

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC105304

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAINTFIELD
a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ended

31 December 2023

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The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

2nd Saintfield Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Fairview, Ballynahinch Road, Saintfield BT24 7AD

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105304)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. John Torrens
Mr Robert Barr
Mr Gordon Campbell (Resigned 14/01/23)
Dr Scott Laidlaw

Mr Colin Black
Mr James Gilmore
Mr Trevor Leaker

Mr John McAllister

Mr Stanley McFarland

Mr Bryan Rea

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister
Clerk of Session
Deputy Clerk of Session
Treasurer

Rev. John Torrens
Mr Stanley McFarland
Mr Trevor Leaker
Mr Roy Copes

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Jones Chartered Accountants
4 Comber Street
SAINTFIELD
Co. Down
BT24 7AZ

BANKERS

Danske Bank
32 Main Street
SAINTFIELD
Co. Down
BT24 7AB

SOLICITORS

W.G. Maginess & Son
68 Bow Street
LISBURN
Co Antrim
BT28 1AL

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAINTFIELD

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2023

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 oversee the spiritual life and witness of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its community. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and 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. The Kirk Session typically formally meets five to six times per annum.

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. 2nd Saintfield Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Down 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.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAINTFIELD
a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2023

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

2nd Saintfield Presbyterian Church exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purpose is by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We aim to achieve this, by the grace of God, by being an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people, 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 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.

ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

The congregation's regular, wide range of meetings and organisations are summarised below. (See also MINISTRY AND ACTIVITIES and MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS sections.)

Meetings	Frequency	Participants/Age Range
Sunday Worship	Weekly	All welcome
Lords Supper	5 times per year.	Professing Christians
Sunday School (JAM)	Weekly	4-10 years old.
Saintfield Youth	Weekly (Sunday)	12-18+
Girls' Brigade	Weekly (Monday)	4-18
Boys' Brigade	Weekly (Tue & Thur)	4-18
Ladies Badminton	Weekly (Monday)	All ladies welcome
Senior Badminton	Weekly (Tuesday)	All adults welcome
Junior Badminton	Weekly (Wed.)	Year 5 to year 14.
Indoor Bowling	Weekly (Friday)	All adults welcome
Soup Lunch	Monthly (Tuesday)	All adults welcome
Midweek Bible study	Monthly (1 st Wed.)	All adults welcome
Ladies Bible study (Impact)	Monthly (2 nd Wed.)	All ladies welcome
Men's Bible Study	Monthly (3 rd Wed.)	All men welcome
Presbyterian Women	Monthly (4 th Wed.)	All ladies welcome

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2023

MINISTRY and ACTIVITIES

The Kirk Session formally met 8 times and the committee met on 5 occasions in during 2023. The Kirk Session also met informally in March for fellowship, prayer, discussion. Elders continued their practice of focused praying for those in each other's district at the start of each session meeting.

As noted last year the Kirk Session's primary focus for 2022 and much of 2023 has been on seeking permission from all members to hold necessary details on our 'Omega' church data base and reviewing our member and communicant lists. Great care has been taken to do this in a gracious and caring way, our desire being to encourage those back to worship and communion. It has taken longer than we had hoped but thankfully most of this work has now been done and we expect this exercise to be complete by mid-2024. It has been such a big exercise because it was so long since it was last done: therefore, we plan to keep both our membership and communicant lists constantly under review so we do not have to repeat this exercise again.

Following the resumption of work on the Meeting House Refurbishment in 2022 we had a special congregational meeting in February 2023 where 81% of the congregation voted to say they were content to proceed with the project on the basis of the scheme design set out by the Meeting House Sub-committee on the understanding that members would have a further opportunity to vote on the later detailed costs of the project. Since then, permission has been granted by both Presbytery and the Linkage Commission. The next steps are to acquire planning permission and to develop a satisfactory funding plan. Towards the second half of 2022 the Kirk Session asked the Meeting House Refurbishment sub-committee to resume work on this project which was stalled by Covid 19 pandemic. An important part of this was the production of a Meeting House Refurbishment Vision document unanimously agreed by session which will help provide direction for this project.

Our Care Team continued to provide enhanced care for the more needy in our area and have established a Pastoral Care Fund to assist with this. The team also supported our Ukrainian family in their desire to move closer to Belfast this move being completed at the end of 2023. It has been good to be able to help Nadia, Vera, Viktoriia and Sophia Vivchar to relocate here in Northern Ireland in such difficult circumstances and the Elders wish to thank all of the many members of the congregation who made this possible practically and financially.

Given the gradual reduction in the number of elders (trustees) and the desire to improve pastoral care the Kirk Session sought and received approval from Presbytery to elect up to 4 new elders. Consequently, an updated voters list has been approved and nominations have been made by the congregation, the aim being to elect up to 4 new elders in 2024.

The Kirk Session decided to have a series of Sunday evening service at the beginning of 2024, to send a small team to help our partner church in Hungary with their summer camp in 2024 and began planning a joint (1st Saintfield, 2nd Saintfield & the Parish) town wide evangelistic event for Easter 2025 during the latter part of 2023.

Letting our church halls to outside organisations has continued throughout 2023 and we continue to be pleased to be able to assist our local health clinic, Blood Transfusion Service, Breast Feeding Groups, Weigh Management Group and others in the community by providing these facilities.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAINTFIELD
a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2023

MINISTRY and ACTIVITIES (*continued*)

Other additional, notable ministries and activities in 2023 include.

- Presbyterian Women's service in February.
- Men's convention in February.
- A very enjoyable church family picnic in June.
- An information stand at Saintfield show.
- Ladies summer book club.
- Summer Walking Group.
- Holiday Bible Club at the start of August.
- A church fellowship and prayer morning for all church activities on 23rd September.
- A new series of topical Wednesday evenings entitled 'Down Academy' in September, October & November.
- Women's convention mid-October.
- A Classic Vehicle show in October followed by a Thanksgiving Service on Sunday evening.
- A special praise evening on the last Sunday of November.
- Our annual BB & GB Enrolment service
- A new Craft Fair at the start of December.
- Hosted three Down Presbytery Youth events through 2023.
- Nativity, Carol and Christmas services in December.

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The Kirk Session and the Rev. John Torrens are very aware that none of the above ministries and activities could take place without the dedication and service of our faithful church members. Throughout the year they have continued to support us prayerfully, practically and financially, and have continued to organise soup lunches and support for the wider community through our food bank.

At the start of the year Gordon Campbell, one of our elders (trustees), stood down from his duties as an elder for personal reasons. He and his family continue to worship with us. We wish to express our sincere thanks to Gordon for his dedicated ministry and hope that he will be able to return to this role within the 3 years as allowed for by the code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Nathan Donnell joined us for a 5-week placement as part of his journey in ministry and we were pleased to see him being accepted at Union College to train as a Presbyterian minister. Paval Tyskra, who had been an unofficial assistant minister in Krakov, was keen to develop his ministry skills and we were very happy to encourage him in this.

We also wish to express our thanks to Peter Shaw (Ballyknockan Road) who represented the church on the board of governors of our local primary school for some years and has now been replaced by Rev. John Torrens from September 2023.

We are also thankful to all who help manage our Taking Care & Adult Safeguarding programs including those who interview all our new leaders and helpers, Irene Craig and Jayne Orr for helping update our policies, Matthew Hamilton who agreed to be our dedicated adult safeguarding officer and finally Scott Laidlaw for overseeing all of this and arranging regular training for all concerned.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAINTFIELD

a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2023

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS *(continued)*

As we have said in previous years we depend heavily on our volunteers and so it is very important that we thank all our volunteers who selflessly serve our congregation for the extension of our Lord's kingdom here in Saintfield.

In 2023 sadly 5 of our members passed away, there have been 2 baptisms and no weddings. There have also been 8 new people admitted to the Lord's table for the first time.

We continue to be thankful to almighty God and look forward to experience His grace and mercy as we gather to worship, reach out with the gospel and serve those in our community.

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.

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a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2023

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 144 contributing families during the year (140 in 2022) donating a total of £114,219 – (2022 £103,926).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £218,882 compared to £214,763 in the previous year.

Total expenditure fell marginally to £190,760 from £191,972 in 2022.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregations and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Funds will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregations and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2015)". 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 AND POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

The activities of the congregation continue to be dependent on ongoing contributions from its members. In the first full year without Coronavirus restrictions the Trustees are pleased to note that the total income for 2023 (£218,882) has now exceeded pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (£217,267). 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 on-going 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 hold at least 12 month's normal expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £1,271,938 (2022 – £1,321,302) which represents a reduction of £49,364. The Trustees however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent of the ongoing financial support of members.

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a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2023

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 at a meeting on 22 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



BRYAN REA



COLIN BLACK