

**FIRST BALLYEASTON CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

Trustees' Annual Report

**FIRST BALLYEASTON CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
Year ended 31 December 2024**

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

First Ballyeaston Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Ballyeaston Village, BT39 9SJ
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (**NIC104880**)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who served during the year were:

Euel Agnew Dessie Baker Roy Baxter Joe Bingham Jim Cahoon Alan Currie Wilson Dickey	Anne Gardiner Robert Hill Trevor Mills Uel McCrea (Dec'd 22 Jan 2024) Edwin McDowell Tom McKnight William Stewart
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PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Edwin McDowell
Clerk of Session	Euel Agnew
Treasurer	Joe Bingham
Congregational Secretary	Malcolm Downey

AUDITOR OR INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Hopper & Co
6 Doagh Road
Ballyclare. BT39 9BG

BANKERS

Danske Bank
18 The Square
Ballyclare, Co Antrim BT39 9BB

SOLICITORS

J W McNinch & Son
37 Main Street
Ballyclare, Co Antrim BT39 9AA

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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 normally held at least 8 times each year.

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 votes from 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 Ballyeaston congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Templepatrick 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.

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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 a 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

First Ballyeaston 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 purpose 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;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is 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 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.

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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 normally holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations/activities including

- Sunday School & Bible Class
- Women Together Group
- Bowling Club
- Girls' Brigade
- Youth Group
- Holiday Bible Club

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00 am. On the first Sunday of the month, and from November 2024 on the third Sunday of the month also, there is usually an evening service at 7.00 pm. On alternate weeks a Bible Study and Home Group provide opportunities for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at four Sacraments of Baptism and gave thanks for faithful service and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved.

At 31 December 2024 there were 208 communicant members and 268 families connected with the congregation.

Average attendance at Sunday morning services during 2024 was about 125, with an additional 150 views of the weekly live-streamed services.

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, pastoral associate, elders or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

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Mission and outreach

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; 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.

First Ballyeaston also responds to challenges in the local community and in the wider world. In 2024 we supported the Presbyterian Children's Society, Christian Aid, the British Legion Poppy Appeal, the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal, the local Foodbank, MacMillan Cancer Care, and certain specific Mission Projects of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including its World Development Appeal.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregation 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 2024.

Property

The following is a summary of the maintenance and refurbishment work carried out on the church property during 2024:

- Four high quality microphones were purchased to replace those previously used as part of the Church AV system;
- Repairs were carried out to the carpet in the Church;
- The Youth Lounge in the Lecture Hall was repainted;
- At the Manse the front fascia was repaired and repainted and the rear gates were also repainted;
- An external door at the Lecture Hall was replaced; and
- The new fencing around the Church Green was completed by the installation of a new entrance gate.

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Organisations

Sunday School & Bible Class

Sunday School for P1-P7 children (and age 4 pre-school children) met in the Galbraith Hall during the Church service, with four teachers and 20 pupils in the age range 4 to 11 years. At the same time the Bible Class for post primary school children met in the Upper Vestibule with two teachers and about 10 young people. Following the retirement of one of the teachers, the Bible Class began meeting fortnightly from September 2024. The children and young people took part in the morning service in Church on Youth and Children's Day held in June, which was followed by a picnic at Loughshore, Antrim, and also staged a nativity play in Church in December.

The Sunday School continues to donate to Tearfund, a Christian charity that partners with churches in more than 50 of the world's poorest countries, tackling poverty through sustainable development, responding to disasters and challenging injustice, with the aim of bringing about an end to extreme poverty.

Women Together

The Church's Women Together Group held six meetings on Tuesday evenings during 2024. These included Guest Speakers from Hope 365 (a local charity) and Ballyclare Youth for Christ, social and craft evenings, and a quiz and games night. The meetings were attended by up to 20 women. A successful craft and coffee morning was held on the morning of Saturday 7 December which was well supported by church members and non-members, with money raised going to Marie Curie and the Group funds. The annual Women Together Service took place in Church on Sunday 3rd March and was led by Rev David Moore, from An Tionólann, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland outreach in West Belfast. Over the summer the Group organised a number of fortnightly evening walks at various locations in East Antrim.

Girls' Brigade

The GB company meets in the Church Lecture Hall on Monday evenings from September through to March. It has a full and varied programme and the 2023/24 session ended with a Display for parents and friends on Monday 25 March.

The 2024/25 session started with a Registration Evening on 9 September, followed by Enrolment at the Church Service on the morning of 24 November. Company membership remains strong, at around 70 girls in five age-related sections from pre-school Toddlers to Brigaders (14 to 18 year olds).

A Coffee Morning was held on Monday 30 September in aid of McMillan Cancer, raising almost £1,000 for this worthwhile charity. As the year ended the Company had commenced planning its Annual Display, scheduled for April 2024.

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Bowling Club

The Bowling Club meets in the Church Halls each Wednesday from 7.00 to 9.00 pm during the months of January to April and September to December. The Club has a membership of about 20 people and welcomed some new members during the year. It participates in the Sixmilewater and District League and finished the 2023/24 season, which ended in March 2024, in fifth place. The club also participated in the local Chest, Heart and Stroke Cup competition. The 2024/25 league season started in September 2024.

Youth Group

During the year nine meetings were arranged for young people (10 to 16 years old), including an outing to the North Coast in June, a BBQ in August, a trip to Airtastic in September and various games nights in the Lecture Hall. Up to 25 young people attended and the group has continued to meet monthly into 2025.

Holiday Bible Club

With help and support from a large group of volunteers, the Annual Holiday Bible Club was held on 1, 2 and 3 July 2024 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at the Lecture Hall and was enjoyed by about seventy P1 to P7 children. This was followed by a Family BBQ and Fun Night, attended by about 90 people, on the evening of 4 July at Carnfunnock Country Park.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to express their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time and talents by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

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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 Commission's public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 196 contributors during the year (197 in previous year, 2023) donating a total of £93,481 (£97,658 in previous year, 2023)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £169,557, compared to £166,310 in the previous year, this increase was due in part to increased investment income and greater income from fundraising events and other trading activities.

The Endowment Funds received a higher level of interest than in previous years (£3,781 compared to £996 in 2023) and the end-of-year balance invested was £82,864.

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;
- 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 Funds 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 congregation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2015)".

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.

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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.

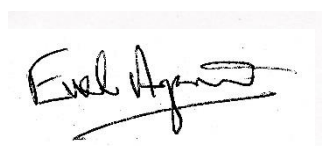
RESERVES POLICY

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 two- and six-month's normal expenditure which gives a target range of between £21,117 and £63,353. At the year-end unrestricted free reserves were £33,288 and remain within the target range of reserves. The Trustees continue to monitor the level of reserves on a periodic basis.

RISK REVIEW

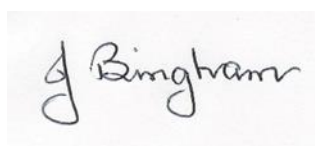
A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of ongoing financial support from members. These 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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 15th May 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Euel Agnew

15th May 2025



Joe Bingham

15th May 2025