

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Woodlands Presbyterian Church of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 48 Burleigh Drive Carrickfergus BT38 8HW Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104919)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Leslie Addis

Jonathan Addis

Brian Allen

Dr Ian Drysdale

Peter Drysdale

Richard Gibson

Desy Hawthorne

Graham Hawthorne

Martin Holmes

Brian Ingram

Nathan McConnell

Andrew McCorkell

Stuart McCullough

John Morgan

Robert Morgan

Jonathan Parkes

Robin Scott

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister Rev L Addis (Retired October 2023)

Vacancy Convenor: Rev Jonny Moxen Ballyclare Presbyterian Church

Clerk of Session Dr I Drysdale

Church Treasurer B Allen, **Church Secretary** G Hawthorne

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: A Baxter 3 Whitethorn Greenisland Carrickfergus BT388FH

BANKERS: Danske Bank High Street Carrickfergus

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. Ten meetings of Kirk Session were held during the year. To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant at 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. Woodlands Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Carrickfergus 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.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Woodlands 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 Vision of Woodlands Presbyterian Church:

Worship: To achieve vital and meaningful worship of God.

Discipleship: To grow together in our knowledge of God.

Fellowship: To provide supportive and pastoral caring ministry to one another.

Outreach: To reach out actively and seek to bring others into the community of faith.

Ministry: To proclaim God's love by work and action, here and throughout the world.

Resources: To develop ourselves and use our property to be welcoming to all.

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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday at 11.00 am and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is normally observed six times per 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:

The organisations and ministries commenced in September.

The Ark (Crèche during Sunday morning service) 10

King's Kids (Sunday School) Sunday from 11.20 am 40

Girls' Brigade Monday at 6.00 – 9.00 pm 108

TreeTots Group Tuesday at 10.00 am 30

Ladies Bible Study Tuesday 10.00 – 11.30 am fortnightly 12

Seniors (for retirees) Tuesday at 1.30 pm (monthly) 40

Olive Tree Wednesday at 9.30 – 11.00am 20

Grapevine (English class Wednesday) 7.30-9.00 15

Potter's House and Food Table Thursday at 10.00am – 12.30 pm 35

Boys' Brigade Thursday at 6.15 pm 88

Youth Fellowship Friday 7.00 pm 36

Women of Woodlands meets periodically 40

Men's Breakfast Saturday (Monthly) at 9.00 am 40

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am. Bible study groups meet fortnightly during the year c. 120 members. The groups provide an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for prayer. In 2023 17 baptisms were performed. We conducted 2 marriage services and sought to provide comfort to 6 families who had been bereaved. On 31 December 2023 there were 213 communicant members and approximately 220 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 200.

Pastoral Care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited by the minister, elders and members of a dedicated team from the congregation.

Mission and outreach

At a local level, the congregation endeavours to encourage and welcome members of the community to join us at special services, at social events and engage through personal approaches and involvement. We provide support for those who are facing difficult economic circumstances and for the local migrant community. The congregation has a strong record of supporting overseas mission. 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.

Our minister, Rev Leslie Addis, retired in October of this year and will be missed with all associated with Woodlands and in the wider community.

The Kirk Session, under the guidance of God has embarked on the process of recruiting a new minister in the coming months.

In the meantime the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has appointed the Rev J Moxen from Ballyclare PC as convenor of the vacancy and we have been blessed by his leadership in the interim period.

Presbytery

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

General Assembly

The Vacancy Convenor and the Clerk were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

Property

All necessary improvements were carried out to prepare the manse for the new minister.

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, such as Woodlands, 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.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions to the General Fund (through the Weekly Freewill Offering), and the Building Fund. 120 families contributed to Weekly Freewill Offering in 2023 (122 in 2022). There were 49 contributors to the Property Fund (53 in 2022). There were 60 Contributors to our Missionary Fund (58 in 2022).

In 2023, total income across all three funds was £248,657 (£226,474 in 2022). Total income of the congregation during the year was £285,193 compared to £260,618 in the previous year.

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 congregations 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 judgments 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 fund 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.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:



Clerk of Session 30-9-24