including Basic Car Mechanics. A tasty lunch in the barracks canteen was also included.

During our Harvest Party in October, we completed Mixology badge, with the girls blending fresh juices, fruit, yoghurt, herbs and spices to produce delicious drinks.

In November, we joined many others taking part in the Remembrance Sunday Service in Ward Park and after the service paraded round Bangor. We also provided a flag bearer for our service in church.

Also in November, we were pleased when one girl was presented with the Guide Gold Award at the North Down County AGM at Lorne.

On the weekend before Christmas, ten girls and three leaders stayed in the Ranger Cottage at Lorne for our first residential since 2019. It was the weekend after a particularly hard frost had descended on North Down and many footpaths were still thick with ice, even after several days. However, we were very cosy in the cottage. We wrapped up warm on the Friday evening for a winter walk to the Camp Chapel, where 4 girls said their Promise. We travelled to Belfast on the train on the Saturday for some Christmas shopping. The girls were given money to put towards purchasing their own lunch and had great fun searching out items to buy in the shops, many returning to Lorne laden with bags.

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Girlguiding Ulster celebrated 100 years in 2022 and several special events were held. On 21 May 'A Time to Remember Tea Party' was held at Lorne and 5 former Assistant Leaders from the noughties (most of whom had also been in the unit as girls), joined me for the occasion. The Lorne Archivists had arranged a very interesting display of old uniforms, badges, books, newspaper cuttings, logbooks from the early days of Guiding to the present day and we spent a happy time reminiscing.

Another really lovely occasion was the Centenary Lunch on 22 October. Two hundred leaders past and present packed into the function room of the Royal Hotel, Cookstown and enjoyed a truly delicious meal. The two present leaders invited a former leader of 7<sup>th</sup> Bangor (my leader when I was a Guide) to come with us, which made it extra special.

Before lockdown our meetings ran for two and a half hours, from 7.30 pm-10.00 pm, but having become used to the shorter Zoom meetings, we decided to reduce our meeting time by three quarters of an hour. We now meet from 7.45 pm-9.30 pm, which is still plenty of time to run the programme.

Our meetings are packed with a variety of activities and it is pleasing to see the girls loyally attending each week. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Bangor Rangers**

What a year it has been! We were finally able to properly bounce back from Covid-19 with the easing of restrictions and our numbers ever increasing. In January we took on more new Rangers from local Guide units and this saw the unit grow to nearly 20 girls on the books, a brilliant achievement for us! This has been a crazy busy year for us, getting back into the swing of both indoor and outdoor meetings, as well as public events and activities. The year started slow as we got used to life after Covid-19 restrictions but the girls still covered lots this term including learning how to make and grow 'Kefir' (a gut-healthy, cultured drink) as part of our wellbeing topic, complete the 'women's rights' interest badge, attend Eden Pottery for some relaxing pottery painting and most important of all, in March, we all rallied together for some community action by helping donate essential items for the Ukraine appeal with Girlguiding Ulster. The girls donated many clothes, toiletries, bedding, and anything else they could get their hands on and as a unit we did a great job at contributing to this appeal.

We had two very important events in July before finishing for the summer and these could not come quick enough, but before this, we had a busy few weeks in May and June which included a beach BBQ, learning the craft of pyrography, completing the Period Poverty badge with a guest from The Homeless Period Belfast who ran a great workshop for us, and last but not least, a joint Platinum Jubilee party with 1<sup>st</sup> Groomsport Guides to celebrate our Queen.

The first of our summer events was the much anticipated, (very long-overdue) residential weekend away to Lorne where we stayed in the Marion Greeves Centre and the girls decided that the theme for the weekend was going to be Disney films! We decorated the whole house in Disney decorations and the girls themed their bedrooms too, we had Tangled, Lilo & Stitch, Up and Toy Story rooms. We