

# **First Ballymoney 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 2022 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

### **Reference and Administrative Details**

First Ballymoney Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
Meetinghouse Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6JN

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105385)

### **Charity Trustees**

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were: - Rev Stephen McCracken, David Adams, Darren Brewster, Andrea Carton, Heather Dunbar, Lynn Edwards, Derek Hamilton, Debbie Knight, Elaine Lee, Helen Murray, Jeremy Murray, Derek McFarland, Lesley Owens, Trefor Owens, Tracy Peden, John Peden, Neil Robinson and Mandy Walker.

### **Principal Office Bearers**

Minister	Rev Stephen McCracken
Clerk of Session	Neil Robinson
Treasurer	Elaine Lee

### **Independent Examiner**

John Hamilton, D. T. Carson & Co., Chartered Accountants, 51-51 Thomas Street,  
Ballymena, BT43 6AZ

### **Bankers**

Ulster Bank, Coleraine Branch, 30 The Diamond Coleraine BT52 1DP

### **Solicitors**

Greer Hamilton Gailey inc Murphy Carey, 25-27 High Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6AJ

## **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 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 six in each year or as appropriate.

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. First Ballymoney Congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Route 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.

First Ballymoney 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 the His Spirit and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purpose is to be a body of people called to show God's love and tell of His grace in this place and time, so that others will become followers of Jesus.

We value:

**Prayer** – We believe in the transforming power of private, family and corporate prayer. When the Church prays amazing things happen.

**Worship** – We want to love, honour and glorify God through faith in His Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**People** – We believe that people matter to God; He loves us passionately, He pursues us relentlessly and He will never let us go. Therefore, people matter to us; we want to be a caring and compassionate community in action.

**Teaching** – We believe in all matters of faith and practice, scripture is the final authority and is the catalyst for change in our lives, church and community.

**Outreach** - We want to support local and global mission in our prayers, financial giving, education, and personal involvement.

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 towards Him and towards 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 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.

## **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 a number of 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 –

- Jigsaw [Sunday School]
- Journeymen [Bible Class]
- Youth Club
- Youth Fellowship
- First Friends [Sunday Creche]
- First Friends [Monday Mother & Toddlers Group]
- Presbyterian Women
- Life Groups
- Meeting House
- Prayer Meeting
- Boys Brigade [Joint Company]

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and Prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and a monthly 6.30pm from September to June. Prior to morning worship there is a time for prayer. Every second and fourth week midweek Life Groups provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

During the year there were  
4 Sacraments of Baptism.  
2 Marriage Services  
5 New Communicant Members  
2 New families.

Every bereavement is a great loss to a family and our church fellowship. We gave thanks for faithful service and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2022 the average weekly attendance at morning worship is 125 persons

### **Prayer Ministry**

Prayer is at the heart of every Christian community and praying for each other is an act of love. We believe that people matter to God and in the transforming power of private, family and corporate prayer for our needs and the needs of others. We encourage prayer within the various mid-week Life groups as well as in individual situations. We hold a weekly prayer time prior to our Sunday worship service. An Easter Prayer Room runs from Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday and is an opportunity for members to reflect and pray in our church in the light of Easter.

### **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 church members. Rev Jim Thompson retired from the role of Pastoral Care Worker during 2022 after many years of service. The support he provided was greatly appreciated by those he visited and their families and our church fellowship.

## **Mission and Outreach**

At a local level the congregation is actively involved in loving and serving the people of Ballymoney, prayerfully, financially, raising awareness and serving with other volunteers. Sometimes the congregation acts alone, whilst at other times the congregation partners with other churches and charities. Our endeavours at a local level during 2022 include supporting:

- Ballymoney Foodbank – supporting those without food by ways of foodstuffs toiletries and essentials left at collection points within the Church.
- CAP [Christians Against Poverty] – supporting people in poverty and when unemployed.
- Schools Ministry – Visits by our Minister and our Youth and Community Co-Ordinator
- Community Carol Service which was hosted by our congregation this year.

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, assists with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students and financially supports congregations in areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

In addition the congregation continues to support the World Development Appeal which is an annual initiative of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that focuses on helping people trapped in poverty. It endeavours to change lives and communities for the better by channelling resources in support of sustainable development projects in every continent. This work is taken forward through PCI's development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund.

PCI congregations are encouraged to highlight the World Development Appeal during the Advent and Christmas period.

## **Holiday Bible Club**

It has been several years since the congregation ran a Holiday Bible Club but 2022 saw its return during a week in August. This was a great event with 60 children coming throughout the week.

## **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

## **General Assembly**

Our Minister, Youth and Community Co-Ordinator and a nominated elder attended the meeting of the General assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June 2022

## **Property**

During the year periodic inspections and maintenance checks were carried out by authorised professional services to inspect and report on safety and upkeep of the church properties.

## **Organisations**

### **Creche**

This is a facility for parents with young children whereby the service is relayed via live stream TV link to the adjacent classroom equipped for babies and toddlers.

### **First Friends**

During 2022 an additional facility for Mothers and Toddlers opened up in the church halls meeting on Monday mornings for approximately 90 minutes. A varied range of activities including free-play, nursery rhyme/story time, toys/crafts and snack time. This Group is open to parents from within our congregation and the wider community offering a venue to meet and make friends in a welcoming safe environment.

### **Jigsaw**

Jigsaw is our children's ministry group for boys and girls from 4 – 11 years old. The kids meet in the Session Room during our Sunday morning service. The leaders are currently using 'The Gospel Project for Kids' as their curriculum material, which takes children on a Christ-centred chronological journey through the Bible.

Every week we enjoy worship, Bible stories, prayer, craft, drama, games and small group study not forgetting snack time! Our aim is to help our children understand the essential doctrines of our faith and to realise that the Bible is not a collection of stories but God's unified story of redemption.

Jigsaw started the September term with a Big Breakfast and games. A Light Party at mid-term and Selection Boxes were distributed a Christmas. The children join their parents in church during our regular Together Services.

## **Youth Club**

Youth Club provide a safe and welcoming environment for kids from P4 to year 8 to come together where they can sit and chat, play games, make crafts etc. Our leaders are there to guide them when they ask for help or when they are really excited to tell us about their week, we are there to listen and celebrate with them.

This year activities recommenced in March. Initially, opening up for children from within our own congregation with approximately 10 attending. At Easter we hired a bouncy castle and enjoyed the usual chocolate treats.

In September the Club opened fully to the wider community which received a tremendous response with 99 kids registering and on average 50 attending when they meet alternate weeks.

In October as part of our church Harvest celebration the Youth made and provided for the elderly of our congregation gift bags. The kids really enjoyed decorating the bags and putting the gifts inside their creations. To end their year in Youth Club they organised festive craft event and those keen on football were able to enjoy the World Cup matches on big screen in the company of their friends. The leaders distributed selection boxes and enjoyed some party food together.

The leaders would like to take this opportunity to thank all our wonderful helpers and encourage others to consider volunteering to support this aspect of our Youth Ministry.

## **Journeyers**

Journeyers is a Sunday morning gathering for young people in year 8 - year 10. It meets during the morning church service. Over the course of the session young people take part in ice breaker games and activities before covering some content from the Bible. Mainly the content centres on something from one of the four Gospels looking at the life of Jesus and what it looks like to follow him. It runs with three core leaders most Sundays, with the exception of when the church holds an all age service / together Sunday.

## **Youth Fellowship**

Youth fellowship aims to meet every two weeks and is a Sunday night gathering for young people in the church to come along to. Having around two hours together gives plenty of time to catch up, play games, study the Bible together and enjoy food / snacks together too. The aim would be that youth fellowship is a place for young people to come and explore faith freely through Bible study and through asking their questions.

## **Meeting House**

Meeting House is a Group for our Senior members including a few friends from neighbouring congregations. They meet monthly on a Monday afternoon from 2.15pm to about 3.30pm. The organisation has been meeting since September when Rev Stephen McCracken was their guest speaker for their first meeting. Throughout the year they invite a variety of speakers and musicians. At each meeting they have a cup of tea and a time to socialise. Each meeting is opened with a Bible reading and prayer and also close in prayer. Group members enjoyed a Christmas lunch in the church halls.

Meeting House is open to all and is a great way of getting to know others and remembering other's needs.

## **Presbyterian Women [PW]**

This is the women's ministry within our church meeting on the first Thursday of the month October – April. Meetings always open with a hymn, a Bible reading and prayer.

Every year PW supports different projects at home and overseas as well as Deaconesses training in Belfast. Each year a coffee party is held and all the money raised is sent to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The members demonstrate care and compassion to others by visiting members who are ill, give gifts at Christmas to those confined to their own home or in a nursing home. PW also supports bereaved families by providing catering in the halls.

## **Music Ministry**

Sunday worship is led by a group of musicians under the leadership of our Worship Co-ordinator.

## **Life Groups**

Life Groups have been meeting twice each month during 2022.

All our groups have enjoyed close fellowship together, getting to know each other better and welcoming new members into the groups. As they spend time with each other, they share life experiences and have the opportunity to support each other in practical ways, as well as praying with and for each other.

At the group meetings time is spent looking at what the Bible teaches and discussing together what this means as individuals in our day to day life. In 2022 our studies were based on the previous Sunday sermons giving the groups an opportunity to reflect and apply the teachings.

## **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATOR**

Our full-time Co-Ordinator has been involved in these various youth ministries of First Ballymoney but also in particular events in the wider church and community. He has been involved school ministry in 5 local schools taking assemblies or speaking in Christian Union. He and two other youth leaders began an inter-church Sunday evening youth event called Young n Free that has now been held in 10 different local churches.

## **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 purpose 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 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 secular organizations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charities Commission's Public Benefit requirement statutory guidance.

## **AGM**

An AGM was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through Weekly Freewill Offering [WFO]. There were 200 contributors/191 contributing families during the year to WFO ( 193 contributors/187 contributing families in the previous year, 2021) donating a total amount of £95,614 (£86,102 in the previous year, 2021).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £187,031 compared to £191,378 in 2021

Total Expenditure was £167,484 in 2022 compared to £137,537 in 2021


## 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 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 27/04/ 2023 and signed on its behalf by

  
Neil Robinson  
Dated 27/04/23

  
Elaine Lee  
Dated 27/04/23