

Second Presbyterian Church Comber

Trustees' Report

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published on 16 July 2014 (as amended by Update Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016).

TRUSTEES

The Trustees that have served during the year are listed on page 1.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

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 and prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations (these organisations are described further below).

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Second Presbyterian Church Comber 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 honor 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 congregations mission purpose is:

"To enable people of all ages to become committed followers of Jesus Christ and to mature in their faith".

Our vision is, "to be a church for the community becoming a 'new community' in Christ", which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God and love for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian Gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of every generation.

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a community of God's people through five core values agreed by the Kirk Session:

- (i) "With Christ at the centre of our church life, Second Comber is committed to every- member ministry, enabling gifts to be fully used and faith to mature".
- (ii) "With Christ at the centre of our church life, Second Comber is committed to worship which is meaningful and relevant to all ages".
- (iii) "With Christ at the centre of our church life, Second Comber is committed to being an open and welcoming fellowship where support and care are genuine".

- (iv) "With Christ at the centre of our church life, Second Comber is committed to mission and outreach being at the heart of church life".
- (v) "With Christ at the centre of our church life, Second Comber is committed to being a community where attitudes of love, mutual respect and understanding are consistently displayed".

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.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship at 11.30a.m in the meeting house each Sunday, evening services are usually held twice per month with the informal Sunday Night Together, a time of prayer and praise held on the first Sunday of each month at 5.30p.m to include families. During restrictions in the first few months of 2022 social distancing and sanitation was adhered to. Each week the Midweek Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship and to study the scriptures. The Prayer Ministry continues on Monday evenings with 'Pause for Prayer' and on Wednesday mornings when the Church is open to all for private prayer or a member of prayer team will be available for individual needs, this also takes place after Sunday morning worship.

When restrictions eased, we were able to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism for 5 babies and a service of thanksgiving for the safe delivery of 1 baby thanking God for the gift of new life in our Church Family. The Marriage services for 4 couples were held. With great sadness the Congregation lost 27 members during 2022 and our sympathy goes to each family for their personal loss in this time of bereavement.

At 31 December 2021, there were 434 communicant members and 615 families connected with the congregation. When in-person worship returned, the average weekly attendance at morning worship would be 175 people with approximately another 100 watching the services by live streaming.

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 ministers, elders or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors and can be supplied with weekly recordings of the services. COVID restrictions obviously restricted face to face meetings but normal visitation now takes place.

Mission and Outreach

The United Appeal: The United Appeal for Mission is at the very heart of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Every aspect of the Church's mission depends to some extent on United Appeal. It supports projects, programmes, and staff at home and overseas. It helps congregations and individuals to build God's Kingdom through youth and children's ministry, social action, and the training of leaders. It also supports the production of different resources that encourages people to grow in their faith as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, so the Good News of the Gospel can be shared. Collections for the Appeal take place 3 times throughout the year from within the congregation.

'The NET'.

At a local level, close ties have been built up with Comber Youth for Christ ('The Net') for which provision has been made, financially, prayerfully and through the work and energy of individual volunteers. Members of the Congregation meet the Net team once a month for Prayer.

World Development Group

The World Development Appeal is an annual initiative which focuses on helping people trapped in poverty. It endeavors to change lives and communities for the better by channeling resources in support of sustainable development projects on every continent. This work is taken forward through PCI's development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund. Fund raising takes different forms within the church with a close association with the 'Drama Group' over the years. The WDG works as a sub-committee within the Mission Committee.

Foodbank

A partnership with the Dundonald Foodbank occurs on a weekly basis with the collection of foodstuffs gifted by the congregation at the weekly Sunday services, along with items provided by the youth organisations midweek. 2022 saw a contribution of 2500 kg of foodstuffs provided by the congregation towards the work of the Foodbank ministry.

Property

In relation to property, 2022 saw ongoing routine maintenance within the property itself, the Property Committee identifying areas and situations which required attention. These projects are carried out where possible by a small team of volunteers and by selected tradesmen. The necessary surveys, electrical, alarm system, exterior/interior lighting etc., and fire drills were carried out. The storm panels which were removed to provide ventilation during Covid remain off the windows. A major programme of restoration, renovation and refurbishment of the Manse commenced at the end of August 2022 with completion scheduled for the late Spring in 2023.

ORGANISATIONS

Creche

During Sunday morning worship young children and babies may be left in a soft play friendly environment. There are two experienced leaders-in-charge and a team of twelve volunteers who operate on a Rota basis, some parents are also welcomed to stay and the facility to watch the service relayed from the meeting house is available. Usual average weekly numbers: 6

Sunday Special

Sunday Special meets each week during term time from 2.30 to 3.30p.m usually with 6 members who have a learning disability attending each week. There are 6 leaders from various churches in the town and some of the parents accompany their children and participate during the hour. The varied programme includes Singing, Crafts and Bible stories and snacks are given during the meeting. Attendance: 6.

Choir

Our weekly services are led by a choir of approximately 25 people under the direction of the Organist/Director of Music. Praise Band, Brass Ensemble, Youth Orchestra also enhance the musical worship at special services through the Church year at Easter, Harvest & Christmas and at other appropriate occasions. Choir practices resumed in person after Covid restrictions were lifted, and music remains an integral part of Sunday worship.

Choir numbers: 25/ other musicians and members of praise band total approx. 20

Sunday Night Together (SNT)

SNT meet on the first Sunday of each month at 5.30p.m with a break during summer months and at New Year, the average attendance is around 70 members of all ages with many families joining together, age being no restriction. The meetings are usually held in our Main Hall but other venues have included an outdoor picnic on the playing fields or at a local country park with an informal outdoor Carol Service, tea/coffee and light refreshments are usually supplied and served by a group of supporters. The small group of leaders meet regularly to plan events, the aims remain constant, to further our Christian journey through fellowship, outreach, praise and prayer, everyone is welcome. Average attendance 70.

Church Flowers

When restrictions eased and church services attained a sense of normality, the Church Flower Rota was again introduced. The flowers which may be in memory of a loved one or for a special occasion are kindly contributed on a voluntary basis and are very much appreciated. The Church is tastefully decorated for Harvest and Christmas by a group of willing volunteers.

Girls Brigade

The Company resumed the current session in January 2022 the different sections meeting on alternate weeks in line with the cautious guidelines due to Covid restrictions. A reduced programme was put in place to include crafts and Bible studies and weather permitting outside activities were held. As restrictions were lifted the Company was able to commence in September and offer the girls a full programme fulfilling the areas of spiritual, physical, and educational needs remembering the Girls Brigade mission to seek, serve and follow Christ. The Company meets each Friday evening September to end March from 6.30 to 9.00p.m. Average attendance: 90.

Boys Brigade

As with all other organisations the first session of 2022 was impacted by the Pandemic with the various sections meeting on alternate weeks to ensure everyone's protection, on-line sessions were also available to keep everyone connected and games and activities were held outside weather permitting. When the organisation resumed many boys who had not participated were eager to engage again and a full programme throughout Anchor Boys, Junior Section & Company Section resumed. The Company were thus able to participate in various competitions, football tournaments, physical activities, and spiritual devotions, all embracing the aim of the Boys Brigade which is "to advance Christ's kingdom among boys and the promotion and habits of obedience, discipline, reverence, self- respect, and all that leads to true Christian manliness. Anchor Boys (P1 to P4) Junior Section (P5 to P7) Company Section (years 8 and above). Total number of boys attending: 112.

Table Tennis Club

The Table Tennis Club recommenced on Monday evenings from September 2022. Sadly, membership had declined as a result of the Pandemic but membership has increased and those who attend of whatever age enjoy the friendship, fellowship and physical activity which the Club has provided over many years. Average attendance: 10.

Bowling Club

There are two meetings each week of the Bowling Club in our Main Hall. The Monday Club re-started in September 2022, this is our Club night with club matches and friendly games with neighboring Clubs. The Saturday evening meeting began again in November 2022 welcoming anyone from neighboring

Clubs and different areas for fellowship supper and small prizes. Bowling is open to all ages and level of skill. Average attendance: Mondays 20/ Saturday 24.

Children's Society

The Congregation has supported the Presbyterian Children's Society over many decades helping to fund the Society's mission to support families and children at times of great need where there is a breakdown in family life. With Covid restrictions generally in place during 2022, the door-to-door collection was ended requesting that funds be donated to this most worthy of causes given directly via the weekly offering plate.

Catering Corps

Due to Covid restrictions the Catering Corps were unable to provide any catering facilities from March 2020, but when these were eased in May catering re-started providing light refreshments after funeral services, this service being much appreciated by members of the bereaved families. New members have joined the team of around 25 people with the welcome assistance of menfolk who assist with the heavy work of setting up and clearing away tables and pouring tea. This provides an opportunity for friendship and fellowship, outreach into our Church family and community and raises funds for Church projects.

Supper Teams

There are 4 supper teams made up of around 80 ladies who meet to provide light refreshments at various events during the Church year, e.g., Christian Aid Lunch, Harvest Supper, Christmas Eve & Carol Services. These events are a great way of providing friendship and fellowship with one another and introducing new families into our Church Family. The assistance of some men who set up and clear away is much appreciated as is the support of the ladies of the Congregation.

Men's Ministry

Men's Ministry meets twice monthly in the morning within the Church Halls, and its aim is to enrich men's lives through developing friendships and to further deepen the relationship with God through the exploration of His Living Word and prayer. Discussions and presentations center on a wide range of issues against the backdrop of God's Word and its application in daily living. Throughout the session there are opportunities for external trips to local attractions and conferences. Average attendance: 12.

Midweek Bible Study

This group meets weekly on Thursday evenings in one of the Church Halls and is led by our Minister, although on occasions visiting speakers on a variety of Christian topics have been welcomed. This meeting provides the opportunity through a structured programme to enable a greater and deeper understanding of God's Word and to grow into a deeper relationship with Him. There is usually a Question-and-Answer slot at the end of each session. Average attendance: 20.

Tots & Co

Tots & Co meet in the Main Hall on Friday mornings during term time between 10.00 and 11.45a.m. The group caters for babies to pre-school children (3-4 yrs.) and provides a programme of playtime with a variety of toys, crafts, music and singing, Bible Stories and of course snacks. Carers and parents/grandparents are also welcomed, and they too are provided with refreshments. There are ten leaders with at least eight present each week and the help of menfolk who set out the toys and chairs and clear same away is much appreciated. Average attendance: 50.

Banner Group

The Banner Group resumed meetings again on Wednesday mornings when restrictions were lifted. The meetings are based on prayer, devotions, fellowship, and fun with the nine members who attend working

together through needlecraft to make banners for display in the Meeting House representing the different occasions and seasons throughout the Church Year as we celebrate God's goodness to us. Banners have also been made for special events and Church organisations. The group now has a total of 20 banners inspired by Scripture and praise and the work is always ongoing. Attendance: 9.

Sunday Morning Youth & Children's Ministry

As we returned to worship together in-person our Children's Ministry returned during morning worship for the younger children of nursery and primary school age. Children are provided with a snack and drink after which they have story time which is very much linked to the theme of the morning service and the children's address. There are also games, crafts, colouring or puzzle activities related to the story helping to reinforce the message. During 2022 the numbers gradually increased as more families returned to worship together and by the end of the year the numbers had grown to 25. Some of the junior leaders help out each week on a rotational basis.

Senior and Junior Bible Class

During Autumn 2022 we were delighted to invite our young people from year 10 upwards to attend Senior Bible Class with 2 leaders meeting before morning worship. Numbers were small with regular attendance from 4 teenagers and occasional appearances from a couple of other. Junior Bible Class was then introduced being a replacement for Senior Sunday School for children from Primary 7 up to Year 9. This takes place under the leadership of a small team of 4 and meets twice monthly during morning worship with the young people being encouraged to remain in Church on other Sundays or assist on a rotational basis with the Children's Ministry. The number of young people attending may be anywhere between 4 & 10 and the teaching and discussion is centered around the theme of morning worship. These young people are encouraged to use their talents to take part in morning worship through music, reading from Scripture or leading in prayer. Average attendance through all groups: 30/35

Youth Fellowship

Youth Fellowship meets on Sunday evenings in the Cottage and is aimed at young people from year 8+ who would like to know more and grow in faith and fellowship. When restrictions eased the group were able to offer a full and varied programme, and much emphasis was put on re-engaging with each other as well as looking at the "one another's" in the Bible. It is led by the Youth & Family Worker together with assistance from a small team of committed helpers. Average attendance: 20

Baptismal Roll

During 2022, 5 children were baptized and welcomed to the Cradle Roll, there was also a service of thanksgiving for the safe delivery of 1 child.

Prayer Development Team

Within the context of worship and congregational life prayer must remain a priority. The team meets 3-4 times per year to plan and develop the prayer life of our Church. New initiatives included the availability of TRY PRAYING booklets and Catching the Wave, a 40 day study beginning on Ash Wednesday have been distributed throughout the Congregation. Prayer is available with our Minister before Sunday service and members of Prayer Development Team provide the opportunity for worship after the service. Pause for Prayer meets each week, the Church is open each Wednesday for private prayer or with members of the prayer team present and our link with The Net continues once a month as we join with them in their Prayer Time. As part of our Easter reflection and celebration our Minister's wife set up a Prayer Labyrinth. (Prayer Development Group 14 members)

Women's Ministry (Presbyterian Women)

CONNECTED meetings are held once a month and is open to all ladies within the congregation. This is an opportunity to meet together, share words of encouragement and build each other up through prayer and fellowship and deepen our Christian faith. During restrictions CONNECTED our Women's Ministry App enabled us to keep in touch and currently has 52 members. The monthly meetings usually feature guest speakers who share their own particular faith journey and Christian service through a variety of organisations and charities. At the beginning of September 3 Re-Connect walks were organised with up to 20 women enjoying a walk around our town with a welcome cuppa and short devotional on return. The Women's Ministry service with the PW theme "Deeper Together" was held in the Church building at the end of September. A Scripture writing challenge was organised through What's App in February and October to help us take time to engage and reflect on God's Word. PW contribute to the PW Mission Fund in support of Home & Global Mission Projects. Average attendance 25/30.

Drama group

With restrictions eased at the latter part of the year the annual Pantomime enabled a cast of approximately 55 (of various ages) to "tread the boards" once again. This organisation provides an outlet for children and young people from the Church and community to come together for a time of dancing, singing, fun and fellowship and although many do not have a Church connection Christ's message, Christian discipleship and prayer is at the center of all that is done. The financial proceeds support the work of World Development in our Church, helping the needs of those in the Third World. The total cast and crew would number 75.

Crossfire/Crossfire Plus

Crossfire & Crossfire Plus meet each week on Wednesday evenings from 7-8.00 p.m. and caters for children in P1-P6 & young people P7-Year 10. The evenings involve Bible stories, games, crafts and quizzes with outdoor activities and fun nights held in the Church grounds when the weather is good. This is an opportunity to share and learn of God's love through His Word to our youngest children.

Crossfire Plus for the older age group is led by our Youth & Family Worker and is an opportunity for them to explore God's word in relation to their own lives through discussion with each other, and through games and crafts. All the Crossfire Groups also link into the theme of the weekly worship services. Children and leaders were able to lead a special service in Church dedicated to the Crossfire Ministry.

Average attendance (both Groups): 25

Shine: (the umbrella name for the youth groups dedicated to Summer activities)

All of the Summer events for our young people were able to go ahead as planned with the easing of restrictions, all activities are held in the Church complex and grounds. Holiday Bible Club takes place during the third week in August from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. with around 80/100 children taking part. The main theme is related to Bible stories, fun, games and crafts and the children are given snacks during the evening. The evenings close with prayer and after the children have been collected the leaders have a time of prayer and reflection.

Wacky Wednesdays and Transform Thursdays

These events are held on four Wednesday nights and Thursday nights of amazing fun for children P4-P7 during the summer holidays. Suitable activities and programmes for the differing age ranges are organised both indoors and outdoors and all including the leaders are encouraged to take part. The evening ends with an epilogue sharing God's love. Average attendance through both groups: 50

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, especially in these times of COVID 19 and the social distancing restrictions. Obviously for 2021 the number of events has been greatly reduced and hence the need for volunteers was also reduced, yet we still recognize this vital element to the maintaining of a vibrant church life. Without COVID's complications the church relies upon 160 leaders/helpers throughout all organisations. Within the church 240 people have been POCVA checked over the years.

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 to Christian benefits 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 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 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 through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 434 contributors during the year (2021: 424) donating a total of £181,048 (2021: £159,542).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £335,925, compared to £276,871 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased to £329,430 from £177,119.

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees have considered the level of unrestricted funds that it is appropriate to hold taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the policy of the Trustees to hold at least three month's normal expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted funds were £200,643 (2021: £251,487), which represents more than three months expected expenditure. The Trustees, however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent of the ongoing financial support of members.

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 congregation. 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 at least nine times in each year or as appropriate.

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 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. Second Presbyterian Church Comber 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 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.

Second Presbyterian Church Comber

Trustees' Report (continued)

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material 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 business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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.

Disclosure of information to examiners

Each trustee has taken steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. The trustees confirm that there is no relevant information that they know of and of which they know the auditor is unaware.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 7/6/23 and signed on its behalf by:



Robert Andrew Courtenay



Mary McIlveen