

**Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church**  
**a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

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

**Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC104268**

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
a 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**

Saintfield Road congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland: Myrtledene Road, Belfast, BT8 6GQ, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland: NIC104268

**CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Malcolm Buchanan  
Gordon Campbell  
Andrew Hamilton  
Gavin Hamilton  
Heather Lowry  
Jean McClune  
William McClune  
Ian Mullen  
Jonny Patterson  
Lorna Rodgers  
Neil Templeton  
David Thomson

Johnny Bell  
Robert Clarke  
Derek Henderson  
John Hamilton  
Jonny McClune  
Alistair McCracken  
Heather Montgomery  
Alison Mullen  
David Rice  
Alison Templeton  
Alf Thompson  
Ben Walker (Minister)

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister  
Clerk of Session  
Treasurer

Rev. Ben Walker  
Dr. Alistair R. McCracken  
Mr. Ross Withers ACA

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS**

Finegan Gibson Limited

**BANKERS**

Danske Bank Limited  
Donegall Square West  
Belfast  
BT1 6JS

**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 also 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 eight times per year, monthly September to May.

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.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Presbytery**

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's 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. Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the South Belfast 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 Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 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**

Saintfield Road 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 its members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

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.



**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The congregation usually 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 prayer and Bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations. Other external organisations also use our church premises and are supported by the congregation.

The Rev. Ben Walker continued as Convenor of the vacancy in Belvoir Presbyterian Church. Following the recommendation of Kirk Session and as reported in the 2022 report representation was made to the Linkage Commission of PCI asking for permission to appoint an Associate Minister, to work primarily in the congregation meeting in Belvoir. A request was also made for additional funding. The Linkage Commission did not grant permission to call an Associate Minister. There are ongoing discussions by both Kirk Sessions, South Belfast Presbytery and the Belfast Conference about the ongoing relationship between Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church and Belvoir Presbyterian Church.

During the year (September) Mr Andrew Ferguson was appointed as an Assistant Minister of the congregation in Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church. This is a three-year training appointment and Mr Ferguson will be eligible for a call to his own congregation in September 2026.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and the services are also broadcast through live streaming. On some Sunday evenings, and during the week, meetings for prayer are held or also live streamed. Life Groups meet in homes or in the Church for Bible Study and prayer.

At 31 December 2023 there were 289 communicant members and approximately 290 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at Sunday morning worship was approximately 230.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are normally visited on a regular basis by the minister, elders or by a member of the congregation. The structure for pastoral care was reviewed in 2022 and changes implemented in 2023. Three large pastorates were created and the pastoral needs of the people in each pastorate are met by a pastoral team lead by some of the elders. As part of this implementation a review of the names of people on the Church database was undertaken.

**Mission and outreach**

The congregation is involved in many differing types of local mission activity throughout the year. The congregation also supports workers overseas, including financial support.

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 carry out mission and outreach on a denominational basis, beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The PCI 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 congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

**Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of the Presbytery of South Belfast by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

**General Assembly**

The minister along with an elder nominated by Kirk Session normally attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. The 2023 General Assembly was held in June. The Minister, Assistant Minister and a nominated elder attended and where appropriate contributed to debate and voted on resolutions.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

**Property**

During 2023 a number of small-scale works were carried out. These include rendering the wall in front of the main Church, installing safety rails, new signage, improving the lightening conductor on the Church tower and some maintenance work on the manse.

**Organisations**

There are a range of other organisations in the church which provide fellowship for church members and others and which meet regularly, using church facilities.

**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 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.



**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to ministers and employees who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment or, on occasion, members serving either locally or overseas. 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 and statutory guidance.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through Freewill Offering, together with donations to the Support Fund (specifically for mission and property)

There were approximately 215 contributors to the General Fund during the year donating a total of £131,142 (£142,388 in 2022), excluding Gift Aid.

Total income of the congregation during the year was £363,095 compared to £244,454 in the previous year. Grants of £11,690 were claimed and received and the congregation were also in receipt of a legacy donation of £127,242 in 2023.

Total expenditure was £294,969 compared to £280,372 in 2022. This was primarily due to increases in staffing costs and increased property expenditure.

**RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE 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 congregation 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;



**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

- 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 Congregation 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 2019)". 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.

**POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN**

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 on-going 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. It is the policy of the Trustees to hold between three and six month's normal expenditure. The Trustees also bear in mind the bank balance available and the net current asset position. During the year the Church received a legacy of £127,242 and until decisions about its use are made, this is being held in reserves and the bank account. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £195,308 (2022 £110,067).

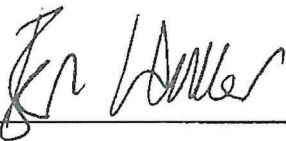
**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**RISK REVIEW**

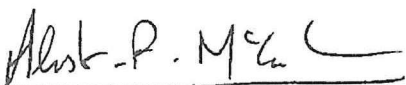
Following the fire damage, the Trustees have considered the risks around security and have enhanced the measures which were in place. A review of other major risks, including child protection and data security, has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of on-going 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.

Regular training with regard to issues such as child protection is given.

They have been approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and signed on its behalf on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024 by

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rev Ben Walker (Minister)

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Alistair McCracken (Clerk of Session)