

**Wellington Congregation of the  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**For the year ended 31 December 2023**

**Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland  
Charity Number: (NIC105536)**

**WELLINGTON CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**  
**Year ended 31 December 2023**

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**WELLINGTON CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**  
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Year ended 31 December 2023**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY**

**Trustees**

Trustees during the year ended 31 December 2023 were:

|                |                   |                    |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Robert Acheson | Keith Irwin       | Patrick McClintock |
| Tommy Adger    | James Kennedy     | Trevor McFetridge  |
| Alistair Bates | David Keys        | James McIlvenna    |
| Lex Brown      | Robin Keys        | David McKean       |
| Sam Caves      | Robin Lindsay     | James H McKeown    |
| William Caves  | David Marshall    | Jonathan McKeown   |
| Ronald Crooks  | Geoff Marshall    | Trevor McKeown     |
| David Currie   | John Marshall     | Gordon McNair      |
| Sam Davison    | Victor McAfee     | James Millar       |
| Geoff Eagleson | William McCartney | Mervyn Orr         |
| Roger Green    | Roy McClelland    | Harold Patterson   |
| William Hill   | John McClintock   | William Richmond   |
| Mark Hood      | James McClintock  | Gareth Williams    |

**Principal Office Bearers**

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Minister                 | Reverend Alistair Bates |
| Clerk of Session         | Geoffrey Marshall       |
| Treasurer                | John Marshall           |
| Congregational Secretary | John McClintock         |

**Holding Trustees**

William Caves  
David Keys  
Geoff Marshall  
John Marshall  
Patrick McClintock

**Principal Bankers**

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Danske Bank  | Ulster Bank Limited  |
| 1-2 Broadway | 49 Wellington Street |
| Ballymena    | Ballymena            |
| BT43 7PE     | BT43 6AD             |

**Solicitors**

James Ballentine & Son  
Bank Buildings  
The Pentagon  
Ballymena  
BT43 5LL

**Church Office**

28 Sourhill Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 2NB

**Church Auditors**

Johnston Kennedy DFK  
Chartered Accountants  
10 Pilot View  
Heron Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9LE

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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**  
**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 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 were held on eight occasions and six e-mail decision taking correspondence.

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. Wellington Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (thereafter referred to as 'Wellington Church') has been assigned to the Ballymena 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.

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**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.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

Wellington 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 purpose of the Church is the advancement of religion. To shape this purpose, Wellington Church has the following vision statement;

**Wellington exists to see people – Truly know Christ, understand the Word of God, and live for Him through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

To enable the vision the Kirk Session has set out four core values –

- **Faithful teaching of God's Word**
- **Seeking God through prayer**
- **Gathering for edifying fellowship**
- **Remaining gospel focused**

How do we build the vision? – Ensuring that each ministry understands and seeks to implement the vision of the church as agreed by the Kirk Session.

The Leadership and Development Co-ordinator has specific responsibility to lead in the implementation of the vision in church life and ministries.

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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**  
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**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**Worship and Prayer**

The congregation meets for worship at 10.30am and 6.30pm every Sunday and visitors are welcome to participate. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on four 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. As well as our regular services during the year we celebrated God's gift of new life through three baptisms, conducted six marriage services and sought to bring comfort and support to 15 families who lost a loved one through bereavement. On 31st December 2023 there were 579 communicant members and 673 families connected with the congregation. The weekly average attendance at morning worship 550; evening worship 200.

Prayer is vital to the life of the congregation and people are encouraged to attend weekly prayer meetings prior to and during each worship service. In addition, a mid-week, Tuesday morning and Thursday lunchtime prayer meeting is held fortnightly. The leadership (elders) meet fortnightly on a Friday morning to specifically focus on prayer. The congregation is encouraged to continue in personal daily prayer and collectively in a Life Group setting. A co-ordinator and dedicated prayer team provide leadership in response to prayer requests and other such circumstances which require insight and specific direction.

**Pastoral Care**

We are given the privilege and responsibility to care for one another in the body of Christ. This takes many and varied forms; within study/prayer groups and organisations, by elders in their district and informally by members in the congregation. Sometimes it is a spontaneous act – on other occasions it leads to much caring over a long period. We greatly value this pastoral care which occurs member to member.

Alongside informal caring we have a structured approach so that as far as possible no-one gets overlooked. We have a dedicated pastoral care team made up of staff who prioritise visits from the Urgent>Hospital>Weekly>Fortnightly>Bimonthly>Twice yearly>Bereavement.

During the year a part-time Pastoral Care Co-ordinator was employed by the church. The pastoral care team meets weekly to plan and assign visits and the Pastoral Co-Ordinator has been tasked to review the provision of pastoral care to the congregation.

**Mission and Outreach**

Wellington Church responds to challenges in the local community and in the wider world. To facilitate this, we have GoLocal and GoGlobal teams who meet regularly to engage in mission and outreach.

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**Year ended 31 December 2023**

Locally we positively encourage community use of our facilities. Consequently, we have individuals and groups making use of our sports and conference facilities. We facilitate local youth events, such as various youth teams, and actively support Scripture Union locally. We provide part finance to some in training or serving in Northern Ireland. Through the United Appeal we encourage PCI's outreach program.

Globally, we support organisations and individuals. We have an ongoing commitment to Tearfund and MAF. We also support specific work among the marginalised in India (Asha), North Africa, South Africa (Genesis), Kenya (Bread), Ukraine, Lebanon and Slovenia. We currently have church members serving through AIM, Bread, PCSA and MAF.

**Organisations**

A glance at the weekly programme gives an overview of activities and organisations which are open to all (*approximate number attending in brackets*):

- **Sunday** – *Collective Bible Study (youth-20), Crèche (12), Well (Sunday School- 65+), Collective Fellowship (50+).*
- **Monday** – *Girls Brigade (100+).*
- **Tuesday** – *Circuit Training (40), Men's Fellowship (24), PW/Wellington Women (50), Badminton (15)*
- **Wednesday** - *Tots &Co (45).*
- **Thursday** – *Boys Brigade (80+).*
- **Friday** – *Kettle Bells (12).*
- **Saturday** – *Net (youth club - 160).*
- **Monthly** – *Sewcrafty (ladies – 12).*
- **Ask group** – *12 families.*

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**Contributing to denominational structures**

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 work 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 denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday school project and any other special appeals.

**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 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**

The congregation owns a meetinghouse and church halls located at 28 Sourhill Road, Ballymena. The new premises were first occupied in March 2009. The congregation also owns a manse located 21 Old Galgorm Road, Ballymena.

**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.

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**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 notice boards, 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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**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the weekly freewill and monthly offering envelopes. There were:

- In the current year 475 contributors donated £347,493 to the General Account Free Will Offering, (460 contributors in previous year 2022, gave a total of £334,921);
- 280 contributors to the Mission fund, donated £86,066 in 2023 (2022: £76,728 was given by 276 contributors);
- 430 contributors to the Building Fund, gave a total of £222,056 in 2023 (2022: 422 contributors gave £231,565).

The total income of the congregation during the year 2023 was £952,863 compared to £861,155 in the previous year 2022.

Total expenditure decreased from £683,723 in 2022 to £680,089 in 2023.

The unrestricted reserves at 31 December 2023 was a £482,903 (2022: £389,359) which includes free reserves of £463,764 (2022: £359,470).

The level of restricted reserves at 31 December 2023 was £6,193,376 (2022: £6,014,146), of which £5,358,884 was designated towards fixed assets.

**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 congregation 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 charity will continue in operation.

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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 congregation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (second edition – October 2019)". 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.

**Statement of disclosure to the auditor**

We, the Trustees who held office at the date of approval of these Financial Statements, as set out above, each confirm so far as we are aware, that:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware; and
- We have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken as trustees in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

**GOING CONCERN**

The activities of the congregation are dependent on the ongoing contributions of 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 ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

**RESERVES POLICY**

The Trustees aim to generate reserves at a level which would cover twelve months of commitments and expenditure. At the year end the free reserves amounted to £463,764, which is over 12 months of expenditure. The Trustees consider that the level of reserves will be dictated by future donations and planned expenditure and have processes in place to review both income and expenditure on a regular basis.

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS** -The leadership in the church understand that it's vital to review and refresh what we do. This is sought through prayer asking, "what does God want for this congregation for the next year and beyond". In the year 2024 we hope to pay off any outstanding debt. After that, we will direct and distribute greater financial support to Go-local and Go-global ministries. In addition, we plan to better equip and train leaders in sharing the Gospel message (word and practical ways), not only in the organisations they lead but more thoughtful Christian approach to those around us.

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**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 on behalf of the Kirk Session by:



Geoff Marshall - Clerk of Session

Date: 28/10/2024