

The Parish Church of St Patrick, Drumbeg

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ending 31 December 2024

Trustees' Report

The trustees present the annual report and statements of Receipts and Payments and Assets and Liabilities for the Parish Church for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Chairman's Report

1. Structure, Governance, and Management:

Drumbeg Parish follows the Church of Ireland structure at Parish level as codified in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, governed by General Synod and the Synod of the Diocese of Down and Dromore.

The parish is managed by the Select Vestry (the trustees) ordinarily chaired by the incumbent. The Select Vestry is elected annually at the Easter General Vestry by those recorded on the Register of Vestrypersons. The Select Vestry comprises twelve ordinary members, two Churchwardens, and two Glebe-wardens.

The Churchwardens elected for 2024 were Mr Gordon Poots and Ms Lore King. The Glebewardens were Mr Raymond Kerr and Mr Michael Barnett. Miss Nicola Wadsworth was elected Honorary Secretary and Mr William Miscampbell was elected Honorary Treasurer. The Reverend Timothy Eldon and Miss Marion Wilcox were admitted as ex-officio members. Following the departure of the Reverend W. S. Nixon in August 2024, the Very Reverend Henry Hull assumed the duties of chairman until the institution of an incumbent.

The Select Vestry remains indebted and grateful for the hard work and commitment of the Church Wardens, Glebe Wardens, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer for their ongoing hard work and commitment to the work of the parish.

The Select Vestry is responsible for the management and maintenance of parochial finances, buildings, lands, and possessions moveable and immoveable. They also have a responsibility to the necessary provision of monies and resources to support the Rector and Ministry Team in the mission objectives and ministry activities of the Parish.

The Select Vestry is supported in this work by the Diocesan Office in the Diocese of Down and Dromore through the Diocesan Council, the Diocesan Secretary, the Diocesan Accountant and the Administration staff. The Bishop of Down and Dromore as ordinary of the diocese holds ultimate responsibility for the provision of worship and pastoral care in the parish.

2. Objectives and Activities

We are a Church of Ireland Parish Church in the Diocese of Down & Dromore within the context of the wider Anglican Communion committed to both Word and Sacrament and seeking to minister to all ages and backgrounds, expressing our mission in the following key areas:

- Teaching the Bible

Faithfully teaching the Bible in Church and in homes; equipping everyone in our care to live out the truth wherever they are.

- Ministering In Prayer

Praying for one another after church on Sunday mornings; Praying for the life of the Church at regular Prayer Meetings and in our homes. We are available to pray. No prayer request is too big, too small or too inconvenient.

- Making disciples of all ages

Creating a learning community, that helps people at all stages in their faith journey to move towards maturity in Christ.

- Proclaiming Jesus locally and globally

We believe that we have something so exciting to share that we can't keep it to ourselves. We want our community and other communities across the globe to meet Jesus and discover real life.

- Caring for people in Jesus' name locally and globally

We believe Jesus commands us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves', so we seek to support people in their mental, physical and relational needs. We seek to stand alongside, and advocate for: the forgotten, the oppressed and the poor of body, mind and soul, both on our doorsteps and further afield.

- Caring for God's Creation

We believe the natural environment is God's gift to humanity and as such it is our responsibility to steward the natural resources of the world in a 'green' manner for successive generations. We seek to achieve this by calling on our membership to encourage and to implement sustainable environmental practices in their daily lives.

3. Select Vestry Activity

2024 has been a year of significant change for Drumbeg as following the General Easter Vestry the Rector, the Reverend W. S. Nixon, announced his appointment as incumbent of the Parish of Seapatrick. Mr Nixon's incumbency of Drumbeg parish formally ended on the 20th August 2024.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of Mr Nixon's leadership in Drumbeg over his twelve-year incumbency and the growth and development he effected in God's providence. The absence of Mr Nixon and his family remains deeply felt in the parish as we look prayerfully forward to the appointment and institution of the next incumbent in 2025.

Following Mr Nixon's departure, the Reverend Timothy Eldon and Miss Marion Wilcox have maintained pastoral care and spiritual oversight in the parish as Curate Assistant and Diocesan Lay Reader respectively. The Very Reverend Henry Hull assumed the responsibilities of interim chairman of the Select Vestry.

Mr Michael Barnett continues in the role of GDPR Controller and ably oversees the implementation of GDPR policy in accordance with the requirements of the Representative Church Body. In September 2024 the parish adopted ChurchSuite management software to improve the efficiency of record keeping, rota management, and facilities usage. The Select Vestry is very grateful to the Technical Intern, Mrs E. Livall, for her continued hard work in coordinating ChurchSuite.

The Safeguarding Panel continues to oversee the welfare of children and vulnerable adults involved in church activities. Mr Eldon received Safeguarding Panel training and joined the panel on an interim basis to fill the vacancy left by Mr Nixon.

The Health and Safety Committee has continued under the able leadership of Mr L. Rossi in maintaining safety equipment and implementing appropriate policy in the parish.

At the request of the Hon. Treasurer Mr W. Miscampbell, the Select Vestry created a Finance Committee to oversee the activity of the Hon. Treasurer and provide appropriate accountability. The Select Vestry appointed Mr W. Miscampbell, Mr J. Cochrane, Mr R. Kerr, Mr G. Poots, Mr L. Rossi, Rev'd T. Eldon and Rev'd W. Nixon to be members of the committee.

The Rector's Mission Committee was also constituted as a committee of the Select Vestry for the duration of the vacancy to maintain accountability in parochial overseas mission activity until such time as an incumbent should be instituted. Mr N. Quinn continues as chairman with Rev'd T. Eldon, Miss M. Wilcox, Miss N. Wadsworth, Mrs S. McFall, and Dr M. Morrow as members.

4. Achievements and Performance

The making of disciples through the teaching of the Bible remains our chief priority in parochial activity. Attendance at Sunday worship has remained steady and more than 60 people meet fortnightly to study the Scriptures and pray in homes.

Provision for children and families has also continued with success. In September JAM was reconfigured to comprise two classes for younger and older children and Mrs L. McGourty joined the team as a regular teacher. As a result, we have begun to see a growing consistency in attendance at JAM and better engagement from the children in the teaching.

The Boys' Brigade company welcomed three new leaders this year under the leadership of Captain James Cochrane and was able to open a Junior Section which has been welcomed with eagerness by the boys. It is hoped that the company will continue to grow and with adequate staffing open a Company Section as the boys graduate beyond the Junior Section.

The Girls' Brigade Company has also continued to grow under the leadership of Captain Sarah Price with the happy problem of needing to recruit more leaders to meet the numbers of girls joining.

Little Lambs toddler group has similarly grown and strengthened this year and continues to garner an excellent reputation in the local community. Mabel Quinn maintains a broad range of activities for the children and their carers on a Thursday morning, well supported by a team of volunteers, most of whom have joined for the first time this year.

We are very grateful to all those who volunteer their time and resources in maintaining these important ministries which engage children and families with the gospel message.

The parish remains committed to mission partners at home and abroad and more that £40,000 was raised towards projects with our partner agencies. In February a team was again sent through Fields of Life to Nypaya School in Northern Uganda where team members were able to see the new kitchen block and crop fields which are now in active use feeding the school children. A team will visit again in September 2025.

In November a small team of four (Mr N. Quinn, Mrs M. Quinn, Rev'd T. Eldon, and Ms. D. Montague) made a link visit through CMSI to the Province of Alexandria and delivered a four-day programme of teaching in St Raphael's School, Cairo. The parish along with some generous donors raised £10,000 to support the running costs of the school and provide food for all the children for the duration of the visit. It is hoped that this link with Cairo will continue to develop with regular link visits.

The Curate's Sit-Out raised £2,250 towards the Suitcase Project and on Christmas day newcomers were welcomed to the Parochial Hall to share a Christmas dinner. We are grateful to Mr N. Quinn for organising this special Christmas event.

The Rector, Curate Assistant, and Pastoral Assistant have provided ongoing pastoral care to the parish in the visitation of the sick and the administration of the occasional offices.

The parish has encouraged ongoing fellowship and community through regular activity groups and events. The Heavenly Crafts group, Bowls Club, and Art Club are active and growing as are Coffee Stop and Chums and Crumbs. We are grateful to Ms R. Bunting for her long service to Christian Aid and the regular lunches in the parish and are pleased that Miss N. Wadsworth and Ms W. Kidd have agreed to continue this ministry. We are also grateful to Mrs B. Farris and the team who maintain the regular Afternoon Teas. Each of these activities help to encourage Christian fellowship and strengthen relationships in the body of Christ.

5. Chairman's Financial Review

We are supremely grateful to Mr W. Miscampbell for his ongoing hard work as Hon. Treasurer and his commitment to keeping the Select Vestry regularly informed. Free Will Offerings remain steady and our cash accounts healthy, however, we wish to continue to encourage generosity among God's people to His work.

In preparation for a new Rector the Select Vestry has planned substantial and necessary works to renovate the Rectory and fit it for purpose. This has included reconfiguring the ground floor to create a kitchen dining space, a new utility room, and expand the Rector's study. These plans have been guided by the expertise of the Rector's Glebe Warden Mr R. Kerr who will manage the works commencing in early 2025. The Select Vestry is deeply indebted to Mr Kerr for his contributions to maintaining the buildings and grounds of the parish.

The fellowship at Drumbeg continues to grow in faith as disciples of Christ and welcome new members. As we look towards welcoming a new Rector and a new season of ministry in 2025 it remains imperative for us as a worshipping community to seek our God in prayer, and to follow him all the more closely.

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

Very Reverend Henry Hull
(Interim Chairman)

Reverend Timothy Eldon
(Curate Assistant)