

GROOMSPORT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

This is the Annual Report for 2024 of Groomsport Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Classification: Religious Designation

Charity Number: NIC105278.

Address: - 35 – 37 Main Street

Groomsport

BT19 6JR

Trustees during 2024:-

Alastair McQuoid	Michael Steele	Lowry Manson
Hilary Knight	Jane Black	Audrey Thomas
June Kirk	John Todd	Brenda Boyd
William McCreedy	Samuel Ferguson	Ivan Crawford
Alan Chestnutt	Elaine Nixon	Margaret McCreedy
Fiona McCreedy	Stewart Holland	George Purdy
Richard McCreedy	Sharon Goldie	Maureen Stewart
Chris Thompson	Paul Dalzell (Minister)	
Graham Wilson (Resigned 31/3/24)		David Purce (Resigned 21/9/24)

Our governing body

Our governing body is the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and we are constituted by The Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The purposes of our charity

“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.”

Appointment of Trustees

The Kirk Session of Groomsport Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland appoint new Charity Trustees. All Elders on Kirk Session are Trustees for our charity and are appointed at a meeting and asked to fill in the required Registration Form which is then input into our Registered Charity number NIC105278 by Elaine Nixon.

Public Benefit Statement

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and 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 understand of the 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 congregational churches and 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 notice boards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways. The benefits are monitored 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, Deaconess, 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 organisation, charities and individual members of the public.

Statement of activities

Hold services of worship and other religious activities. These, and all that follows, are open to anyone of the appropriate age and/or gender to access, without regard to whether they are member of our congregation. Through prayer, support our members, our own Church, other Christian Churches, the community and leaders in society and government. Organise meetings and events that promote our charitable purpose. Participate in the life of the local community. Participate in and support what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the supervising Presbytery does. Support secular and Christian organisations and charities through volunteering, providing accommodation, financial gifts and prayer.

Kirk Session Report 2024

2024 has been a momentous year for our church. It has been a time of challenge and change for our congregation with completion of a major refurbishment of our church halls and electing a new congregational committee. In all things we are mindful of complete reliance on our Saviour Jesus Christ and his plan for our congregation here in Groomsport Presbyterian Church.

In March last year I was honoured to take over the role of clerk of session. I would like to thank our minister, Rev Dalzell and the Kirk Session for their support and patience as I have felt my way into this new role within the church. I would like to pay tribute once again to my predecessor, Mr Alastair McQuoid, who skillfully and safely navigated our way through some very challenging years.

Over the past year, our Kirk Session has faced significant difficulties with the serious illness of two members who thankfully are now on the road to recovery. Both have expressed their heartfelt thanks for the prayers and practical support of the congregation. Sadly, two elders, Mr Graham Wilson and Mr David Purce, resigned from Kirk Session, both for personal reasons and I would like to thank them for their dedicated service to our church over many years. We now have a team of 23 elders covering 21 districts throughout Groomsport, Bangor and Donaghadee. Our elders have worked harmoniously together to serve this church and provide pastoral care to the

congregation. My report would be long indeed if I listed all the work undertaken by individual elders, often done quietly and unnoticed but for which I am very grateful.

Looking back over the year, the most significant achievement has been the completion of renovations of the Walter Nelson Hall complex. We now have a marvelous new facility that we can use to further God's kingdom and share Christ's love here in Groomsport and further afield. The renovations were completed in a year and would not have been possible without the unstinting work of our property convener Mr Lowry Manson, our treasurer Mr Chris Thompson and facilities co-ordinator, Mr Ian MacDonald. Our thanks also go to the architects, Mr Brian Knox, Mrs Judith Hamilton and our main contractor, Mr Andrew Wishart. Many others have contributed in different ways. On behalf of our minister Rev. Dalzell and Kirk Session, I would like to thank everyone who brought this project to a successful completion.

We were delighted to have the Vice Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Catherine Champion, perform the official opening after a Praise Service and dedication on Sunday 2nd June 2024. This completed a weekend of activities which included an Open Day on the Saturday and a congregational lunch on the Sunday.

Having a new facility is of course, not an end in itself. The Kirk Session appointed a Steering Committee to ensure that we make full use of these facilities. Much has already been accomplished. The Hub is now open every week for the 'Wednesday Welcome' where members of the congregation and folk from the local community can drop in for a time of fellowship together. Tea/coffee and scones are provided, and new friends have already been made. Saturday coffee mornings take place most of the year now from March to December. In August we hosted around 30 refugees who have been staying in hotels in Bangor. Lunch was provided and it was a time to listen to their stories and understand a little about what they have gone through. We use the Hub for a new Men's Group and Hobby Hub. New activities in the halls include Tai Chi and Pickleball, both twice weekly. Outside community groups such as Discover Groomsport and Groomsport Village Remembrance association have made use of the new facilities as well as other visiting church groups.

Another significant development has been the creation of a new website for our church. This is a bright and user-friendly window into the life of Groomsport Presbyterian

Church. There are regular updates on all that is going on as well as our weekly online service. Our media presence is further enhanced by our Facebook page and we have recently installed a new notice board on the gable end of the Walter Nelson Hall. Thank you to Fiona McCreedy for the tremendous work she has done and for her on-going work to keep this all fresh and up to date.

Over the summer months we undertook the election of a new 20 strong congregational committee. We have welcomed seven new committee members. All continue to dutifully serve in pastoral care and overseeing the temporal affairs of our church. We thank those committee members who have retired from service and contributed much to the life and work of our congregation here in Groomsport. Thank you to Mr George Purdy for continuing in the role of secretary and bringing his expertise and wisdom in overseeing the work of the committee.

Our mission committee continues to inform and encourage our congregation in fulfilling our responsibilities as to how we should engage in the wider mission of our church. In addition to our monthly mission focus we have been blessed to have special Sunday services for Leprosy Mission, United Appeal, World Development Appeal and also a service led by Mr Stephen Cowan, long-standing PCI missionary in Tuum, Kenya. In November, the Donaghadee Community choir along with visiting organist Mr George Hewitt led a special evening worship and praise. The collection of £900 went to the Linda Norgrove Foundation. I would encourage you to read the mission report by Mrs Maureen Stewart which will appear in this annual directory. Thank you to all the members of the mission committee for the important role that they play within our congregation.

The Kirk Session is encouraged to witness the on-going ministry to the younger members of our congregation. We particularly thank Mrs Sharon Goldie and her team of teachers for their dedicated service each Sunday in witnessing Christ's love to our children. The children's day service and gift day service are always special highlights in our church calendar.

We are blessed to have a wonderful church choir who lead our worship each Sunday and put so much work and preparation into our special services at Easter and Christmas. Thank you to all members but in particular our organist and choirmaster, Mr John

McIlwaine, our chairman Mr Alastair McQuoid and also Mrs Isabel Keenan for her able assistance at choir practices and deputising at the organ throughout the year.

The Kirk session would like to thank the trustees of The McCaw Trust for their oversight of this investment on our behalf and ensuring that we continue to use this investment to further Christ's kingdom.

Once again, Kirk Session would like to express their deepest thanks all those who give of their time and energy in leading the many organisations and sub-committees within our congregation. Further information on their work is outlined elsewhere within the annual report.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our minister, Rev Dalzell, for his leadership of our congregation, his teaching during weekly worship and the extensive pastoral care he has provided throughout 2024. We are also grateful for his engagement and co-operation with our neighbouring churches in Groomsport and in leading important community events such as the village remembrance service. We pray for Paul, his wife Catherine and indeed for each other that we may strive to reflect the Love of Christ and further the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

Groomsport Presbyterian Church
March, 2025