

# Annual Monitoring Return

for the year ending

31st December 2023

**Cairncastle Presbyterian Church**

**CHARITY NUMBER 104873**

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# TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

The charity, Cairncastle Presbyterian Church, is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who worship God and work for Him amidst the beauty of His creation in the rural setting of Cairncastle.

History records how a community and society can benefit when people share belief in a Creator and respect for His laws. Equality and diversity, social justice and care of the environment, all flourish on such a foundation. Modern research also indicates people who attend church regularly are generally happier, better citizens and less likely to self-harm!

Such affirmation gives the charity confidence in its delight in the realistic yet uplifting Biblical message of redemption from all sorts of bondage, healing of the hurts and brokenness of life and hope that triumphs over despair through God's grace and love in Jesus Christ.

## AIM AND PURPOSE

The purpose of Cairncastle Presbyterian Church is the advancement of the Christian religion for the benefit of the community it serves. The accomplishment of this purpose will be demonstrated in the public lives of people who:

- Have a mature understanding of the Christian faith giving them strong Christian principles for their lives;
- Are good citizens who are respectful of authority, holding high moral values and are law abiding;
- Are pursuant of public good and care for the weak and vulnerable in society;
- Who persevere doing good inspired by the Christian hope of a better world.

The pursuit of such outcomes leads to a more generous and public minded community and as such can cause harm to no one.

The charity aims to achieve this purpose through motivating its members and providing opportunities through setting appropriate objectives and providing appropriate activities.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

In setting objectives and planning for activities, the Trustees note that the charity has given due consideration to the general guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit, and in particular to its supplementary public benefit guidance on the advancement of the religion.

The charity endeavours to fulfil its public benefit obligations by enabling its members to appreciate how better understanding the Christian faith enables them to express that faith in the context of everyday life in the public square through:

- Worship and prayer: learning about the Gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in God.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and evangelism.
- Cooperation with others.

The charity organises numerous activities to further its purposes. Information regarding these is publicly displayed on church notices, on the church website, Social media and on Facebook and when appropriate in the local Community Hall. All, of appropriate age and gender, are welcome to access any of these activities, without regard to whether they are part of our congregation. Further information of these activities is provided on the next page under the heading Mission and Evangelism.

To facilitate this work it is important that the Trustees maintain the fabric of the Church and halls antics site on the Drumnagreagh Road.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and prayer**

The Trustees offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that we hope our participants find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

This coming together of the congregation on Sunday mornings at 11am for worship is motivation and heartbeat of everything. Worship nurtures and expresses faith through praise and prayer, scripture and sermon, music and sacrament. In this way people learn about the Gospel, develop their knowledge of and trust in God whom we worship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and those attending are encouraged to live out their faith for the benefit of the local community. During Sunday Worship, our Sunday School and Bible Class meet on a twice monthly basis for the Christian education of our young people, which provides them with a good moral framework for their lives. Such young people are more likely to grow up as good citizens and less likely to end up in crime and drugs. This can only be for the public good.

As well as our regular services, we support our community in celebrating and thanking God at the milestones of the journey of life. Through Christian baptism we thank God for the gift of new life, in Christian marriage we unite a man and a woman in holy matrimony as they exchange their vows in public and seek God's blessing on their union, and through funeral services, we share with family and friends in their grief, bringing comfort and thanksgiving for the life which is now complete in this world and commend the person into God's keeping.

With 186 families (190 in 2022) and 374 (380) persons on the Church Roll, the average attendance at Sunday worship was 70 (70). Though 0 (0) new members joined through profession of faith, others joining through transfer means the Communicants' Roll now stands at 126 (130). There were 34 (18) young people enrolled in our Sunday School and Bible Class.

The sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated 4 (5) times during the year; 59 (68) attended at least once, with an average attendance of 41 (40). The sacrament of Holy Baptism was celebrated on 2 (3) occasions. In addition, 0 (1) weddings and 6 (2) funerals were conducted.

## Pastoral care

Some of the congregation were unable to attend church due to sickness or age and these benefit from the regular pastoral visits the minister and elders, whether at home or in care homes or in hospital.

Provision is made for disabled access to church and halls for any wheelchairs users.

The trustees are also aware of the need to ensure a safe environment for children, young people, vulnerable adults and leaders.

## Mission and Evangelism

Sharing the Christian faith and helping those in need are an important demonstration of the charity's Christian faith and commitment to public benefit.

Our **Sunday** services are broadcast on Social Media and enable the charity to maintain its witness to a larger public audience. In addition, the minister has and weekly devotional talks on YouTube on **Wednesdays**. These have been and are appreciated by many both near and far, especially those unable to attend in person through age and infirmity.

The charity facilitates a number of activities through the week that provide an opportunity for interaction between the congregation and the local community:

- The Presbyterian Women has a particular interest in supporting the work of our denominational deaconesses and missionaries. It meets monthly on Monday afternoons with about 20 ladies.
- The Rainbow Club for Mothers and Toddlers meets on Tuesday mornings with about 20 mothers plus children.
- The Friendship Club provides further opportunity for informal fellowship for the community. It meets monthly on a Tuesday afternoon with about 20 in attendance.
- The Thursday Midweek Bible Study provided an opportunity for those attending to engage in video based, discussional Bible Study, which was appreciated by those attending.
- The Senior Bowling Club meets on Fridays and provides valuable social and recreational opportunities for its dozen or so members.
- The Girls' Brigade, with 11 girls enrolled, meets on a Saturday morning.
- The Saturday Youth Club has resumed with 4 young people.

In addition, the charity supports financially the charitable agencies of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland: the annual United Appeal, the World Development Appeal, the Sunday School Project and the Moderator's Appeal.

The charity also supports the work of other charitable agencies, namely, Christian Aid, the Larne Foodbank, The Salvation Army Christmas gift appeal, the Christmas Shoebox appeal and the Royal British Poppy Fund and other charities listed in the accounts.

## **Cooperation with others**

Mindful of the public benefit requirements, the charity enjoys good relationships with its Christian neighbours and cooperates with them whenever possible, particularly during the Christmas season and Easter celebrations. Our minister is co-chair of the management committee of the Dixon Hall in Drains Bay, currently the venue of the local Sea Cadets and of summer activities for young people. He and three trustees are on the Board of Governors of Cairncastle Primary School.

The church hall is the venue for the community's annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony and the annual Gospel Concert held by the Ulster-Scots Society.

The charity also participates in community activities in Ballygally run by the Mid and East Antrim Council.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The charity is funded principally through voluntary donations, bequests and gifts from the congregation. The Trustees note with appreciation the continuing generosity of those who supported financially the work of the congregation.

The day to day running of the congregation was financed through its General Fund mainly through the contributions of its 149 (151) recorded contributors. The total income of the General Fund increased to £73,625 (£62,185), including Gift Aid of £11,136. However, expenditure also increased to £77,449 (£73,769) giving a deficit of £3,824 (£11,584). Despite the welcomed increase in receipts, helped by a special funds raising event, the deficit continues to be a serious challenge to the charity, largely due to the continuing increase in costs.

The total income of all the cash funds of the Congregation, was £91,647 (£82,309) while the total expenditure was £93,643 (£87,099).

Included in these figures is the giving of £12,635 (£10,639) to Missions and Charities as listed in the accounts.

## **Property**

The congregation maintains the church and halls at 4 Drumnagreagh Road, Cairncastle, Larne, Co. Antrim, BT40 2RN, with an insured value of £2,434,044, and owns a manse at 5 Cairnhill Crescent, Ballygally, Larne, Co Antrim, BY40 2QT, with an insured value of £304,645.

## **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 12 month's normal expenditure from unrestricted funds, currently in the region of £77,000. At the year end unrestricted reserves were £95,000 which represents an adequate level of reserves. The Trustees, however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level conscious that the funding of its present activities is dependent on the ongoing financial support of members.

## **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 ahead, subject to the continuing support from members to fund on an ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

## **Risk Review**

A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The Trustees are concerned at the long term implications of the continuing deficit in the General Fund. The Trustees endeavour to mitigate these risks by regularly monitoring the activities and finances of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving and voluntary support.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

The Trustees thank all who volunteer their time and energies and skills in cleaning and maintaining the church premises, run the activities of the congregation, decorate the church for Sundays and special occasions, provide catering, operate the audio-visual equipment and maintain our social media presence, and those who make members and visitors feel welcome in attending services. In particular we thank our finance team who have helped us all to understand the church's finances and our financial obligations. This invaluable contribution of these and others enables the church and its activities to keep running and makes ours a lively and vibrant community.

The volunteers are aware of the responsibility of public benefit. They receive no private or material reward but may benefit from the development of personal skills that are incidental to the roles for which they volunteer and the satisfaction of knowing they bring benefit to others.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

The charity has appointed a safeguarding officer (designated person) to ensure that a safeguarding policy is in existence and is being complied with. All persons involved with

children, young persons and vulnerable adults are made aware of their responsibilities, have the contact details of their safeguarding officer and are required to attend safeguarding courses which are arranged either locally or on-line. The safeguarding officer maintains records in respect of every attendee in each section of the charity and their respective leaders. Similarly a record is maintained in respect of the contact details of the parents or guardians of those children and young persons. All records are held in strict confidence and are available only on a 'need to know' basis.

The safeguarding officer has access to a central 'taking care unit' which can give specialist guidance and advice when required. He is aware of and has the contact details of the relevant statutory bodies available to him in the event of a serious or potentially serious incident or allegation.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

The charity, namely, Cairncastle Presbyterian Church, is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, which is part of the worldwide Christian Church. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is Trinitarian in its theology, Reformed in its doctrine and Presbyterian in its ecclesiology. Its governing document is "The Constitution and Government of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland," otherwise known as "The Code." (available at [www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Categories/General-Assembly.aspx](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Categories/General-Assembly.aspx)).

The congregation is answerable to the General Assembly through the Carrickfergus Presbytery and participates in both church courts through its minister and representative elder.

The congregation has two bodies that are responsible for managing the congregation, alongside our minister, and are elected by the congregation, as and when the need arises, in accordance with The Code, Section XII:

- The Kirk Session, consisting of elders who are ordained by the Presbytery and act as the Charity Trustees, has the spiritual oversight of the congregation and are responsible for the financial aspects of church life.
- The Congregational Committee, which works closely with the Kirk Session, has responsibility for the upkeep of the property, financial management, and control of other areas of how the church is run.

The elders, who are the congregational Trustees, have pastoral responsibility for the districts into which the parish is divided and through pastoral visitation are in touch with families of the congregation. They are in a good position to be aware of the needs of the congregation and what is going on in the local community and are better placed, therefore, to engage meaningfully in informed discussion at the regular meetings of the Trustees.

The Trustees met 10 (12) times during the year with an average attendance of 7 (9). At their meetings, all aspects of the work of the congregation are discussed and reflected on and proposals made. The Trustees are accountable to the charity stakeholders,

namely, the congregation, and report to them at an Annual General Meeting held in the spring and respond to questions and suggestions proffered by members of the congregation.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Charity Name: Cairncastle Presbyterian Church.

Charity Address: 4 Drumnagreagh Road, Cairncastle, Larne, Co. Antrim, BT40 2RN

Charity Registration Number: NIC104873

Charity Contact: Mr Robert Stewart.

Social media: <http://cairncastlepresbyterian.org> @cairncastlepresbyterian.church

Bank: DANSKE BANK

Independent Examiner: MBS Chartered Accountants, 3 High Street, Larne, BT40 1JN

## **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

### **The Kirk Session**

Those who served during the year or who were trustees at 31st December 2023:

Rev Andrew Watson

Mr Cowper Lynas

Mrs Jennifer Bindley

Mrs Valerie Moore

Mr Mark Gilbert

Mr John Robinson

Mr David Holden

Mrs Helen Stewart

Mr William Hunter

Mr Robert Stewart

Mrs Jean Hunter

### **Principal Officers**

Minister

Rev Andrew Watson

Clerk of Session

Mr Robert Stewart

Committee Secretary

Mrs Jennifer Bindley

Treasurer

Mr Mark Gilbert



## RESPONSIBILITY OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities and to have the accounts examined by an independent examiner.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the congregation's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time its financial position. 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.

This Annual Report and Financial Statement were approved by the Trustees at the meeting of the Kirk Session and signed on its behalf by:



Andrew Watson

Minister



Robert Stewart

Clerk of Session

Date. 20th March 2024.