

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

**Trustees Annual Report  
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 106138)**

## **PORTAVOGIE 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**

Portavogie congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
Main Road, Portavogie, Co.Down  
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 106138)

### **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Mr George Mawhinney  
Mr John Thompson  
Mr Sennie Thompson

### **PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister	Vacant
Clerk of Session	vacant
Treasurer	Mr John Thompson

### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Mrs Rachel McDougall  
21c Glastry Road,  
Kircubbin  
BT22 1DP

### **BANKERS**

**Ulster Bank**  
**22 Frances Street,**  
**Newtownards,**  
**BT23 3DP**

**SOLICITORS**

**Russell & Co  
11 Lower Mary Street,  
Newtownards  
BT23 4JJ**

## **PORTAVOGIE 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 congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote. Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held when required (average 7-8 a 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. Portavogie congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ards 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.

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

#### **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. Portavogie 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 purposes are by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place. 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 toward him and toward 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 the 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.

## **PORTAVOGIE 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 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 holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School
- Rock Youth Club
- Mothers and Toddlers- Tots Time
- Good News Club (for primary school children)
- Presbyterian Women's group

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 10.30am; since Covid 19 we have suspended our evening service until further notice. 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. At 31 December 2023 there were 36 communicant members and 80 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at morning worship is approx. 45.

### **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 elders and via phone.

### **Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation supplies clothing to migrant fishermen in Portavogie Harbour. Special Sunday services – Harvest, Harvest of the Sea, Children's Day, Christmas Carols by candlelight.

Supporting missionary agencies –

Presbyterian Children's Society

Belfast City Mission

Leprosy Mission

United Appeal

Poppy Appeal

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas child

**PORTAVOGIE 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 elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

**General Assembly**

Temporarily suspended due to Covid 19 pandemic.

**Property**

We rent the Manse, 22 The Tides, Portavogie. Various work was carried out such as new bathrooms, kitchen appliances, painting and general updating.

**Organisations**

**Sunday School**

Sunday School normally meets during the morning service in the Church hall. There are 20 children on the register. We use our own materials to share the Gospel message, which includes a bible story, worksheets, colouring sheets, craft and baking.

**Mother and Toddlers- Tots Time**

On Tuesdays the Mother and Toddler group meet at 10am-12pm with approx. 30 children attending with their mothers/carers.

**Good News Club**

Good News Club (for Primary School children) meets on Wednesdays at 6.30pm-7.30pm. Scripture Union material is used to share the Gospel message and children play games, recite memory verses and create craft to further explain the bible story.

**The Midweek prayer and Bible study group** meets on Wednesdays at 7.45 pm.

### **Rock Youth Club**

Rock Youth meet every other Saturday in the Church Hall from 7.30-9.30pm. Various activities and speakers ensure that our young people have fun, fellowship and learn about the bible in a relevant way. 30-40 youth regularly attend from P7 upwards. Various activities include cage football, cooking, craft, games, sport, outings and movie nights.

### **PW Women's group**

The Women's group meet on the first Monday of every month and have various speakers, craftspeople, missionaries who are in keeping with the PW theme for the year. The meeting runs from 8-9.30pm and have a usual attendance of 12-15.

### **Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with the above organisations and other church activities. Not forgetting our caretakers.

## **PORTAVOGIE 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 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.

**PORTAVOGIE 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 37 contributors during the year (30 in 2020) donating a total of £39728 (£37671 in 2020). Total Income of the congregation during the year was £57,174, compared to £55,105 in 2020.

**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) 208 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 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and signed on its behalf by

John Thompson

  


