

LOUGHAGHERY 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 NIC105065.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Loughaghery congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Cargygray Road, Hillsborough. BT26 6BL.

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105065).

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. Leslie Patterson
Mrs. Olive Dennison
Mr. John Ferguson
Mr. Mark Gibson
Mrs. Marion Hunter
Mr. Alan Jess
Mr. Norman Jess

Mr. Tristan Kinnear
Mr. Ivan McAuley
Mr. Brian McCord
Mr. David Moore
Mrs. Carol Patton

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister
Clerk of Session
Treasurer

Rev. Leslie Patterson
Mr. Norman Jess
Mr. Alan Jess

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mrs. Alison Wilson
27 Hermitage, Hillsborough. BT26 6RJ.

BANKERS

Danske Bank
Business Banking, P.O. Box 183, Donegall Square West, BELFAST. BT1 6JS.

SOLICITORS

W G Maginess & Son
68 Bow Street, LISBURN. BT28 1AL.

LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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 Sessions 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 congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held five times in the year i.e. once every two months with a break in the summer.

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 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. Loughaghery congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Dromore 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 the congregation.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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

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

Loughaghery 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.*

LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords 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 regular bible study & prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School
- Boys Brigade
- Girls Brigade
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Fellowship
- Bowling Club
- Badminton Club
- Knit & Natter Group
- CU@7 Junior Youth Club

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday morning at 11.00am (10:30 July & August) with occasional evening services held throughout the year. A Prayer meeting is held weekly and on a monthly basis our Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures as well as a time of prayer. Our Home and Overseas missions team organised special midweek meetings in February and March with special speakers and these were well attended. Services were recorded and available on our website. We conducted four baptisms throughout the year and we sought to comfort and help those who had been bereaved.

At 31 December 2023 there were 132 communicant members and 134 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 100-115.

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 elders. The Sunday service is recorded and can be viewed on our website and those who are not online receive a DVD copy.

LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation supported mission work through United Appeal, World Development Appeal, Christian Aid, Mission to Mexico, Presbyterian Children's Society and Belfast City Mission.

The Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Bowling Club and Ladies Fellowship also supported charitable causes during the year.

We also take a monthly service in the local nursing home and a Bible Club in the local Primary School. Services in the nursing home are still suspended since the pandemic but the Bible Club in the local Primary School has resumed.

As mentioned above 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 congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual World Development Appeal and any other special appeals.

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

Normally the minister and a nominated elder attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Assembly Buildings, Belfast in June

Property

The annual Fire Defence and Fire Alarm maintenance checks were completed. A new camera and projectors were installed in the Church sanctuary and the Church main Hall had new LED lights installed and the floor resurfaced. Ongoing maintenance painting was completed and Graveyard repairs carried out.

Organisations

- **Sunday School** – The Sunday School is held during the Service with a break in July & August. A Children’s Church is run for these two months by other volunteers to give teachers a break. There were 29 children and young people on the roll in 2023 with 11 in the Bible Class and 18 in the Sunday School. Each year the children and young people learn memory verses and are taught bible stories and how to apply it to their lives. They took two services throughout the year, one at Christmas and Children’s Day in June where they participated in singing and drama and they closed the year in June with an outing.

- **Boys Brigade** – In September 2023 the BB Company moved away from BB UK & ROI. The Company is now part of The Northern Ireland Boys’ Brigade, or BBNI, which is a new registered charity in Northern Ireland. The BB Company continued to meet regularly on Tuesday evenings in the Church Hall and the Welcome Area of the Church. In the 2023/24 session there were 13 Anchor Boys (Ages 4-7), 10 Junior Section (Ages 8-10), 7 Company Section (Ages 11-14) and 11 Seniors (Ages 15-18) together with 11 leaders. Anchor Boys and Junior Section Leaders took part in their respective BBNI conferences as part of their continued training and development. Two young leaders took part in a BBNI Step Up course for young leaders aged 18 -30 years and we look forward to their further development. The boys in all sections took part in the BB’s awards programmes, based on Christian faith development, community, recreation and developing skills. 4 senior boys gained The President’s Badge and 1 achieved The Queen’s Badge. 14 boys are participating in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, 6 at Gold, 5 at Silver and 3 at Bronze levels. The Company offers a safe environment for boys to enjoy fellowship and camaraderie and to develop interests in a wide variety of fields.

- **Girls Brigade** – Loughaghery Girls Brigade started in 1997 with 13 young girls and 4 leaders and 27 years later we have a strong and loyal membership with 29 girls and 8 dedicated leaders. Many of the younger leaders have come through our GB ranks as young girls and have remained with us and participated in the leadership training programme. We meet each Wednesday night from September to March/April learning new activities and working towards awards and badges. The younger girls attend for the first hour and the older Company girls meet later. There is a wide range of award/badge courses that can be undertaken with the only mandatory one being the scripture course that is set by the GB HQ team on a yearly basis. This course and the programme material is always very relevant to the girls young lives and is enjoyed by girls and leaders. Other examples of activities during the year include baking, craftwork, aerobics, badminton, games, singing, volunteering, GB international knowledge, general life skills, camp craft etc. At the end of each yearly session we have a Parents Night where the girls put on a display of the activities they have learnt and badges and awards are presented. For the past 18 years we have provided participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme for the older Company section girls and this has proved very beneficial in helping to encourage these older teenagers to stay in our Company until they reach the age of 18. Many of our young adults have achieved all three levels of this award, showing great determination throughout the various sections. The majority of our members attend loyally each week with only around 35% of the girls being members of our own congregation. Around half of the rest would attend other local Churches. GB motto is “seek, serve and follow Christ”.

- **Presbyterian Women** – Meetings are held on the 1st Monday each month from October to April with an outing in May. It is open to ladies of all ages in the congregation and is a chance to meet on a less formal basis for a blend of spiritual and social events. The average attendance at monthly meetings was 18.
- **Men's Fellowship** – Meets on the 3rd Monday each month from October to March with occasional ad hoc outings. It is open to men of all ages in the congregation and is a chance to meet on a less formal basis for a blend of social and spiritual events. It is open to men from the wider community and members are encouraged to bring along friends and neighbours. Post Covid a full programme of meetings resumed and the average attendance was usually around 18.
- **Badminton Club** – The juvenile and senior sections normally meet on a Monday night but only the senior section met during the year. There was an average attendance of 6/7 members and the men took part in the Ballinderry Men's League.
- **Bowling Club** – The club meets on Thursday nights from October to April. There were 26 members on the roll and during 2023 there was an average attendance of 18. The club were winners of the Maghergall Churches League and runners up in the Charity Cup. Members also participated in club singles, pairs and points competitions.
- **Knit & Natter Group** – The group holds their meetings on Tuesday afternoons with a break over the summer months. Membership remains steady with an average of 14-16 attending each week, some of whom are not members of the congregation. During the year items of knitwear were distributed to Seamen's Christian Friend Society, Salvation Army, Ulster Hospital Maternity Unit, Mid Ulster Maternity Unit, Baby Basics Magherafelt, Blossoms, Belfast Samaritans Purse, Swaziland, Annahilt Home and Craigavon A&E Dementia Unit.
- **CU@7** – This organisation for Primary school aged children was started in February 2023. The evening starts with a short bible story message and the kids then participate in games, craft, drawing etc. with an interval for juice and biscuits. The average attendance was around 28.

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.

LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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.

LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering and 114 families contributed £56,832 during the year which was up £3,865 (6.8%) from 2022. Expenses on Ministerial costs, Manse, heat & light etc. also increased resulting in a trading loss of £426 but a bequest of £3159 for general purposes meant we had a surplus of £3,092.

Total Income of the congregation (including organisations) during the year was £111,484. Total expenditure (including organisations) was £119,058 which was up from 2022 mainly due to increased spending on Property. The net decrease to our funds was -£7,574 reducing our total funds carried forward to £174,432 (inclusive of investments/bequests).

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE 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 congregations 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 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.

Approved by the Committee and Kirk Session at a meeting on *20th October 2024* and signed on its behalf by

[Name] *Hedie Rotten*

[Date] *28/10/24*

[Name] *Alan Thomas Jess*

[Date] *28th October 2024*

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LOUGHAGHERY CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

(See attached report from the Independent Examiner)