

**HIGH KIRK BALLYMENA 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 2023 including a balance sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

High Kirk Ballymena congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
65-71 Thomas Street
Ballymena
BT43 6AZ

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105563)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Mr David Bellingham	Mr Ryan Jess	Mr Gordon Montgomery
Mr David Boyd (appointed 22 Oct 2023)	Mr Alistair MacCorkell (appointed 22 Oct 2023)	Mr Thomas Montgomery
Mr Peter Brown	Mr Trevor Magee (appointed 22 Oct 2023)	Mr Robin Mitchell
Rev Norman Cameron	Dr Philip McCartney	Mr Colin Patton
Mr Clive Fulton (appointed 22 Oct 2023)	Mr Charles McConnell	Mr Ryan Walker (appointed 22 Oct 2023)
Mr Kenny Gregg	Mr Bryan McKibbin	Mr Clifford White (appointed 22 Oct 2023)
Mr James Hamill	Dr David McLaughlin (appointed 22 Oct 2023)	Dr Claire Wilson (appointed 22 Oct 2023)
Mr Francis Hughes	Mr Gary McQuoid	Mr Stephen Wilson

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Norman Cameron
Clerk of Session	Gary McQuoid
Treasurer	Adrian Pogue

AUDITOR

John Finnegan
Potter Finnegan Limited
Unit 25 The Courtyard Business Park
Galgorm Castle,
190 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1HL

BANKERS

Danske Bank
1 Broadway
Ballymena
BT43 7PE

SOLICITORS

Mr Andrew McClean
JJ Macauley Solicitors
22 Carnmoney Road
Glengormley
BT36 6HW

**HIGH KIRK BALLYMENA CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND :
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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 are held at least ten times in each year.

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. High Kirk Ballymena Presbyterian 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 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. The General Assembly for 2023 was held in June 2023.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

High Kirk Ballymena 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 her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregations mission purpose is 'To be a church creating fully devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who are Loving, Learning, Serving and Reaching in His name'.

**HIGH KIRK BALLYMENA CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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 and has a wide range of organisations including:

Little High Kirk Kids	Boys Brigade
High Kirk Kids	Girls Brigade
High Kirk Youth	High Kirk Little Families
Tothers	Pre-School Community Playgroup
Movement	Life Groups
Deeper	Bowling Club
PW	Grief Share
Life Centre/BOBS	Homework Club

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Ordinarily the Trustees look to report on the following aspects of Church life:

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 9.30am, 11.30am and 6.30pm. During the week, the Life Groups provide an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life with 7 Sacraments of Baptism and 2 services of thanksgiving, conducted 4 marriage services and gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 771 communicant members and 621 families connected with the congregations. At the end of the year our membership stood at 1,425.

The average week attendance at Sunday worship is c. 650.

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 one of the congregation's pastoral visitors. This year we appointed 8 additional elders with a view to being more effective and intentional in this area of church life.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregational mission aspect of church life is founded on the mission purpose as outlined above and manifests itself in various ways as compassionate and practical Christianity, looking to reach people for Christ at their point of need. To this end the work undertaken by our Life Centre initiative continues to experience exponential growth and something that the congregation has embraced with enthusiasm. The continued development of Café Explore which meets weekly on Wednesday provides a different way in which church is more accessible to the demands of modern living.

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.

HIGH KIRK BALLYMENA CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular 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.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders and an under 30 representative were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June 2023.

Property

The church committee are appraised on a regular basis to ensure our risk profile and that the risk assessments are current. This means that we have a recurring maintenance programme, prioritised to provide an energy efficient place to worship.

Organisations

High Kirk is a vibrant and busy fellowship as evidenced by the number of organisations already identified within this trustees' report. At the very core of our organisational structure is a desire to be both caring and missional. Such a commitment is built around ensuring our Christian values are shared based on a clear understanding of the biblical principles that underpin all we do – the Lordship of Jesus Christ is our central theme.

Set against such a backdrop all that we do then reflects a willingness to meet people's needs right where they are. We want an all-member ministry and while numbers attending can encourage the leadership of the individual organisations the main thrust of what we do is to see lives changed and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ established.

High Kirk wants to play a full part in the community that is Ballymena and at the core of all we do is our desire to make 'church' more welcoming and practical as we develop our missional DNA. Every day we are 'open for business' with activities catering for every part of our membership. These range from the children within the pre-school playgroup and even before that with our Totlers gatherings right through to those senior members of our fellowship who are the back bone of our Bowling, PW, and Hub activities.

Our youth organisations continue to grow and the numbers of young people building their foundational Christian experiences is very encouraging as they develop from High Kirk Little Kids, High Kirk Kids and High Kirk Youth, through GB & BB and on into the Movement and Deeper - given practical opportunities to show their faith is maturing and real through a variety of mission opportunities at home and overseas.

The trustees are committed to ensuring that High Kirk demonstrates a practical side to our Christianity and the principles that underpin it. Hope House continues to be part of our 'local' community and that role is under continual review to ensure it remains effective while we look to play as full a part of the resident's association as we can. We need to build on these relationships and show practical love as we recognise that 'faith without works is dead.'

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.

HIGH KIRK BALLYMENA CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering.

There were 544 contributing families during the year (469 in previous year, 2022) donating a total of £413,131 (£352,782 in previous year, 2022)

Total income of the congregation during the year was £808,139 compared to £825,613 in the previous year, 2022.

Total expenditure in the year ended 31 December 2023 was £882,348 (2022: £833,514). The major focus of this spend, as is appropriate for a people focused organisation, was on staff at 39%.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF 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.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

GOING CONCERN

The activities of the congregation are dependent on ongoing contributions from 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 an ongoing 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. As a faith-based organisation the Trustees are of the opinion that the members of the congregation provide finance for the furthering of Christ's kingdom and as such expect the Trustees to hold a minimum of reserves. The Trustees are comfortable with this expectation but will continue to review such a policy in light of responsibilities for the staff within their employment. This policy was subject to review in June 2023 and considered appropriate.

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. The use of one principal bank account and oversight from the finance committee enables such risk management to be appropriately managed.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 23 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Rev NA Cameron

Trustee



Mr G McQuoid

Trustee