

**SECOND NEWTOWNARDS CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105270)

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Second Newtownards Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
26 Mary Street Newtownards Co Down BT23 4DQ

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105270)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Mr. Henry William James Lennon

Mr. James McMaster

Mr. Norman Willis McClean

Mr. William Robert Martin

Mr. George Ivan Patterson

Mr. James Wallace Robinson

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister

Vacant

Clerk of Session

Mr. George Ivan Patterson

Treasurer

Mrs. Anna Langtry

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr. G Ferguson. 23 Stratheden Heights Newtownards BT23 8TD

BANKERS

Danske Bank 35 High Street Newtownards BT23 7HS.

SOLICITORS

Russell & Co Solicitors 11 Lower Mary Street Newtownards BT23 4JJ.

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 Sessions 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 on active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote. Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least four times a year..

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant at 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.

Second Newtownards 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 and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of the 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

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

Second Newtownards 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 is to glorify God in our worship and witness and to seek the lost for Christ.

Our aim is to continually present the Gospel in our Church and wider community by

- Building a fellowship of believers
- Demonstrating in a practical way the love and concern of Christ
- Encouraging the work of Outreach/Mission in the wider community and overseas

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/Bible Class
- Mums & Tots
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Fellowship
- Missionary Committee

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and Prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am During the week the Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. Prayer is an integral part of church life and time is set aside on Thursday mornings to focus on this aspect of our witness.

At 31 December 2023 there were 56 communicant members and 107 families connected with the congregations. The average weekly attendance at morning worship 30.

Pastoral Care

As a congregation we have adopted PCI "Taking Care" policy and programme safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in every aspect.

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 one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

In addition, recordings of the services are distributed to those members of the congregation who are unable to attend services. As well as our regular services we sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

Mission and Outreach

The congregation has a passion for mission as demonstrated by the fact that 25% (£13,122) of total expenditure was spent on Mission and Outreach

The congregation supported financially and practically both local and international Christian charitable organisations and agencies.

Locally the congregation had an on-going collection for the local Food Bank and catered for mothers and preschool children one morning a week in its Mums & Tots . In addition, the congregation contributed toys and imperishable food items to Belfast City Mission's Christmas Appeal. The church's premises were made available to several local groups including Valhalla Street Theatre, the local branch of Child Evangelism Fellowship, and a teenage Archery club.

The congregation's main vehicle for financially supporting the work of the Church overseas was the United Appeal for Mission (UA).

UA is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the congregation contributed £3,359 to it. The Fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on a 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.

As well as UA the congregation also contributed to the PCI's annual World Development Appeal, (£1,753), Syrian Earthquake Appeal (£1,000), and Presbyterian Childrens' Society (£1,310)

Through the congregation's Missionary Committee financial support totaling £5,553 was provided to 23 local and international Christian organisations including:

- Patterson Ministries
- CEF
- Bible Society NI
- European Missionary Fellowship
- Operation Mobilisation
- Asia Link
- Tear Fund
- Open Doors
- Leprosy Mission
- Smiles Foundation
- Barnabas Fund
- Logos Ministries International
- Shelter Now UK
- Smiles Foundation

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.

PROPERTY

Generally the Church's property is in a good state of repair and no major repairs or refurbishment projects were undertaken during the year Routine maintenance tasks were completed to the church, the manse and church halls.

ORGANISATIONS

Sunday School

The Sunday School provides a Christian Education mainly to the children of the congregation and to a small number of children from non-member families. Sunday School meets during the morning service. There were 7 on the Sunday School roll

Each Wednesday morning our main hall was used by up to 21 members of Mums & Tots' group. In addition, the Men's Fellowship, Presbyterian Women, and Friendship Hour, each met monthly with an average attendance of 12-20.

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 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 by 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

Total income for 2023 was £52,166 which was £1,330 lower than 2022.

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering (FWO). There were 63 contributors to FWO in 2023 and they contributed £27,242 which was £891 less than in 2022.

Total expenditure at £55,270 was £8,295 higher than 2022. While this reflected an element of inflationary pressures (electricity costs for the church rose by £600 to £4,613) the main reason for the larger than usual increase in was two items of exceptional expenditure. The first was the renewal of the Certificate of Electrical Worthiness for the church building which led to a total spend of £4,361 on church maintenance, an increase of £4,063 compared to 2022. The second item of exceptional expenditure was the repayment of £1,951 to HMRC because of HMRC mistakenly paying a Gift Aid claim twice.

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 congregations 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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 13 February 2024 and signed on its behalf by

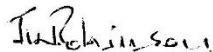
Signed



Date:

13-2-24

Signed



Date:

13/2/24