

Newcastle Presbyterian Church

Trustees Report 2023¹

The Trustees of Newcastle Presbyterian Church (NPC) are the members of Kirk Session (KS), which includes the Minister, Rev A Boreland. Rev Boreland acts as Moderator of all meetings of Kirk Session. The members of KS are appointed in accordance with the rules of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ⁽¹⁾.

Minutes are recorded by the Clerk of Session.

The work of Kirk Session is supported by a Committee elected by the Church members. The membership of both Kirk Session and Committee are all volunteers chosen from the congregation.

As a general rule, apart from August, Kirk Session meet on the third Tuesday of alternate months aligning our meetings with Committee. All meetings are now in person. Each meeting commences with devotions led by Rev Boreland, a time of open prayer and we also close with prayer.

Public benefit statement

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by the advancement of religion, specifically by making known the Christian Gospel as found in the Holy Bible. The direct benefits include the gaining of an understanding of Christian beliefs which lead to spiritual and moral development through Bible teaching. This in turn leads to practical outworking of Christian belief in the local community through spiritual and temporal care of all (including those in special need). Local action is supported by centrally organised resources and events. public access is made known through word of mouth, noticeboards, public advertising and social media. Benefits are evaluated by formal and informal feedback from members of the church and from the public. The benefit does not lead to harm. The only private benefit coming from our purpose relates to Ministers, missionaries and lay agents who receive benefits as a result of holding office or employment. The wider beneficiaries of our purpose are

¹ The Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (the Code) available for download from www.presbyterianireland.org.

members of the church and their families, individuals who are in direct or indirect contact with the church and other communities through NI, or indeed worldwide which benefit from our support for both Christian and secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Aims and purpose

Kirk Session has oversight of the aims of the church which are set out in the rules of PCI. In summary, this is to work together with the minister in the oversight and government of the congregation, for the strengthening of God's people in spiritual fruitfulness and fellowship, and for the extension of Christ's kingdom among all people. In exercising this leadership, the Kirk Session oversees and works along with other members who have leadership roles in the congregation. NPC can sum up its purpose with the phrase "Making Christ Known".

Achievements and performance

Worship Services and social activities

Although Kirk Session is responsible for personnel and all organisations within the Church and those who use our premises it is only a small part of the work of NPC in Making Christ Known. All worship services and other activities are open to all members of the community. During 2023 there was one morning service each Sunday which allow for prayer, Bible study and singing. Evening services were restarted on a monthly basis. The services are also available on social media and by CD. These services and all other activities held are open to all faith groups (and to people who hold that they have no faith) and all ages. 5 services of Communion were held. Social activities such as indoor bowls, badminton, creche, Parents and Tots as did Sunday School, junior badminton, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade which cater for younger age groups. Badminton, bowls, tea and coffee mornings, fellowship groups and visitation catered for older age groups. Lots of communication went onto social media and this continued in 2023.

Interchurch services were held on a regular basis,

Interactions with the local community continued with our youth worker taking

part in local primary school assemblies. An event for children from across the community was held over the period of 1 week in late July. This is open to the children of all residents and visitors to Newcastle and was held largely in the open air this year.

NPC continued to support local charities with finance, food and practical aid being available.

Members of the church continued to hold office on boards of local schools, some of the charities which received help and assist with running and maintaining the local foodbank.

NPC is an integral part of a local group of Presbyterian churches known as a Presbytery. NPC is part of the Presbytery of Iveagh.

General Data Protection Regulations and Child Protection are standing items on the agenda for each meeting of Kirk Session. No matters of concern were noted in 2020, 2021, 2022 or 2023. Training in child protection policy is ongoing.

Pastoral ministry

Rev Boreland led Sunday Services, speaking from the Bible both in church and at outside locations such as local care homes. Hospital visitation by Rev Boreland, supported by retired minister Rev Quinn continued.

A Prayer Action Team continues to coordinate prayer meetings across the church. A Global Mission Action Team promotes charitable works and missions not just around Newcastle, but further afield.

Church membership

Church membership has remained around 250 families in 2023. Of these, normally around 200 people attend church each Sunday morning. Services of baptism, weddings and sadly funerals continued to be held.

Maintenance of social activity

The church committee held 5 full meetings during 2023.

Over the year the committee sought to continue to empower the church to effectively “Make Christ Known” in our community and further afield through our discussions and decisions. Maintenance and essential repairs were ongoing and strict social distancing maintained when employing contractors to repair or service facilities.

The catering team normally provides tea and coffee after church to promote a opportunity to get to know visitors and develop friendships.

Our audiovisual and IT systems were in great demand. Audio recordings are available after most services, and video recordings of services are available through multimedia channels.

Financial governance

The treasurer is supported by a Finance Sub Committee which reviews the monthly financial statements and the treasurer then reports to Committee at each meeting.

While Committee has overall responsibility for maintenance of church property, securing funds and dispensing monies, Kirk Session retained a monitoring role through receipt of Committee minutes at each meeting. Furthermore, members of Session also attended meetings of Committee and took part in the Finance Subcommittee meetings. The Finance Subcommittee provided recommendations to Committee on expenditure and on other issues such as banking and budgets.

The Committee have procedures in place to count income by teams and lodgements are carried out on the next working day after the church services.

Payments are made by cheque only or by standing order to utility suppliers. All cheques require 2 signatories.

As the church income is less than the £250,000 threshold for audit the Committee appoint an independent examiner to review the financial statements of income and expenditure. Mr John Thompson carried out this role for 2023 and provided a statement verifying the accounts.

The statement of Mr Thompson is attached as a pdf document.

It was noted that our income was back to pre-pandemic levels and exceeded our overall expenditure.

Access to the church books is available on request, though it should be noted that these are only available in hard copy. A statement of income and expenditure is below.

Notes

- (1) The church reporting year runs from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023
- (2) Income for 2023 was £243093
- (3) Expenditure for 2023 was £272247.82
- (4) Income for 2022 was £209,965
- (5) expenditure for 2022 was £227,275

NPC does not hold any restricted funds.

NPC seeks to hold a reserve of cash at the bank equivalent to 3 months average expenditure.

Administrative information

Newcastle Presbyterian Church is located at:

39 Main Street, Newcastle, BT33 0AD, which is also the postal address of the church office.

Charities Commission NI reference NIC 105117

Minister: Rev Andrew Boreland.

Contact in respect of Charity Commission communication is:

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