

LISSARA 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 (NIC105078)

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

Lissara Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
The Square, Crossgar, Downpatrick, BT30 9EE

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105078)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Alan Burke	R McClurg
S G Clements	V M McCorriston
S M Cuffey	G McMullan
G Hutchinson	Mrs E Patterson
Mrs R Niblock	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Alan Burke
Clerk of Session	Matthew Cuffey
Treasurer	John J Patterson

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Brian Rice, Saintfield Road, Crossgar

BANKERS

Danske Bank, PO Box 183, Donegal Square West, Belfast BT1 6SJ

SOLICITORS

Murlands Solicitors, 15 English Street, Downpatrick BT30 6AP

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 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 twice in each year as required.

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. Lissara congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Down 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.

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.

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. Its 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.

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 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 holds regular bible study meetings and has a range of organisations including

- Knitting Group
- Girls' Brigade
- Presbyterian Women
- Boys' Brigade
- Lissara Tots

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30 am and at 6.30 pm on certain evenings. During the week the Bible Study/Prayer Time provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

During the coronavirus restrictions a number of our services were online and the pastoral care by telephone or letter. These methods are continued, and services are still available over the telephone for those without internet access. We welcomed one adult to the Lord's Table for the first time. We also gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 80 communicant members and 123 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 83.

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/or elders or contacted by letter or telephone.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation supports prayerfully and financially two missionaries to Muslim people in London. Children in third world countries are supported by the knitting group's activities, and those at home through the Presbyterian Children's Society (PCS) envelopes.

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.

The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project 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

The minister and one of our elders attended the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. Although normally held for a week at the beginning of June, this year the General Assembly was held over 4 days in the last full week in June.

Property

Permission was granted by PCI and the congregation for the purchase of a property on the Derryboye Road to be used as a manse and for the sale of the existing property and approved site adjoining. This has happened with the exception of the sale of the site which is currently sale agreed.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Organisations

The following is a brief outline of the past year in each organisation as they aimed to develop activities again following the lockdown situation -

The Boys Brigade (BB) - The BB meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from September to April. There are 3 age group sections covering an age range from 4 to 18, with approximately 52 boys and 12 leaders. Recreational activities include age-appropriate games and crafts, and a Christian Education programme is followed by all sections. Visits by outside groups and trips to activities are organised throughout the year. These are mostly of an educational or sporting nature. An away weekend is held each April/May for older boys.

The Girls' Brigade (GB) – The GB meets in the Church hall every Wednesday night from 6.45 to 8.15 pm during September to April. It has girls aged from 3 to 18 years old with an average attendance of 30 girls and 7 leaders. It follows a Christian programme with girls completing activities in the areas of spiritual, educational, service and physical. Additional activities are arranged of a recreational or educational nature at the end of the session.

Presbyterian Women (PW) – The PW normally meets monthly from September until May with an average attendance of approx. 25 ladies. Since the Coronavirus Restrictions, we have moved from the traditional Monday evening to more flexible arrangements including morning meetings, and mission evenings that are open to all – men, women, and children.

Knitting Group – The Knitting Group meets fortnightly on a Monday morning with normally 8-10 in attendance. Ladies are continuing to work knitted and crocheted items both for personal use and for mission outreach organizations. New patterns and stitches add to the enjoyment, as does the welcome tea/coffee and biscuits. Fellowship is good.

Lissara Tots - Lissara Tots was formed at the end of September 2022 running on a Friday morning from 10.30 am to 12 pm. This is open to the community and is aimed to provide friendship and fellowship for parents, carers, friends and pre-school children within a Christian environment. Generally well attended with carers and children coming from a wide range of backgrounds.

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.

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.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 158 contributors during the year [168 in 2022] donating a total of £85,670 (£72,367 in previous year, 2022).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £150,142, compared to £410,627 in the previous year. This shows a steady financial support for the congregation. The much bigger figure in the previous year includes the income from the sale of the manse.

Total expenditure for the year was £154,065 compared to £531,497 in 2022. The main reason for the bigger expenditure in the previous year was the purchase and upgrade of a new property as a manse for the congregation.

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 congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 208 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 Kirk Session at a meeting on 12th February 2024 and signed on its behalf by

[Name] Rev Alan Burke [Name] S Matthew Cuffey

[Date] 12th February 2024

[Date] 12th February 2024