

**HIGH STREET (HOLYWOOD) CONGREGATION OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

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

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104337)

HIGH STREET (HOLYWOOD) 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.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Address: High Street Presbyterian Church,
High Street, Holywood, Co. Down,
BT18 9AE

Office No: 02890 425962

Website: www.hspc.org.uk

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 104337)

EXISTING CHARITY TRUSTEES

Aubrey Bell
Rosemary Bell
Deirdre Bromley
Tim Bromley
Chris Fleming
Roberta Hulme
Peter Mackey
David McCance
Eileen McClenaghan
Lesley McDowell (currently on sabbatical)
James Warburton

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. James Warburton
Clerk of Session	Mr. Tim Bromley
Treasurer	Mr. Jonathan McCluggage

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 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 each month, excluding summer July and August.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member, a regular attendant on its ordinances, and a person of character in line with the biblical requirements for this office. 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. High Street congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the East Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists 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, administrative 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 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.

High Street 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 congregation's mission is, 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.
- Committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible.
- 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 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.

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 fortnightly bible study meetings and prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations including a Sunday School and crèche, Parents and Toddlers group, Street Pastors outreach group, 5-a-side Football, Women's Ministry, Men's ministry, Prayer Ministry, and a food distribution programme called the "Manna Table".

We also hire out our premises to community groups for activities. This includes two separate Irish Dancing groups, a community flower arranging group and we also provide an office to a locally based charity called Aspire who work with underprivileged children in various Belfast schools.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 10.30am. During the week Bible Study home groups and prayer meetings provide an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. As well as our regular services during the year we conducted marriage services and funeral services as the need arose.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or infirmity are visited on a regular basis by the minister, elders or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation is involved in various events and activities in Holywood. Our location on the main street of the town makes it ideal to use our premises to support local events. For example, during the Holywood May Fair we used our forecourt to provide music and entertainment for the enjoyment of the general public, with puppets and songs for children being a main focus. We also served tea and coffee inside the church building and invited people in for a seat. At Christmas, as part of the Holywood Christmas Fair, we had entertainment on our forecourt with a group playing music and performing with puppets for children.

We also run a weekly food distribution facility called the "Manna Table" where we set out two tables filled with groceries and domestic products and we invite people from the Holywood community to come and take a few things, without any questions being asked. The idea is to help those in our community who are struggling to get by in terms of paying for basic amenities. We also invite people in for a cup of tea/coffee and a bit of conversation and we have developed lasting relationships with a number of folks through this. We also have enlisted the help of someone who gives citizen's advice to come along once a fortnight to chat with anyone who would like advice regarding debt, housing, budgeting etc.

Giving

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 do mission and outreach on a denominational basis beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The 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, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care. The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, and any other special appeals during the year to help those in need around the world.

Presbytery

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

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

Property

In 2023, there was a considerable bit of maintenance performed on the church halls and this is set to continue over the next few years as we seek to bring our buildings up to a better standard for the various organisations and community groups who use it.

Social Engagement

During the year our Parent and Toddler group meets on a weekly basis, and offers a play resource to local parents and grandparents. We would often have a packed out hall with upward of 20 children plus their parents/guardians. This has become a wonderful community in itself, containing a real diverse mixture of people from various nationalities and religions.

The Street Pastors group (set up in conjunction with the community association and the PSNI) use our church as a base before heading out on many Saturday nights during the year. Their purpose is to go towards areas of anti-social behaviour and engage with people, offering bottles of water, footwear to anyone who requires, and perhaps first aid where necessary. They also seek to build relationships with people in the process.

Our church also has a food collection bank for Storehouse, and volunteers take the collected food down to the Storehouse facility in Bangor for it to be distributed to those in need. Our Prayer Ministry team also offered prayer to members of our congregation and to anyone in the public who fills in a prayer card when they are on site. We also ran multiple children's events during school holidays – Easter, Summer, Halloween and Christmas. These events were well attended by members of the public. A lot of children came along, and sometimes parents too. We typically had crafts, games, songs, bible stories, quizzes and lots of fun.

We also have been involved in setting up and running English language classes in conjunction with Holywood Baptist church. These classes are for any foreign nationals living in the greater Holywood area to come along to, free of charge, to learn English. A number of our members are volunteering there.

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 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.

Signed: J. Warburton

Date: 08/10/2024

[Minister]

Signed: T. Bromley

Date: 08/10/2024

[Clerk of Session]