

**Macosquin Presbyterian Church:
a 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 NIC105541

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

Macosquin Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
116 Coolyvenny Road
COLERAINE
BT51 3SF
Co. Londonderry
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105541)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

William Cochrane	Mark Goudy (Chair)
Will Collins	Alan Hall
Nigel Connor (Appointed May 2023)	Roy Hall
Thomas Dunlop	Ian McFaul
Trevor Fulton	Ricard McIlmoyle (Appointed May 2023)
Maurice Farquhar (Appointed May 2023)	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Mark Goudy
Clerk of Session	William Cochrane
Treasurer	Simon Moore (Resigned July 2023)
	Audrey Richmond (Appointed August 2023)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:

Mrs Olive Wallace
101 Coolyvenny Road
COLERAINE
BT51 3SF

BANKERS

Ulster Bank Ltd
The Diamond
Coleraine
BT52 1 DP

SOLICITORS

Macaulay Wray Solicitors
35 New Row,
COLERAINE
BT52 1AH

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 and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its parish 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 funds and property belonging to the congregation so that the aims and goals of the Church may be financially facilitated. 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 of Session 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 Macosquin Kirk Session are held on a monthly basis, with additional meetings arranged as required. In addition to formal business meetings, the Kirk Session regularly meet to pray for the congregation and their needs. During this past year, many Session and Church Committee meetings were conducted online.

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 of Elder can be nominated 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 the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it geographically by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Macosquin Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Coleraine and 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 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

Macosquin 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 its members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission locally and to our world.

The Church leadership continue to be guided in all plans and activities by the 'Church Mission Statement' which was agreed and adopted by the Kirk Session in 2017. It states:

Macosquin Presbyterian Church:
by God's grace and for His glory,
we are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ,
who live by the Gospel,
grow in community
and are equipped for mission.

At its heart, the statement of mission seeks to encourage believing church members to a deeper commitment to Christ and the service of His Kingdom. Such commitment will be evident in their growing faith and love for Him and in a desire to build stronger relationships within the church family, all the while endeavouring to lovingly reach out beyond our membership into the wider community with the Gospel of Christ.

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 personal profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular Bible Studies and meetings for prayer to which everyone is warmly encouraged along. A wide range of organisations suitable for different groupings exists within the church fellowship and is open to any who wish to come along. These include

- Sunday School and Bible Class
- Girls' Brigade
- Boys' Brigade
- 'Open Door' Friendship Group
- Presbyterian Women
- Women's Bible Study
- Women's Summer walks
- Men's Bible Study
- Occasional recreational events for men
- Mothers and Toddlers' Group

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30 am. Evening services are held on special occasions, such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. During the week, a women's and men's Bible Study provides opportunities for members to meet together for fellowship, to study and be encouraged by the scriptures and for a time of prayer. In July and August, the weekly Sunday Worship services begin at 11.00 am.

We continue to livestream our services to those not physically present on a Sunday. Data statistics show and personal testimonies concur that our services continue to be watched by a good number of viewers beyond our church family and locality. Services are also uploaded and may be watched again at a time convenient to the viewer. DVD recordings of the services continue to be delivered personally to those unable to join with us on a Sunday and who have no internet access.

Like many other church fellowships, overall regular church attendance remains lower than pre-pandemic levels. At 31 December 2023, there were 135 participating communicant members and 184 families connected with the congregation.

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 other members of the congregation. Church members requesting or requiring pastoral help in facing personal issues are also visited and given loving support as and where possible. The pastoral help of a recently retired minister who has joined our church fellowship has greatly enhanced this ministry. More generally, Minister and elders seek to maintain supportive relationships, encouragement and care to all members and families associated with the congregation through planned meetings, informal conversations and general visitation.

During the year we were delighted to welcome 3 new elders unto our Kirk Session who had been nominated and subsequently ratified by the congregation. Not only does this consolidate our pastoral care of others but has already brought fresh insight as we continue to prayerfully discuss how best we may lead and guide our church family and also how we may meaningfully engage with others living locally outside our membership.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to reach out into the wider community, particularly its assigned parish district, viz., the areas of Macosquin, Castleroe and the Somerset area to the SW of Coleraine town. In the past, introductory literature about the church was regularly

distributed throughout the parish area. In coming months this practice will be reintroduced to personally and directly engage with those living within the wider community.

Our Girls' Brigade (60+ members) and Boys' Brigade (20+ members) companies attract a good number of girls, boys and teenagers from the surrounding locality, many of whom have no other church connections. The leaders of these organizations are wholeheartedly facing up to the challenges of attracting new members into our companies. Sadly, many of our former members failed to return after Covid restrictions were lifted. However, we are encouraged by the goodly number of younger children joining our Companies at the lower levels and trust they will remain with us for many years to come.

A recently started Mother and Toddler Group meets on a weekly basis and has already reached capacity for our premises and resources. Many of those attending travel in from the surrounding area and have no formal connections with our church. We are grateful not only for those who come but the many others who help as a team by preparing and arranging the facilities and by providing refreshments for the toddlers and their carers. Another group for older members of the church has also recently started and meets monthly, providing opportunity for those attending to hear an interesting talk on a wide range of topics and afterwards share 'catch-up' chat over a cup of tea.

The church also makes their facilities available to outside local groups who request the use of a church, hall, or small room - and kitchen – to hold special events. At present a support group meets weekly, while other groups such as the Young Farmers' Clubs, Women's Institute and one of our local Primary Schools, held larger meetings and services on site during this past year.

The church continues to be actively committed to the prayerful and financial support of church members and others who are serving Christ as missionaries in cross-cultural situations. At present, we have direct responsibility for couples and their families serving in various missionary roles in Canada, South Africa and Senegal. In addition, as a result of church members being directly involved, we are committed to the financial support and practical maintenance of an orphanage in Kenya, and also for providing some assistance to ensure the educational funding of the young people as they progress through secondary level schools. News from other missionaries, agencies, projects and crisis appeals are also shared and generously supported on an ad hoc basis.

Our congregation also 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 congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of our local Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important relationship between neighbouring Presbyterian congregations throughout the wider Coleraine and Limavady area and also maintains a link with the wider structures of the denomination which encompasses the whole island of Ireland.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders are nominated to attend and deliberate at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland which gathers in the Assembly Buildings, Belfast, for a few days in June each year. This Assembly provides a forum from representatives from every congregation to discuss and decide on matters of churchwide interest and concern, offers guidance for common practice and procedure, and also ensures that necessary legislative oversight for the benefit of and good practice of whole denomination is in place and regularly reviewed.

Property

Following a major refurbishment of our main Church building in 2014-2015, through the diligent oversight of the Church Committee, our church property continues to be maintained throughout to a very high standard with only minimal repair or upkeep required to sustain that high standard and ensure health and safety requirements are met. Our external grounds, including a church burying ground, are also very well maintained.

Volunteers

The Trustees acknowledge their deep appreciation of the many within the congregation who give freely of their time and energy by serving on committees, acting as Office Bearers, undergoing necessary training, and helping with organisations and other church activities. We are also grateful to those parents and other adults from outside our congregation who enthusiastically work alongside our church members to provide leadership to our young people's groups. We are also deeply indebted to those whose administrative skills and financial expertise ensure our financial accounts and records are accurately maintained and clearly presented each year. It would be impossible to function as a church without the commitment of all these individuals. We are grateful for the unique but collaborative contribution of each of them.

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.

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 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.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 140 contributors during the year (134 in 2022) donating a total of £64,000 including gift aid (£63,742 in 2022). Harvest offering going towards the General Fund amounted to £22,219 including gift aid. Total Income of the congregation during the year was £192,274 compared to £148,864 in the previous year. Giving and donations overall increased by 42.5K. This was mainly due to legacies being received of £39K and an increase in restricted donations. Total expenditure increased from £161,009 in 2022 to £168,900 in 2023. Overhead costs increased by 14% overall as all organisations are now fully operational again after covid. Repairs and maintenance costs were £17.5K of which £8.4K was for sand blasting and painting the railings, and 2.1K was for new curtains in the halls.

At a time when the country is facing challenging financial difficulties, the Trustees acknowledge and express their gratitude for the continued financial support of congregation members. The Trustees deeply appreciate their generosity.

Signed

Mark Candy

Signed

William A Cochrane

Date:

1st Aug 2024

Date:

1st May 2024