

## **First Holywood Presbyterian Church**

### **Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2023**

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First Holywood Presbyterian Church is a Christian organisation derived from a Declaration of Trust and it is a registered charity, registration number NIC 104336.

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2019).

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives and aims**

First Holywood Congregation 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 congregation's mission purpose is to seek to enable people of all ages to discover Christ and to follow Him, to celebrate Him together and to learn how God's truth can change and equip us for effective service in the community and the wider world.

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

##### **Significant activities**

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords 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

- Children's Ministry
- Connect (for teenagers)
- Tots R Us (Mothers and Toddlers)
- Women's Morning Bible Study
- Home and fellowship groups
- Presbyterian Women
- Thursday Club (for senior citizens)
- Luncheon Club (for senior citizens)
- Young Life (for teenagers)
- Girls Brigade and Explorers
- Arts & Crafty Folk

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**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Public benefit**

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.

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#### **ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Charitable Activities**

##### **Minister's Review**

We give thanks to God, Father, Son and Spirit for the grace by which we have been called, gathered, led and empowered to live as members of the church of Christ, in First Holywood Presbyterian.

In this report, we do more than note facts and figures, by which any organisation may give account for itself. We give all glory to God for the signs of his blessing and purpose for us and through us, as we continue to put him first in all things, and work together for the building of his kingdom, in Holywood and far beyond.

In this year we were blessed to welcome new staff members - Maria Lopez-Melus as administrator, Amy Hunter as Coordinator for Children's and Youth Ministry, and Cathy Smith as student deaconess. We gave thanks for the continuing work of our Kirk Session, as we marked the retirement of Anne White and Scott Burnside, and the handing over of the Clerk's role from Craig Russell to Mark Baillie. We have been blessed and encouraged to see not only the continuation, but the growth of various ministries of the church, engaging a wide range of ages and interests within the church family and wider community.

The Clerk's report will highlight in more detail, some of the changes in leadership and roles during 2023, as well as a new mission partnership strategy, and Kirk Session working structure, all of which are proving fruitful in our ongoing work and witness.

I want to note my own thanks to our staff team for 2023 (Maria Lopez-Melus, Kathleen Spence, Christine McClenahan, Helen Jeffrey, Charles Maginnes, Amy Hunter and Cathy Smith), Kirk Session, committee members, treasurer, organisational leaders and helpers for their dedication, inspiration and creativity.

Thanks are also due to all those of you, our members, who faithfully support and enthusiastically participate in the many and varied aspects of our church life. As a worshipping family of faith, God has called each of us to play our part, and each is as important as the next, within this body.

I pray that these reports, will move us to further praise of the Lord for his goodness and faithfulness, and inspire us to spur one another on, in the work of his kingdom mission through the life, witness and fellowship of First Holywood Presbyterian Church.

Grace and peace to you.

Rev. Stuart McCrea

##### **Kirk Session**

In May 2023, Craig Russell stood down as Clerk of Session having served in the role for four years from May 2019. The Session and Congregation of First Holywood is hugely grateful to Craig for his diligent and faithful leadership during his tenure. Craig served in the role in one of the most challenging periods faced by the Church in recent memory with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. He further had to play a central role in guiding the Church at this time while we did not have a Minister in post.

Craig served as Clerk with a steady hand and put to excellent use his considerable legal and theological talents. He also managed to maintain his good humour and grace in what were at times very difficult circumstances. We are grateful to God for his providence in leading and gifting Craig for this role. He was the right person for the role at the right time. As his successor, I would also want to put on record my thanks to his wife Jenny, and children Lily and Emma, for their support to Craig during his tenure and for the sacrifices they made.

We are grateful to God for how he continued to work and move in the Church family at First Holywood in 2023. Session met on eight occasions in 2023 as we sought to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation.

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In 2023, we had three new staff join our staff team. In January, Maria Lopez-Melus joined as our new Office administrator; in May, Amy Hunter joined as our Children and Youth Co-ordinator; and in September, Cathy Smith joined as our student deaconess. We want to express our gratitude to Maria, Amy and Cathy for the many ways in which they contributed to the life and witness of First Holywood in 2023.

First Holywood supported six charities through our Mission Partnerships initiative: Flourish NI, Scripture Union North Down, Christians in Sport, the Irish Bible Institute, Jengana and Mercy Ships. Several of these organisations led services throughout the year.

In September, Session adopted a new structure which introduced six new sub-groups covering the different areas of the mission and life of the Church. These six groups covered Children and Youth Ministry; Discipleship; Finance and Administration; Mission and Social Justice; Pastoral Care; and Prayer. Each of the groups is led by an elder and we hope that the development of the groups will help the Church to witness to the difference that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ makes in the Holywood of today.

In 2023, two of our elders retired from Session. Firstly, Anne White in March and secondly Scott Burnside in May. Anne, who was ordained as an elder in 2011, had served for several years as the Presbytery representative for First Holywood and was a consistent advocate for the central importance of mission and social justice on Session. Scott, who became an elder in 2007, retired on the corresponding Sunday to his ordination sixteen years before. He had served for many years as the Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee of Session and ably ensured that Session was kept informed of financial matters during his time. The congregation of First Holywood is grateful to both Anne and Scott for their faithful service; both "ruled well" (1 Timothy 5:17) during their years of service.

We were grateful for the work of Graeme Thompson as Treasurer and for the role of Caroline Thompson and Andrew Nugent as child protection designated persons. These are roles of vital importance to the life of the Church and we continue to be thankful to God that we have people of such calibre willing to serve in these roles.

As well as child protection considerations being a regular item of session agenda, we received useful updates from Anne White as our Presbytery elder up to March and by her replacement Lynda Francis. Their willingness to serve in this way is hugely appreciated. We want to thank elder Graeme Thompson (not to be confused with our Treasurer Graeme Thompson) for serving as our representative elder at General Assembly in June alongside our Minister, Stuart McCrea. The importance of the support and guidance of Presbytery and the wider Church remains amply apparent to members of First Holywood and we are thankful for how God uses the different parts of his Church to his glory.

We were glad to join together again with our brothers and sisters in High Street congregation for four Sunday services in July. We were also grateful for the ongoing work of church committee and others in attending to many practical issues of the church and manse.

Ultimately, we give thanks to God who has called us out of darkness in to his marvellous light for his grace to us as a Church family in 2023. It is our hope and prayer that we may continue to seek his glory in all that we do.

"For from him and through him and for him are all things.  
To him be the glory forever! Amen." (Romans 11:36)

Mark Baillie (Clerk of Session from May 2023)

#### **CHURCH COMMITTEE**

The Congregational Committee of the church is charged with the responsibility of 'administration of the temporal affairs of the congregation'. Members are elected from the congregation to serve on the committee for a three-year term at which point a new committee is elected.

**Office Bearers** - The following were Committee Office Bearers during the year:

**Chairperson:** Trevor Reaney

**Secretary:** Christina Baillie

**Treasurer:** Graeme Thompson

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#### **Sub Committees**

The following Sub Committees served during the year:

The Finance Sub Committee which was chaired by Scott Burnside until May 2023 and following this Fiona Woods was appointed as the chair. Throughout 2023, the Sub Committee was made up of Scott Burnside, Fiona Woods, Graeme Thompson, Rev Stuart McCrea, Craig Russell, Robert Conlon, Rachael Mason, Trevor Reaney, Mark Baillie and Christina Baillie. In May 2023, Scott Burnside retired as an elder and therefore stepped down from his role on the Committee. In May 2023, Craig Russell stepped down as Clerk of Session and Mark Baillie took up this role in June 2023. In September 2023, Rachael Mason resigned from the Committee.

Those responsible for Property were Albert Hall and Peter Moran.

The Welcoming and Hospitality Sub Committee has been composed of Cheryl Harbinson, Elinor Cairnduff and Liz Reaney.

The Communications Sub Committee was made up of Jenny Russell, Ben Harbinson and Zoe Woods.

In March 2023, Colin Dewar resigned from the Committee.

#### **Business during the year**

While the Treasurer will issue a separate report on all financial matters, it is appropriate to express our thanks on behalf of the congregation to Graeme Thompson for serving in his role throughout 2023. The work of the Sub Committee has allowed for the ministry and mission of the church to continue through the year. In particular, there has been significant amounts given to support young people and young adults attending and serving through summer camps and missions, as well as contributions made to the organisations chosen to be supported through the mission partnerships scheme.

The Property Sub Committee worked consistently through the year responding to various issues which related to the church property and manse. There have been many minor to intermediate issues which have been dealt with efficiently, cost effectively and to a high standard. In early 2023, issues with the flue of the boiler providing heat to the church sanctuary meant alternate arrangements and repairs to the flue were required to support church services to continue. The Property Sub Committee put arrangements in place.

Regarding the Communications Sub Committee, there has been a significant piece of work completed to design and implement a new logo, house style and website for the church. This has updated the online and print representation of the church in a modern and clear style. The website is easy to navigate and holds lots of information for church members or those seeking to find out more about the church.

In respect of the Welcoming and Hospitality Sub Committee, the members continue to facilitate rotas and co-ordination which allow many practical aspects of the church to flourish. The lunch club continues to provide support to individuals who can gather during the day for a meal and connection.

In 2023, the Chairperson and Secretary reviewed the costs and terms for use of premises to those using the church facilities. This has been implemented and the church property continues to offer premises to various organisations, groups and private events.

Throughout 2023, there has been significant progress achieved by the Committee and the extensive service and work given by members is greatly appreciated.

Following Nicola Lynn's resignation as our Church Secretary, Maria Lopez-Melus was appointed and has been an excellent addition to our staff team. Maria has worked throughout 2023 in relation to many practical and administrative issues which support the work of the Committee and beyond to the wider church family. We are incredibly grateful to Maria for all she has done throughout this year.

Christina Baillie (Secretary)

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#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Freewill Offering in the General Account was £166,616 up 19% on last year, although still lower than per-pandemic levels of 2019, along with slightly higher Gift Aid receipts than 2022, this resulted in total gross Freewill Offerings of £200,007 compared with £171,749 the previous year, an increase of 16%. Here I would again like to thank Fiona Woods for her hard work in submitting the Gift Aid claims.

However, expenditure has also increased by £18,417 largely due to increases in the number of staff and to cost of living increases in salaries and heat & light leaving a deficit on the general account for the year of (£42,028) compared to a deficit in 2022 of (£52,386).

Building Fund donations (including Gift Aid) were 5% higher at £14,310 compared with last year of £13,591. In addition expenditure was significantly decreased to £13,448 from £45,529 due to major repairs to the tower and to the boilers in 2022, resulting in a surplus for the year of £862 compared to a deficit of (£31,938).

United Appeal contributions received were £11,782 down from £12,276 last year. This account required a £10,000 transfer from the general account to ensure United Appeal target was met and other outgoings.

Collections for Outreach amounted to £5,203 down from £16,078 last year, a very significant reduction and from this £9,215 was paid out in donations for various causes up from £2,095 last year due to £6,000 being contributed to mission partnerships.

However, it is encouraging to see the recent utilisation of the Fair Fund being supported by increased donations, with donations increasing to £5,600, up from £600 last year, leaving a balance of £8,763 being carried forward, after £862 was paid out to a number of families in need.

Unfortunately, this year there was an overall deficit of £(59,838) which whilst lower than last year's deficit of £(73,581) is still very significant. With increases in expenditure almost offsetting higher giving.

I would thus encourage the congregation to review what they are giving and either get back into the habit of bringing an envelope to church or if paying online consider increasing that, or simply make a one-off top up payment to the level that you'd like to be giving. I'd especially encourage support for the United Appeal account to offset the shortfall there.

I would like to thank all those who have helped me in 2023 including the members of the Finance Sub-committee, the treasurers of the various organisations, the counting teams, and especially Maria in the office for all their hard work, support, and assistance.

Graeme Thompson (Hon. Treasurer)

#### **Organisations**

#### **UNITED CHOIR AND WORSHIP GROUPS**

'Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord' (Ephesians 5:19)

In 2023 we continued to praise and worship God together as a church family using traditional hymns and modern worship songs. This is representative of how we worship as a whole family together - tiny tots, children, teens and adults. It is such a privilege when so many churches have adopted separate services to cater for different ages and styles of worship. We are blessed to sing alongside a great grandmother in her 90's right down to newborn babies and share God's love for each other in this way. We bring glory to His name as we lift our voices to Him each week.

We began the year with a special service singing favourite hymns and worship songs chosen by some of our church members. Stuart has introduced this and it's such a lovely way to begin the year. We hear the stories of how these hymns have touched individual hearts and appreciate them perhaps from a different perspective.

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We worship each week, leading with a small group of talented musicians and singers. This year we welcomed Amy Hunter who is our Youth and Children's worker but also a talented musician herself. As always we give grateful thanks to all our musicians and singers for their enthusiasm and commitment. Charles leads us week by week with his sensitive playing and we would encourage you to listen as he stills our hearts and prepares us for worship before services or skilfully plays a voluntary as you leave. Thanks also to our talented pianists - Liz, Emma and Judith who occasionally play before services begin. We also thank the A/V team for their dedication and expertise each week.

At Easter, Harvest and Christmas the United Choir and Youth Choir meet together for a few weeks to rehearse special items of praise for those highlights in the churches year. This year numbers grew as the year went on when finally at the Christmas Services we had an adult choir of 22 and a Youth Choir of 15. If you do not want the regular commitment of leading each week this is a wonderful opportunity to come together occasionally to sing and it is also great fun.

The regular music team meet at 9.30 am each Sunday morning to rehearse. United Choir meets for 5/6 Thursday evenings in the run up to a special service. Youth Choir meet after church for a few weeks also before a special service. There is always room for more members to join us either on Sunday mornings or in the United Choir and Youth Choir.

Thanks to all our church family who offer us support and encouragement throughout the year. It is very much appreciated.

Christine McClenahan (Music Co-Ordinator)

#### **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

Children's Ministry is for children aged 4-11 years and takes place upstairs in the Worship Centre during the morning service. We follow as closely as possible to the main themes which are being covered in the morning service, using a mixture of interactive and presented material suitable to the age of the children attending.

Please continue to pray for our children and their parents that each may know the nearness and faithfulness of God, and for the leaders and helpers that they may discern your will in planning the teaching.

Fiona Woods

#### **CRÈCHE**

'All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children' (Isaiah 54:13)

Our Creche is located in the Minor Hall and we welcome all children from birth to 4 years. Our space has been set up to take in the needs of the children with a designated play area for babies and various sections for older children with the aim to stimulate their imagination.

From September 2023 we have been following The Biggest Story theme with our ABC book relating to the stories being taught each week.

Please pray for our dedicated leaders & children as they continue to develop and grow within our church family.

Sandra Gallagher

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#### **YOUNG LIFE**

Young Life continues to produce growing numbers of young people on Sunday evenings, the majority of whom do not belong to First Holywood. The programme is high energy and relational, concluding each week with a clear Gospel presentation. We were encouraged by the numbers of young people attending camp in the summer, particularly Wyldlife camp, where a number of them came to trust Jesus as their Saviour. We were sorry to lose the leadership of Skye Houston and wish her God's blessing as she moved to start a YL club in Dundonald, and as she marries Tim in the summer of 2024. Young life continues to be ably led by DGLs Daisy Shannon and Emma Magowan and their team and we are very grateful to the Lord for this partnership in the Gospel.

Graeme Thompson

#### **CONNECT**

Connect meets roughly twice a month from September to June for year 8-12, to help equip them to understand the Christian faith and find their place as part of the wider church family. Our numbers have grown steadily and we have been greatly encouraged by the levels of engagement by the young people. In the autumn we started a new series on the character of God, following our practice of helping the young people to understand key doctrines and apply them to their lives, with the help of invited guests. We are also encouraging them to get more involved the worship and life of the wider congregation and have been delighted with their enthusiasm and growth.

Graeme Thompson

#### **50TH NI COMPANY GIRLS' BRIGADE**

Our Girl's Brigade session runs from September to April. The Explorer Section (ages 3 to P4) meets on Friday afternoons from 3.30 pm to 5 pm - this is a very noisy session as the girls are very enthusiastic in everything they do. They follow a Bible course similar to the Company Section and also do craft activities. They had their usual Christmas party with a visit from Santa.

The Company Section (P5 and up) meets on Tuesday evenings from 7 pm to 8.30 pm. They begin with Bible class and have a varied programme - marching, drill, duster hockey, cookery, crafts, singing, etc. On the third Tuesday night in September we went for a walk along the coastal path which the girls really enjoyed and finished off our night with hot dogs and drinks back at the Church. In December the girls had a fun night painting Christmas tree decorations. We would like to thank all the parents and friends for their support and encouragement over the last year and ask for your continued prayers for us, as we trust in God to achieve our aim to help girls become followers of Jesus Christ.

Rosemary Ferguson (GB Captain)

#### **TOTS R US**

Tots R Us welcomed a new generation of mums and toddlers on September 2022 and the first half of 2023. Numbers attending soon built up to an average of 30 children and around the same number of adults. Most are from our local community and we have some members whose first language is not English. We gather in the big hall on Tuesday mornings from 10 am to 11.30 am and provide a variety of toys and activities: home corner, dough/baking table, floor play, dressing up, baby area and table top activities which includes painting and crafts. During snack time we provide fruit, breadstick and drinks for the children and tea/coffee and biscuits for the adults. We end the morning with Rhyme Time, songs and actions.

As a group we support an orphan project in Malawi, Toybox - a charity working with street children around the world, and the NI Children's Hospice, as well as contributing to our Church funds.

Join us in praying that God's name will be honoured in all we do as all come into our Church.

Margaret Hewitt (Tots R Us leader)



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#### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

As the theme for the first half of 2023 was Deeper Together, we opened the year with Kelly Scott, a friend of Nathana Burnside's, who provided tips on changing our image with make-up and had great fun watching Kelly demonstrating her skills on two members.

Another meeting focused on the local PW Mission Project, with Henry telling us of the inspirational work reaching out to asylum seekers from the International Meeting

Point (IMP), which led to us collecting toiletries for donation to the IMP. We also catered on May Day to raise funds for PW projects.

It was good to renew friendship with Ann Wilson (nee Murphy) a former member of FHPC who shared her experience of service on PW Executive (she became President of PW in May 2023) and encouraged everyone to become more involved in service of Christ as she told of the value to the people of Timor of the restoration of the radio station after a cyclone.

We all enjoyed fellowship over food at Film Night (Mrs. Harris goes to Paris) -after a Fish and Chips tea for all ladies in the congregation - the May outing was a meal at Royal Belfast Golf Club - and the Christmas meeting was another fellowship meal at Holywood Golf Club in December. Food always features highly in our gatherings!

In September, PW opened the season with videos on the Home Mission projects, with Hazel McCrea, our Leader, setting us the challenge to clear our minds and to be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit, reminding us that we can only do this with help and encouragement in our journey of faith; this was followed by the distribution of gift bags with items to remind us of the power of Christ to change our mindset. We then indulged in a 'Pudding Party'!

We were also inspired by the stories of the faith journeys of two ladies who come regularly to our church and this was pressed home by a team from Sat-7 describing the broadcasting of Good News of the gospel into difficult countries, where the Lord is revealing the treasures of Jesus. Rachael from Bellevue Bees shared her personal story of working with bees and there was much fun as we attempted to make beautiful candles from beeswax.

In 2023, we were also involved with the wider PW family, as groups of ladies attended both the May & September conferences which encourage each other to work side by side and deepen our fellowship; it was also pleasing to welcome several ladies for the first time to join together with PW in 2023; whether you are free on a regular basis or not - please come along and enjoy gathering together with other ladies, sharing our lives and learning together to grow in grace.

Lynda Francis (PW Treasurer)

#### **LADIES BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

The Ladies Bible Group gathers on Wednesday mornings from 10.30 am to 12 noon in the Minor Hall, to learn how God moved and worked in people's lives. Throughout 2023, we have studied female characters in the Bible and reflecting on how God worked his plan and purpose in their lives at that time and in their culture, helping us to understand and know how God continues today to do the same for us. The ladies are given their notes the week before to take home and study, reflect and prepare for the following week. On occasions, such as Easter and Christmas, there is a special gift given in appreciation for their faithfulness, commitment and encouragement.

Kathleen Spence (Pastoral Assistant)

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**ART AND CRAFTY FOLK**

A group of ladies came together for the first time on 8th September 2022 sharing a common interest and diverse skills, not to mention a desire for fellowship and chat. We meet fortnightly, usually on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10 am to 12 noon, with a coffee break halfway and a devotional reading which provides a thought for the day and prayer. A lot of craftwork was completed during 2023, including a blanket for Evelyn Craig's grandson, made from squares knitted by our members. Some money was raised by sales of work among our members: jewellery, crochet and knitted goods being the most popular. From our funds, we were able to buy books for the Alpha course held in Maghaberry Prison, and provide a Christmas party for ourselves.

Rosemary Logan

**TEA AND CHAT**

During June, July and August 2023 we held our Tea & Chat sessions on alternative Thursday afternoons from 2.30 pm to 3.45 pm. Summer is a time when the Church calendar is quiet, which offers folk the opportunity to have a place to gather and share time together. Tea & Chat offers a variety of activities, such as quizzes, music, games, poems, even chair aerobics! Attendance would be in average of 20 people and anyone is welcome to join us for fun, friendship and fellowship. We also share a cup of tea and end with a short epilogue to praise and give thanks to the Lord for all our blessings.

Kathleen Spence (Pastoral Assistant)

**LUNCHEON CLUB**

The Luncheon Club (open to both church and non-church members) meets at 12.30 pm on the 4th Friday of most months, except July and August.

Usually there are about 20 diners, all bringing some chat and a few jokes, so there is always a great atmosphere in the Minor Hall.

We held our Christmas lunch in the Main Hall. Seventy plus diners were treated to a delicious lunch provided by Mc Kees' and karaoke carols before Santa arrived laden with gifts, much to everyone's delight.

A huge thank you to Elinor, Anne and Lynda who have been very generous and loyal with their help.

Cheryl Harbinson

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

**Financial position**

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 15 to 25. The results show net outgoing resources for the year of £59,838 (2022: Net outgoing resources of £73,581).

**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 at least 6 month's normal expenditure. At the year end unrestricted reserves excluding the property, were £165,456 which represents an adequate level of reserves.

**Going concern**

The activities of the congregation are dependent on ongoing contributions from its members. 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 ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

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#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Risk Review**

A review of major risks 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 ongoing 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.

##### **FUTURE PLANS**

The Church plans continuing the activities outlined within the Annual Report in the forthcoming years.

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE 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 monitors and overviews at each meeting compliance with its child protection and safeguarding procedures and approves all leaders within church organisations. 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 ministers 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 normally held at 7.30pm at the church on the first Wednesday of each month (save usually in January, July and August), and additionally when required.

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. First Holywood Congregation has been assigned to the East 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 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.

**First Holywood Presbyterian Church**

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

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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Registered Charity number**

NIC104336

**Principal address**

7 Bangor Road

Holywood

Co Down

BT18 0NU

**Trustees**

Rev S McCrea

Mr S Burnside (resigned 31/5/23)

Mr R McCall

Mr P McClenahan

Mr J Ferguson

Mr J Harbinson

Miss E Laing

Mr A Nugent

Mr C Russell

Mr M Shields

Mrs A White (resigned 31/3/23)

Miss L Francis

Mrs F Woods

Mr M Baillie

Mr D Kennedy

Mrs S Gallagher

Mr G C Thompson

Mr B Bromley

**Independent Examiner**

McIlveen Howard Limited

Chartered Accountants

169a Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast

BT4 3HZ

**Solicitors**

Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors Limited

8 High Street

Holywood

BT18 9AZ

**Bankers**

Danske Bank

Donegal Square West

Belfast

BT1 6JS

**Minister**

Rev Stuart McCrea

**Clerk of Session**

Mark Bailee

**Church Treasurer**

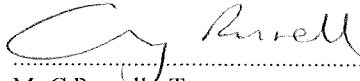
Graeme M Thompson

**First Holywood Presbyterian Church**

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

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Approved by order of the board of trustees on .....20/10/24..... and signed on its behalf by:

  
.....  
Mr C Russell - Trustee