

**CASTLEROCK CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report  
for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

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

#### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Castlerock congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
32 Circular Road, Castlerock, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT51 4XA

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105337)

#### **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Minister (Vacant)  
Mrs Alma Andrews  
Mr Alastair Doherty  
Mr James Hughes  
Mr Geoffrey Warke

Miss Heather McSparran  
Mr Lindsay Montgomery  
Mr George Munce  
Dr David Stewart

#### **PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister  
Clerk of Session  
Congregational Secretary  
Treasurer

Vacant  
Miss Heather McSparran  
Mr Alastair Doherty  
Mr George Munce

#### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Olive K Wallace ACMA, CGMA  
101 Coolyvenny Road, Englishtown, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, BT51 3SF

#### **BANKERS**

Danske Bank  
22 The Diamond  
Coleraine  
BT52 1DE

#### **SOLICITORS**

ANDERSON GILLAN BARR SOLICITORS;  
14 Victoria Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6DW

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

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held each year prior to the Communion Seasons in May and November.

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. Castlerock congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Coleraine & Limavady 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.

Castlerock congregation 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 exists to glorify God by worshipping Him, growing in faith, caring for one another & reaching out to others.

### **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, has a Presbyterian Women's Group and holds activities to raise funds and support the activities of the wider church.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

#### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am.

At 31st December 2023 there were 178 communicant members and 146 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at morning worship is 70. At the beginning of 2023 our congregation remained vacant but the Linkage Commission and Presbytery Commission endorsed the placement of Rev Dr Peter Fleming in the capacity of Stated Supply minister from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. In September 2023 these same bodies gave permission for us to call a minister on a part time basis. By the end of 2023 we were well through the process of calling a minister and hoped to have completed the process by January/February 2024.

#### **Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are normally visited on a regular basis by the minister or district elder.

### **Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation supports financially, practically and prayerfully the work of Castlerock C.S.S.M.

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 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.

The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals.

### **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at 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.

### **Property**

Buildings maintenance:

Weather-proofing the tower and associated work, renewing the protective glazing on the stain-glass windows and repairing the water-damaged plaster in the church are matters we need to address.

We are proceeding with the purchase of an extension to our Burial Ground at Downhill although this is still not completed. This will involve considerable cost in securing the site and creating an entrance, as well as purchasing the land from the National Trust, and paying the associated technical and legal fees.

### **Organisations**

A Group of 'Presbyterian Women' met monthly from October to when the church building was open and a range of activities and speakers.

### **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 Commissions Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 116 contributing families during the year (108 contributors in 2022) donating a total of £50841 (£43561 in previous year, 2022)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £127906 compared to £89585 in 2022. Total expenditure amounted to £82028 in 2023 compared to £52721 in 2022. Free Will Offering contributions increased by £7280 in 2023 compared to 2022. Our Free Will offering was augmented by Gift Aid amounting to £8435. In 2023 we received a bequest of £40000 from the estate of the late Mrs E. Henderson. These funds are to be used at the discretion of the Church Committee.

## 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

As the congregations 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 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 20/2/24 and signed on its behalf by

*Heather K McSparran*

*G. Munce*

Miss Heather McSparran  
Clerk of Session

Mr G. Munce  
Treasurer

Date: 20/2/24

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