

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

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105642)

Swatragh 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 Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Swatragh congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Kilrea Road Swatragh Maghera BT46 5QD

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105642)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. John Martin

Mr Colin Bolton

Mr Ivan Bolton

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister

Rev John Martin

Clerk of Session

Mr Ivan Bolton

Treasurer

Mr Colin Bolton

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

BANKERS

Danske Bank, 14 Broad Street, Magherafelt BT45 6EA

SOLICITORS

Burnside and Logue, 43 Main Street, Maghera, BT46 5AA

SWATRAGH 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 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 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 four times 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 it's 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. Swatragh congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Tyrone 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.

Swatragh 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 His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregations mission statement is, *by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and to share the gospel that binds us as a family so as to encourage and equip each other to serve him in the world.*

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday at 12.30pm and in Summer 9.45am 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 profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation in conjunction with Culnady congregation holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School
- Children's Church
- Bible Study
- Presbyterian Women
- Boys' Brigade
- Girls' Brigade
- Young at Heart
- Youth Club
- Youth Fellowship
- Mothers and Toddlers
- Holiday Bible Club
- Inspire Group

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 12.30pm, 9.45am in summer. During the week the Bible Study provides 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 at Sacraments of Baptism, we conducted 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 14 communicant members and 14 families connected with the congregations. The average week attendance at morning worship is 16

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022</u>
Donations to Missions and charities	£460	£880	£1480	£700

visited on a regular basis by the minister, elders or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation reaches out to the local and wider community through all of its organisations which are open to members of the community for encouragement, education, support and fellowship. We hold various social events including concerts, special seasonal services of worship, trips to events and sites of local interest to encourage participation by members of the local community. We support other secular and Christian organisations through volunteering, financial gifts and prayer. The congregation donated as below to external missions and agencies

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 congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care. The congregation also contributes to the denomination's Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society, Sunday School project and any other special appeals.

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 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 undertook redecoration and audio visual installation in 2021.

Organisations.

The congregation have made extensive use of online services for weekly worship. Recent viewing figures for weekly worship show an average of 100 on Sunday morning and 40 on a Sunday evening.

Sunday School meets weekly on Sunday at 10.30am with 7 children aged 4-11 years attending.

Bible Study meets on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings with around 20 attending.

Presbyterian Women meets monthly along with Culnady congregation and has an average attendance of 30 to hear visiting speakers and share fellowship. They also organise a service of worship for the congregations on an annual basis.

Boys' Brigade meets weekly in the church hall for boys aged 4-18, average attendance 41. BB holds various outings, sports events and an annual display.

Girls' Brigade meets weekly in the church hall for girls aged 4-18, average attendance 63. GB holds various outings, sports events and an annual Parents and Friends Night.

Young at Heart meets monthly in the church hall for older adults with 35 - 40 meetings to hear visiting speakers and share over refreshments. The group holds one or two annual day trips to points of interest in the province.

Mothers and Toddlers meet weekly in the church hall for young children and their carers from across the community. Around 20 - 30 carers with children attend for social and leisure activities.

Holiday Bible Club meets annually in the local community centre in the village of Upperlands. Around 100 children up to age 12 attend for games, Bible-based quizzes and craft activities.

Inspire Group meets monthly for fellowship and Christian learning with about 20 attending.

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.

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

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 14 contributors during the year 2023 (much the same as previous year 2023). Donating a total of £15,860 in year 2023 and £15,405.10 in previous year.

Total Income of the congregation during the year 2023 was £20,269 compared to £18,334 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased from £16,168 in the year 2022 to £24,825 in the year 2023.

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.

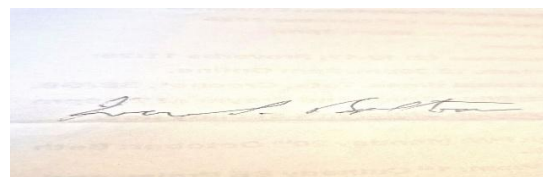
As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 27.10.24 and signed on its behalf by

Rev John A Martin

Mr Ivan Bolton



27.10.24

27.10.24

