



Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin

Charity number: NIC 102622

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS AND OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.12.2023

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REFERENCES AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name	Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin
Charity registration number	NIC 102622
Contact address	Church Street, Portaferry, BT22 1LS

TRUSTEES (SELECT VESTRY)

Rev. Canon Gillian Withers B.Ed. (chair)	Peter Armstrong-Woodroffe
Rosemarie Armstrong-Woodroffe	Michael Beckett
Elizabeth Browne	Eveleigh Brownlow MBE
Rhoda Dorndorf	Francis FitzGibbon
John Johnston	Elaine McFeeters
Diane McWhinney	Lorna Peacock
James Quinn (until 16.02.2023)	Mark Rebbeck
Nancy Sheridan	Kathleen Smyth
Cecilia Stephens	Vivienne Young
Rev. Jennifer Montgomery (ex officio)	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Rector	Rev. Canon Gillian Withers B.Ed.
Assisting minister	Rev. Jennifer Montgomery
Lay readers	Rosemarie Armstrong-Woodroffe Karen McAlpine
Honorary secretary	Elaine McFeeters
Honorary treasurer	John Johnston
St James's, Ballyphilip	
• Rector's churchwarden	Elizabeth Browne
• People's churchwarden	Elaine McFeeters
The Abbacy, Ardquin	
• Rector's churchwarden	Cecilia Stephens
• People's churchwarden	Mark Rebbeck
Glebe wardens	
• Rector's glebe warden	Rhoda Dorndorf
• People's glebe warden	Vivienne Young

OTHER OFFICE BEARERS

Parochial nominator	Elizabeth Browne
Supplemental parochial nominator	Vacant
Diocesan synods person	Michael Beckett
Supplemental diocesan synods person	Vacant
Freewill offerings recorder	John Johnston
Organists	Jennifer Bryce Elizabeth Lyttle BEM Zara Quinn
Choir coordinator	Vacant
Health and safety officer	Rhoda Dorndorf
Ballyphilip Parish Centre licensee	John Johnston (until 30.11.2023) Peter Armstrong-Woodroffe (from 01.12.2023)
Caretaker	Thomas Leebody

BANKERS

Danske Bank
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Guardian Chartered Accountants
2 William Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AH

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

The trustees present the annual report and the statements of financial activities and assets and liabilities for the Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin for the year ending 31.12.2023.

The trustees first wish to express their condolences to the families of the following parishioners, who have died during or since the pandemic:

May Beatty	Mark Browne	Lyla Connar
David FitzGibbon	William Ellison	Louise Livingstone
Harry McBratney	Maureen McWhinney	John Parkinson
James Quinn	Agnes White	William White

Secondly, the trustees wish to thank the following publicly for the support which they have given to the parish in the past year:

Ballyblack Community Men's Group for a donation to the St James's Appeal Fund.

The Listed Places of Worship Scheme for financial assistance with the inspection of St James's Church.

The Ulster Historical Foundation for digitising the parish records.

Joseph Long, Elaine McBratney, Joan Peacock, and Vivienne Young for their industry in raising funds towards the restoration of St James's Church.

Mark Alcorn, Martin Ellison, and David McCallister for the work which they carried out at the Abbey, the Margaret Hurst Dwelling, and the rectory as freewill offerings.

Rhoda Dorndorf for her zeal and dedication in managing the maintenance and refurbishment of the Margaret Hurst Dwelling and rectory.

Tommy Leebody and Johnny Reid for the exemplary standards to which they have managed and maintained the Ballyphilip Parish Centre and the Ballyphilip graveyard.

Mr and Mrs Roderick Savage and Mr and Mrs Oliver Savage for allowing parishioners to use their lane for access and parking during services at the Abbey.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland is the advancement of religion. The principal function of the Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting through the work of its churches – St James's, Ballyphilip and the Abbey, Ardquin - the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole and offering support for those needing help are fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

As a result of activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, the Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin has custody of property and of records, materials and artefacts which are of significance to the cultural and religious heritage of the Upper Ards. The maintenance of the property, records, materials, and artefacts is undertaken by the select vestry of the Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin.

ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE, AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

PROMOTING THE CHURCH'S MISSION

Whilst St James's is closed, Holy Communion and Morning and Evening Prayer are celebrated in the Abbacy on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of each month. A service of All Age Worship is held in the Ballyphilip Parish Centre on the third Sunday of each month. Whenever there is a fifth Sunday in a month, the parish joins either Portaferry Methodist Church or the Parish of Greyabbey and Kircubbin in common worship and Christian fellowship. The services, which are regularly attended by fifteen to twenty people of all ages and backgrounds, reinforce the worshippers' sense of Christian values and contribute to their spiritual well-being.

Evangelisation was internal. During the diocesan week of mission (04.06-10.06.2023) parishioners exchanged experiences with evangelists from Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA), and on 24.09.2023 Open Doors gave the parish an insight to the plight of Christians in North Korea. The address and the exchange of experiences brought an understanding of the challenges which the Church faces in other countries and a realisation that whilst our situation is infinitely more comfortable, the deification of false values in our own culture presents challenges akin to those which Christians must face more starkly in other places.

The parish has delivered the Church's social mission by distributing small gifts and comforts to elderly and deserving parishioners and townsfolk and by working with Youth for Christ NI to offer young people alternatives to anti-social behaviour. Parishioners have helped the Portaferry Food Bank alleviate social deprivation through gifts of groceries, toiletries, and other items and have donated generously to the work of Christian missions and secular charities on the Ards Peninsula and further afield.

As in previous years, the parish joined the other denominations of the town in public evangelism during the Portaferry gala (15.07-22.07.2023), ecumenical carol services during advent, and a moment of prayer and reflection on St Sylvester's day (31.12.2023). These experiences gave everyone - irrespective of denomination - a wider sense of the Church's mission, eroded legacies of sectarian division, and reinforced recognition of our common Christian heritage.

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Two oak trees were planted in the Ardquin churchyard to commemorate the coronation of HM King Charles III and maintenance work was completed on the exterior and interior of the Abbacy Church. The graveyard at Ballyphilip was reopened after additional safety measures were installed.

A high-level inspection found that St James's Church was substantially sound and could be reopened for worship once the tower and the roofs of the transept and chancel had been repaired and a new heating system had been installed. Following discussions with the diocese and McCollum Conservation Ltd, the trustees are examining options for the future of the building.

The parish plate and church records were removed from St James's Church for safekeeping and the Ulster Historical Foundation has made digital copies of the church records to preserve them for future generations and to make them more accessible for genealogical and family history research. The trustees are most grateful to the foundation and its director, Mr Fintan Mullan, for carrying out this project at no cost to the parish.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The Ballyphilip Parish Centre has become a preferred location for families from across the community to hold birthday and First Communion parties as well as for social, cultural, and recreational activities. The centre has frequently been booked for much of each week during the past year. Whilst the increased use of the building is most welcome, a major refurbishment programme will soon be needed because of greater wear and tear on the fixtures, fittings, and decoration.

The Margaret Hurst Dwelling was vacated and left in an uninhabitable condition in the autumn of 2022. It was secured and cleared over the winter at a cost of £1,148. Local estate agents advised that the property could be

sold for £60,000 without being refurbished or for £75,000 after being refurbished, but they noted that the market in Portaferry was primarily rental and that a refurbished property could be let for £450 a month gross. After due deliberation, the trustees decided to refurbish the property and let it through an accredited agent. Local tradespeople have been carrying out refurbishment work since the spring. The costs in 2023 were £9,715.

Repair and maintenance issues at the rectory which were identified in the 2020 quinquennial inspection report are being addressed. Johnny Reid has taken over maintenance of the rectory grounds following the death of William White. The parish of Greyabbey and Kircubbin pays sixty percent and the Parish of Ballyphilip and Ardquin pays forty percent of the rectory maintenance costs. The rector meets the electricity and heating costs.

COMPLIANCE

The parish's safeguarding, data protection, and copyright compliance policies are in accordance with Church of Ireland guidelines. Health and safety policy and documentation follow guidance from Ards and North Down Borough Council. Heating maintenance and electrical safety checks are carried out annually by professionally qualified tradespeople. The safety of those using the Parish Centre is scrutinised by Ards and North Down Borough Council during the annual licensing inspection of the Houston Hall. The parish is registered with the Department for Communities as landlord of the Margaret Hurst Dwelling and the rectory.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities which were started during the year have helped to achieve the parish's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The parish's income in 2023 was £77,575 (2022: £391,185) and expenditure was £93,711 (2022: £122,986). The overspend of £16,136 is largely from legal fees for the sale of the glebe lands (£3,585) and the cost of replacing the parish centre boiler (£13,191). These expenses will not recur and as there is a surplus of £2,975 on the unrestricted funds before transfers, the parish's financial situation is stable. The trustees must nevertheless maintain a tight control of spending because the parish continues to operate close to the limits of its overdrafts (No. 1 Account: £35,000; No. 2 Account: £5,000).

The parish has three accounts with Danske Bank. The No. 1 Account is for current and general expenditure, the No. 2 Account is a reserve for meeting general expenses, and the savings account holds at least £5,000 as a reserve for capital expenses. The immediate aim is to reduce the overdraft on the No. 1 Account. The longer-term aims are to eliminate the overdraft on the No. 2 Account and to build up the savings account to £15,000 or equivalent to three months expenditure.

The trustees have reviewed the budgets for the year ahead and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the Parish can continue its activities and that the financial statements for the year ended 31.12.2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT

GOVERNING DOCUMENT AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHARITY

Chapter III of the Church of Ireland constitution governs parishes and parochial organisation. The members of the select vestry are the charity trustees.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF SELECT VESTRY (TRUSTEES)

All members of the Church of Ireland who are over the age of 18 and who are either resident within the parish or live elsewhere but have been accustomed members of the congregation for at least three months may register as members of the general vestry of the parish, allowing them to attend and vote at meetings of the general vestry, and to stand for election to the select vestry. Meetings of the general vestry are held at least once a year.

The select vestry is elected as part of the general vestry meeting. The select vestry will hold their positions for a period of one year. Select vestry members may be re-elected annually and there is no limit on the number of terms which may be served.

PAY AND REMUNERATION

The parish meets forty percent of the stipend and allowances which the rector receives from the Parish of Greyabbey and Kircubbin. Contributions to the Clergy Pension Fund are set by the diocese. Visiting clergy, lay readers, and organists receive a fee for each service they conduct or at which they play. The caretaker is paid weekly in accordance with the National Living Wage and receives a supplement of £30 a month for unsocial hours.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The select vestry is responsible for the day-to-day management of the parish. The select vestry consists of the member of the clergy serving in the parish, the churchwardens, the glebe wardens, and generally not more than twelve other members of the general vestry elected at the General Vestry. Retired members of clergy resident in the parish are ex officio members of the select vestry.

The select vestry is chaired by the incumbent or other member of the clergy officiating in the parish. Select vestry members are responsible for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how parish funds are to be applied.

The select vestry meets at times fixed by the members or by the diocesan synod. Special meetings may be convened at any time by the chairperson or the churchwardens: approval of uncontentious expenditure and business items is conducted online. The select vestry met seven times in 2023 and the average attendance was sixty percent.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit and have ensured that activities which were started during the year have helped to achieve the parish's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the statement of receipts and payments and statement of assets and liabilities in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland with an income of less than £250,000 requires the trustees to prepare a statement of receipts and payments and a statement of assets and liabilities for each financial year.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the parish's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the assets and liabilities of the parish. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

.....*Canon Gill Withers*..... (Rector)
.....*Elaine McFeters*..... (Hon. Secretary)
.....*21 April 2024*..... (Date)