

**Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

**(Craigy Hill Congregation of The  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland)**

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

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Number NIC104931

# Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Trustees present the annual report and financial statements for Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne for the year ended 31 December 2023.

### Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Craigy Hill Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (otherwise referred to as "Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne")

Charity Registration Number: NIC104931

Contact Address: 76 Churchill Road  
LARNE  
BT40 2EN

Correspondence Address: c/o 4 The Roddens  
LARNE  
BT40 1QT

### Charity Trustees

Rev. Ben Preston  
Brian Clenaghan  
Alan Doole  
John Dundee  
David Fulton  
David Gillespie  
Nigel Hull  
Brian Lewis (Appointed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023)  
Elvin Martin  
Simon McFaul (Appointed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023)  
David McGregor  
Graham Warnock (Appointed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023)  
Stephen Wharry

**Principal Office-bearers** Minister: Rev. Ben Preston  
Clerk of Session: John Dundee  
Treasurer: Alan Doole

**Independent Examiner** Simon Hopper FCA,  
MBSCA, 3 High Street, Larne, Co. Antrim. BT40 1JN

**Bankers** Danske Bank, P.O. Box 183, Donegall Square West, Belfast. BT1 6JS

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### ***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 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 at least eight times in 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 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.

Trustees do not receive remuneration, reward, or other private benefit for carrying out their Trustee responsibility.

#### **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. Craigy Hill congregation of the 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.

# Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

### 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 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***

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion.

Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne 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 glorify God and enjoy him forever 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 statement reads:

*'Under the Sovereignty of God, Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church is committed to following Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and to sharing His gospel by word and action in the local community and the wider world, in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God'*

Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christians 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; and
- 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 using the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community; and
- As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme standard over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms (being the subordinate standards) set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### ***Objectives & Activities***

The congregation meets every Sunday for morning worship and again for evening worship and everyone is welcome, whether members of the congregation or not. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed regularly during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular midweek bible studies and has a wide range of organisations which are referenced below.

### ***Achievements & Performance***

#### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and 6.30pm. During the week the Wednesday midweek provides an opportunity for members to meet for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

Joint evening services were held with 1<sup>st</sup> Larne and Gardenmore congregations during July and August, with three in each church, with the church building in Craigy Hill utilised.

We held the Sacrament of Communion on eight occasions in 2023, five in the morning and three in the evening.

During 2023 there were no Baptisms conducted and no marriages. We sought to comfort those who had been bereaved which was especially poignant in 2023 with the deaths of 10 communicant members.

On 31 December 2023 there were 141 communicant members, with three new members joining in March following communicant classes. As already mentioned, ten communicant members died during the year and a further four were removed from the list as they no longer attend Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church. There were 210 families connected with the congregation with new names on the list replacing some of those removed. The congregation had an average weekly physical attendance of around 80 at morning worship and 25 at evening worship, with approximately 40 more in the morning and 15 in the evening joining virtually.

Our online capacity on YouTube and Facebook continued in 2023, with livestream each Sunday at 11am and 6:30pm along with the telephone service for members who did not have access to the internet, enabling them to listen live on Sunday morning or hear a recording during the week. This was facilitated each Sunday by a core team at the audio visual desk, with additional members joining the team to spread the workload and provide cover for illness. This team deserve special thanks from our congregation and Trustees for their faithfulness and commitment each Sunday. In addition, all sermons are available on the church website.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### **Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister and the elders. Elders also regularly contacted members by telephone, especially those who were alone and/or shielding, which is a practice which particularly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and has been retained.

### **Mission and outreach**

The organisations of the church (listed below) seek to meet its objectives and activities through their varied programmes, covering all age ranges from babies and toddlers right through to the oldest members in our community. None of these organisations could function without the committed service of all those in leadership and we thank everyone who gives up their time and uses their God-given gifts to serve God in this way.

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.

One of our members, Naomi Laramore, works under the auspices of the PCI Council for Global Mission and receives support centrally from the United Appeal.

The congregation donated £16,361 to missionary societies and charities, all but £2,079 of which was destined for international mission support although channelled through UK based charity offices. Included in this is the congregation's contribution to the denomination's Children's Society, Sunday School projects and any other special appeals as the need arises. The congregation also donated £1,000 directly to Christ the Saviour Church in Krakow in support of the publication of Christian literature.

### **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and/or one of the elders. 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.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### **Property**

The congregation continues to maintain its buildings and facilities. This year saw the completion of the repairs to the bell tower with some minor associated landscaping and handrail works to be completed as part of the routine maintenance.

Special thanks go to the Property Convenor, the members of the property sub-committee, our caretakers and all those who volunteered to clean the church and halls and carry out property maintenance tasks throughout the year and to those who provide their time on a regular basis to set out and clear the halls for worship services as well as creche and junior church.

A special mention also goes to all those who have facilitated worship, including the stewarding of the congregation, facilitating safe access and egress, delivering information and providing refreshments and fellowship after the services.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### **Organisations**

The congregation has a wide range of organisations that meet during the week. These include:-

- Sunday School for primary school aged children.
- Crèche for children under 3 who meet during morning service each Sunday.
- Children's church for children between 3 and 7 who meet during part of the morning service each Sunday.
- Boys' Brigade.
- Girls' Brigade.
- Parents and Toddlers.
- Ladies Fellowship.
- Women's Zone.
- Open Door.
- Bowling club - open to all ages, meets on a Monday evening.
- Youth Fellowship.
- Welcome Hub.

We have been encouraged during the year by an increase in numbers attending our Youth Fellowship activities, but have noticed a decrease in numbers in the Company Section (secondary age) of our Boys' Brigade which is largely due to older members naturally leaving due to their age and a gap in the school years 10 – 12 which is a legacy of the COVID years when boys didn't move from Junior to Company Section.

In addition to the weekly activities, there are some other events which take place each year:

- Bible Club in June in the early evenings for primary school age children. In 2023 this took place for five nights from 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June with a special service on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June.
- Motor's Night took place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June and is open to the community, with a supper and epilogue afterwards.
- Fellowship evenings.



# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### **Staff**

The congregation has three paid members of staff:

Minister	Rev. Ben Preston (also a Trustee)
Assistant Minister	Mr. Martin Delaney (licensed)
Praise Coordinator	Mr. David Fulton (also a Trustee)

During 2023 the Rev. Preston continued to act as Vacancy Convenor for our neighbouring congregation, Gardenmore and this will continue briefly in 2024 with a new minister anticipated to be installed in February.

### **Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by praying, serving on committees, leading in organisations, encouraging others, and helping with the wide range of church activities, making it the lively and vibrant community that it is. Their help is at the heart of God's work and witness in Craigy Hill and we are very grateful for their commitment and contribution.

We thank those who have come forward to help establish the Welcome Hub, in particular Mr. David Marshall who leads the catering.

During 2023 the Kirk Session added to the current membership with three new members being elected and undergoing training prior to being ordained in June 2023, with these new members of Kirk Session also becoming Trustees. The three are Brian Lewis, Simon McFaul and Graham Warnock.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### ***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 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, 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.

# Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

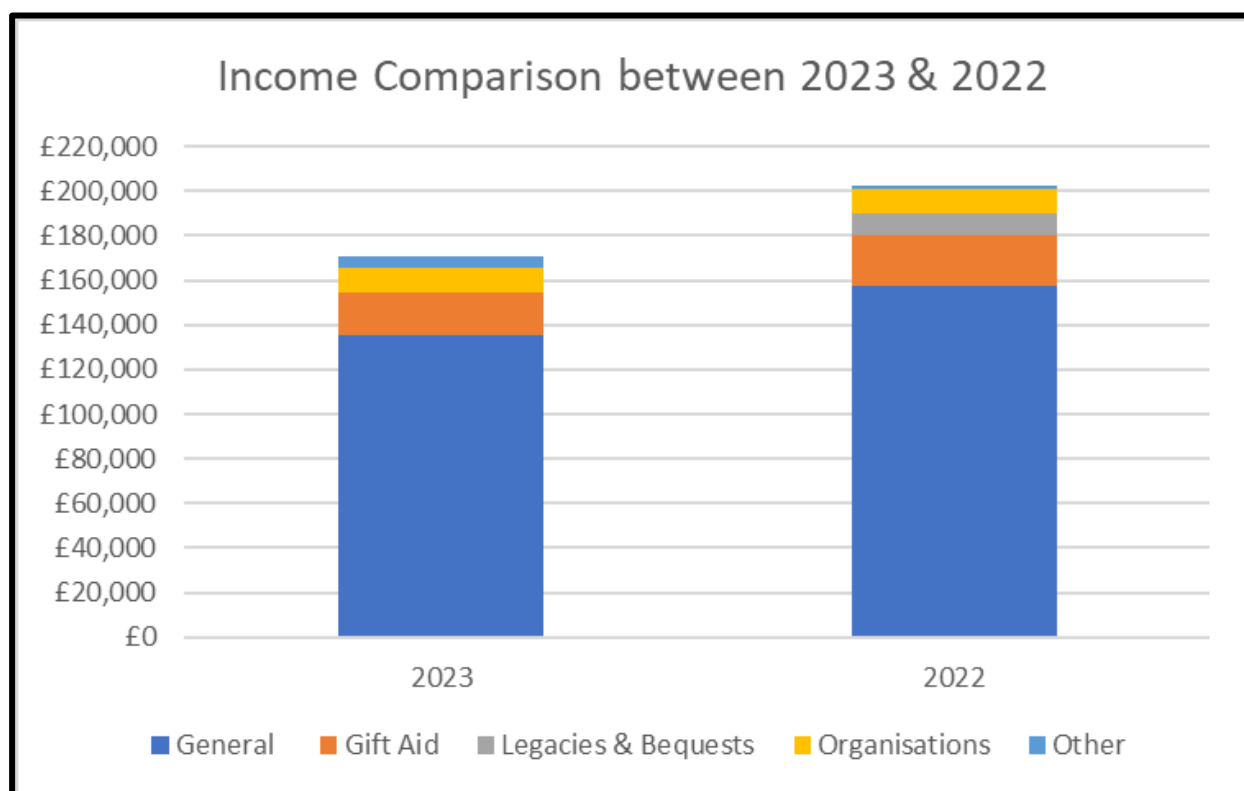
### Financial Review

The congregation's principal source of income is members' contributions through Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 167 contributors during the year (2022 - 160) donating just under £99,000 to general funds (2022 - £97,665).

Total receipts from all sources for the year amounted to £170,635, compared to £202,316 in 2022. The decrease is largely accounted for by the absence of legacies and the reduction in Restricted Funds receipts. It must be remembered that 2022 receipts in this category included the Ukraine Appeal and gifts to clear the congregational loan for vestibule extension, so this is not a reflection on any decrease in generosity of our members.

The total income is summarised in the following table and chart.

Total Income Comparison Between 2023 & 2022			
Income	2023	2022	Difference
General	£135,439	£157,674	£-22,235
Gift Aid	£19,096	£22,646	£-3,550
Legacies & Bequests	£0	£9,705	£-9,705
Organisations	£11,041	£11,240	£-199
Other	£5,058	£1,051	£4,007
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£170,635</b>	<b>£202,316</b>	<b>£-31,682</b>



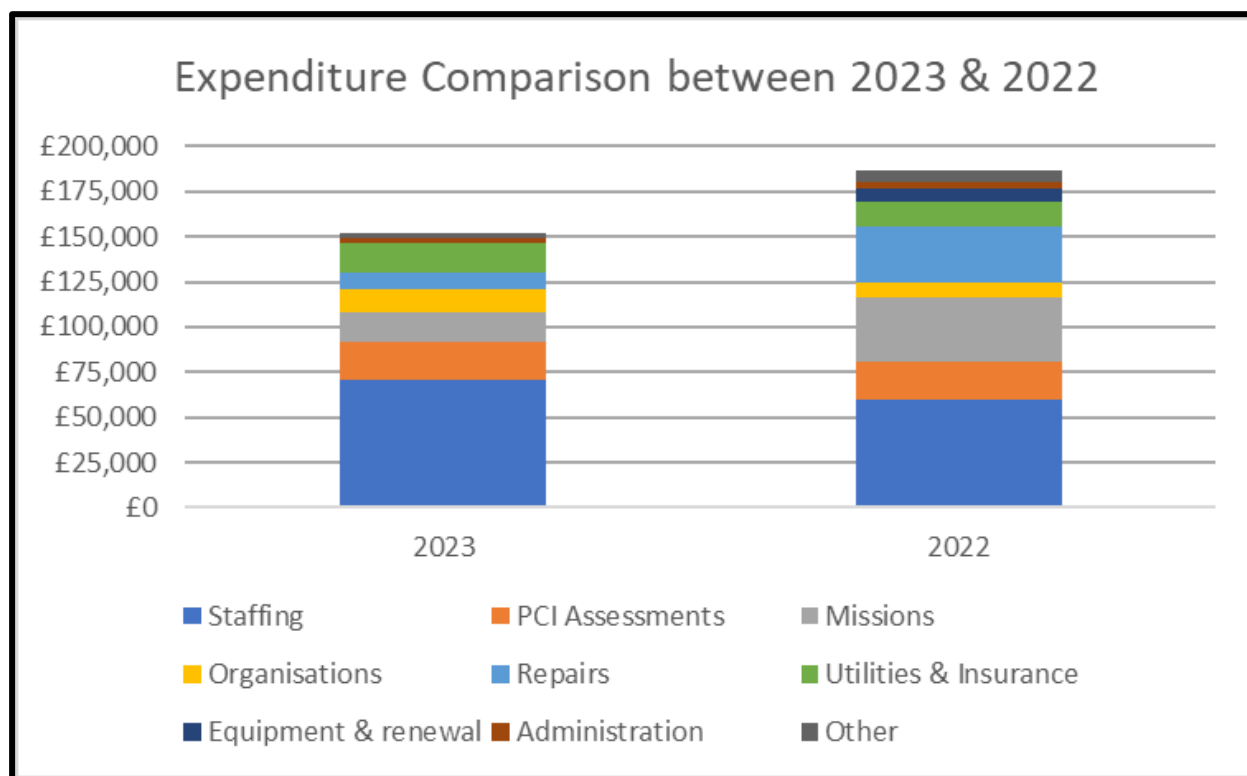
## Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne

### Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Total payments decreased from £186,398 in 2022 to £152,116 in 2023. The increase in staff costs was the due to 2023 having a full year of licenced assistant compared to 8 months in 2022. Although costs increased in general, this was offset by the reduction in payments for the tower repair, retention payment for the vestibule extension and Mission payments for the Ukraine Appeal in 2022.

The total expenditure is summarised in the following table and chart.

Total Expenditure Comparison Between 2023 & 2022			
Expense	2023	2022	Difference
Staffing	£70,984	£59,662	£11,322
PCI Assessments	£20,482	£20,728	-£246
Missions	£16,361	£35,538	-£19,177
Organisations	£12,781	£8,267	£4,514
Repairs	£9,307	£31,271	-£21,963
Utilities & Insurance	£16,166	£13,554	£2,613
Equipment & renewal	£0	£7,705	-£7705
Administration	£2,983	£3,927	-£944
Other	£3,051	£5,746	-£2,696
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£152,116</b>	<b>£186,398</b>	<b>-£34,282</b>



Kirk Session wishes to thank the members of congregational committee, finance sub-committee and counting teams for their diligence in dealing with the financial affairs of the congregation.

# **Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne**

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

### ***Reserves Policy***

The Trustees' policy is to retain a level of free/general reserves which will match its ongoing financial commitments. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not invested in fixed assets and available for general use.

The main reason for holding reserves is to ensure that the charity has enough resources to fund its programmes and pay all debts as they fall due. The Trustees believe that holding unrestricted funds that will cover three to six months expenditure is prudent and sufficient.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 the charity held Unrestricted Funds of £55,803. The trustees regard this balance as satisfactory. Note that at their regular meetings, Trustees are provided with an update of the current financial position and regularly monitor the movement in reserves.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the charity also held £46,206 of Restricted Funds, and £23,795 of Endowment Funds provided for the purposes as explained in note 10 of the accounts.

Overall, in 2023 our total reserves increased from £107,285 to £125,804.

### ***Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.***

There are no funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

### ***Plans for future periods***

The Trustees, in conjunction with the Committee, do not currently have any plans for major building projects. Other regular ongoing repairs and maintenance are anticipated.

# Craigy Hill Presbyterian Church, Larne

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

### ***Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities***

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 payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires charity trustees to ensure that accounting records are kept which are sufficient to show and explain all the charity's transactions, which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to prepare statement of accounts which complies with regulation under the Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In preparing those 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;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and signed on its behalf by



John Dundee – Clerk of Session

8<sup>th</sup> April 2024