

BALLYGILBERT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105298)

**BALLYGILBERT CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**

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

Ballygilbert Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
376 Belfast Road, Ballyrobert, Bangor BT19 1UH
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105298)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

John Adamson		Natalie Alcorn	
Pamela Blakley		John Blakley	
Kenneth Calvert	(resigned May 2023)	Gillian Davison	
Andrew Davison		Craig Jackson	
Peter Davison		Terence McKeag	(deceased October 2023)
Sharon Lockhart		Ian Schofield	
Perry McDonnell	(resigned May 2024)	Frank Robinson	
Sarah Schofield		Vivien Vance	
Alastair Vance			

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. Craig Jackson
Clerk of Session	Peter Davison
Treasurer	David Boyd

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Hugh Gibson, BA (Hons) FCA

BANKERS

Bank of Ireland 82 Main Street Bangor BT20 4AG

SOLICITORS

Russell & Co, Solicitors 1 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 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 minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least seven times in each year.

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

Ballygilbert 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 statement is:

To be a 'caring and living community of Christ's people reaching out to others'

In this regard, we want to:

- Provide an opportunity for all to come to, and grow in, a living faith
- Make you feel welcome
- Create a caring community where you are involved and feel valued
- Be family-focused
- Provide a high standard of worship, embracing the best of the old and new
- Reach out to the wider community, both at home and abroad to show practical Christianity in action

We are not about buildings or activities - but we are about people. Worship plays a central role in our life together in Ballygilbert. We offer services which are upbeat, where a clear Bible-based message is presented and made relevant for life in today's world.

We have a strong belief in our ministry to children, teenagers and young adults. We want them to feel valued and to develop a vibrant and sustained faith.

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.

**BALLYGILBERT CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's 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 resumed regular bible study meetings in home groups. Session meets every week for prayer and we have a wide range of organisations including

- Congregational prayer meeting
- Sunday School (Lighthouse) and Creche
- MADhouse (Youth fellowship)
- Ballygilbert Toddlers
- JAM worship for young families
- Youth Club
- Holiday Bible Club
- Girl Guides and Brownies
- Junior and senior badminton
- Coffee and chat
- Variety of meetings for the women in the congregation

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11am. During the week we have a congregational prayer meeting and the Kirk Session also met separately for prayer. There are also congregational and Session prayerlink (phone groups) for sharing prayer requests.

At 31 December 2023 there were 207 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 75.

Pastoral care

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 members of the congregation's informal pastoral care structure.

Mission and outreach

The congregation supports a wide variety of local and overseas projects ranging from Storehouse in Bangor, Christmas collection of gifts for Women's Aid in Bangor, financial support for E3 Scripture Union Schools project in North Down; Thompson House, Tiny Life; ePap Childrens' project in South Africa, Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes and others. We have a long standing relationship with Mulanje Mission Hospital providing both financial and material support through boxes of education and health supplies.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (cont'd)

Mission and Outreach (Contd)

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on 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 congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

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 congregation 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

Property expenditure comprised routine maintenance.

Organisations

Our Church week starts on Sunday at 11am when an average of 75 folk meet for worship, there have been averages of 2 at Creche, 10 at Lighthouse (for 4-11 years) and 2 at MADhouse (11-18 years). We also have a JAM (Jesus and me) service every month for young families.

One of the major outreach events every year is the Holiday Bible Club week in July/August which attracts children and their parents, many of whom have little church connection. This year there will again be a focus on secondary school age children and we anticipate approximately 60 in attendance.

Many organisations meet regularly on week days. Girl Guides and Brownies meet every Thursday. On Wednesday we have the junior and senior badminton clubs. Thursday sees some 20 carers and children at Ballygilbert Toddlers, the majority are not members of the church. On Friday we have the Youth Club with around 40 young people. Coffee and Chat for our ladies meets twice a month with 15-20 attending.

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 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 Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

**BALLYGILBERT CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 152 contributors during the year (144 in 2022) donating a total of £108,669 (£107,434 in 2022).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £150,177 compared to £143,537 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased from £143,839 to £148,730.

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) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payments 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 ongoing contributions from its members. The Trustees are of the opinion that the congregation has sufficient resources at the date of approval of these financial statements to meet commitments which will arise in the year from the date of signing this report and subject to the continuing support from members to fund on an ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves that it is appropriate to hold taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the policy of the Trustees to attain a holding of around three month's normal expenditure. Currently there are no material unrestricted reserves and the Trustees are working to remedy this position.

RISK REVIEW

A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of ongoing financial support from members. These risks are mitigated by the Trustees, and the Congregational Committee, regularly monitoring the various activities of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving.

Approved by the Kirk Session on 13 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Alastair Vance

Peter Davison