

## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BALLYNAHINCH.**

A CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

### **Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020**

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

#### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

First Presbyterian Church Ballynahinch  
58 Windmill Street  
Ballynahinch  
Co Down  
BT24 8HB

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC 105194

#### **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

The Charity Trustees at the date of this report are

Name Dario Leal; Jill McKee; Fiona Davidson; Helen Jackson; Evaline McCracken;  
Colin Barr; Gordon Bleakley; Martin Chambers; Alan Davidson; Gavin Martin;  
Brian McKee; Tom Morrow; Jackie Scott; Terry Stuart.

#### **PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister        Rev Dario Leal  
Clerk of Session        Mrs. Jill McKee  
Treasurer        Dr Tom Morrow

#### **BANKERS**

Ulster Bank, 1A Main St, Ballynahinch, BT24 8AP

#### **SOLICITORS**

J Murland & Co, 2 Dromore St, Ballynahinch, BT24 8AG

#### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Shannon & Co, 39 Church St, Ballynahinch, BT24 8AF

#### **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 monthly with a summer break.

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. First Presbyterian Church Ballynahinch, a 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.

## 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.

First Presbyterian Church Ballynahinch 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.

At First Presbyterian Church, Ballynahinch, our vision and core values are:

### **Our vision:**

Is to be a vibrant, worshipping Christian community, growing in love for God, love for each other and love for the world in which we live.

### **Our core values:**

**God's Presence** – we value the person and work of the Holy Spirit and therefore seek to depend upon and keep in step with the Holy Spirit.

**Hearing God's Word** – all scripture is God breathed, therefore we seek to discern what God is saying through His word and by His Spirit.

**God's unique call on us** – recognising that God has gifted this church in particular areas of ministry, we offer ourselves and those gifts, to the wider church.

**People** – every person has been created in the image of God and is loved by Him. Since we value people we seek to respond to the needs of people, as God desires.

**The community of 'First'** – we prize building, maintaining and restoring relationships with one another, as we seek to grow in relationship with God.

**Discipleship Training** – we value lives being transformed as people follow Christ. Therefore we have as priorities, enabling people to mature in their relationship with Christ and preparing God's people for works of service.

**Every member ministry** – the Church is the body of Christ on earth and each person who belongs to Jesus has a call on their lives to minister to others. We value encouraging everyone to participate in the mission of God.

**Partnership** – as a witness to the unity of the body of Christ and in recognition of our interdependence, we value partnering with other churches in ministry.

## 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 *circa* five occasions during the year. All those who have been baptized and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who are in accordance with the legislation of the General Assembly are admitted to the Lord's Supper.

The congregation holds regular Bible study and prayer meetings and has a wide range of organizations including

- *Mother and toddlers – First Steps*
- *Sunday School – First Kids*
- *Bible class*
- *Youth programme*
- *Friends First - PW*
- *Home Groups*
- *Creative Worship Group*
- *Bowling Club*
- *Friendship Circle for senior members*

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11 am and on two Sundays each month at 6.30pm. Special services of worship are conducted during Holy week, on Children's day, at Harvest and at Christmas.

Our Home Groups meet regularly, where we study and discuss scripture and pray together in peoples' homes. We meet and pray before morning worship service every Sunday morning. We are part of an inter-Church prayer group, and take our turn in hosting early-morning prayer on a weekly basis.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledge God's gift of new life at the Sacrament of Baptism. In addition, at times of bereavement, we give thanks for faithful service and seek to comfort those who have experienced the loss of a loved one.

In common with other congregations in the denomination, our activities were curtailed by the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic. Church services were suspended on and from 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 and recommenced on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020. We were also closed on 29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Initially, services were recorded for members and others to view online and in December we commenced the live-streaming of services.

At 31 December 2020 there were 236 communicant members and 195 families connected with the congregation. The weekly attendance at morning worship, pre-lockdown, was typically 105 persons.

### **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 or elders. Visiting in homes and hospital was not possible through much of the year (due to lockdown) but contact was maintained by telephone.

### **Mission and outreach**

In First Ballynahinch, we have strong links with other churches regarding mission. We share in many united projects such as The Foodbank which is based in our premises; Ballynahinch Counselling Service, BCS, (formerly The Hub); Christians Against Poverty, CAP, a debt management initiative; Alpha courses where we host and/or participate in the courses; and a child Contact Centre, which facilitates the visiting rights of parent and child. We support and engage in these areas of Mission with prayer, voluntary manpower and finance.

We support The Edge, a non-denominational youth outreach project, which provides a drop-in facility in a building in the heart of Ballynahinch. In particular, it's Mission week in August is supported by teams of young people including young leaders from First in delivering programmes geared to children and teenagers as well as providing socially responsible, practical assistance to members of the community.

Our Halls are used by the local Scouting and Guiding organizations. Scouting includes Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Squirrels, which cater for all age groups. The Scouts usually develop an Environment Challenge award by carrying out litter pickups on the local beach twice a year and at Christmas, they have a "Giving tree" donating gifts to children in less fortunate circumstances in the locality. However, due to Covid restrictions, no meetings took place after the middle of March.

Similarly, the Guiding organizations, comprising senior Guides, Guides, Brownies and Rainbow Guides did not meet in person between March and December 2020 though Guides and Senior Guides did join together for meetings by Zoom.

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 provides financial support to congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation contributed to the denomination's Christmas appeal from the Moderator; a Sunday School project; and other special appeals.

### **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregation 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 scheduled for Belfast, in June; but COVID19 intervened.

### **Property**

Small scale, routine maintenance to property was carried out during the year; and we upgraded the heating system in our Hall changing from oil fuelled to a gas fuelled system. There were no major building projects during the year.

## **Organizations**

### **Children's Ministry**

#### **First Steps**

First Steps is a pre- school ministry that takes place each week in our Hall. Attendees include parents, grandparents, care givers and children from within and without the church membership. There are special activities at Easter and Christmas. Average attendance in normal times is 25 children and 15 adults. Meetings halted mid-March due to Covid restrictions.

#### **Sunday morning crèche**

Crèche is held during our morning worship service in the Hall to support parents with very young children who wish to avail of the facility. We were unable to offer this facility after mid-March due to Covid restrictions.

#### **First Kids (Sunday School)**

First Kids is for children aged 4 to 11 years, and is held during the latter part of our morning service. Numbers averaged 12 until mid March when meetings stopped due to Covid restrictions and the social events, which would normally take place, could not be held.

### **Youth Ministry**

We have a dedicated youth ministry for junior and senior members. Meetings are normally held fortnightly in our Hall though this year; however, no meetings took place after mid-March.

### **First Bible Class**

The Bible class is held in our Hall during the latter part of the morning service on alternate Sundays. It is for children of 11yrs + and has an attendance of up to 5. Meetings halted mid-March due to Covid restrictions.

### **Adult Ministry**

#### **Home Groups**

Home groups are held in members' homes on any one of three nights in the week, for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. A home group aimed at young adults has been established. They provide an opportunity for teaching and Bible study in an informal and friendly environment. Home groups are geared to equip the people of God for the work of God and this is done by the reading of his word, the use of good teaching materials, worshipping together and fellowship that bonds brothers and sisters in faith. The average overall attendance was 40 until Covid restrictions meant in-person meetings could not be held. Some groups began to meet via Zoom to enable contact and study to continue.

#### **Sunday morning prayer**

Prayer time is normally held in the prayer room prior to the morning service, with an average attendance of 7, though this did not take place after mid-March due to Covid restrictions.

#### **Prayer**

The Churches Together, early morning Tuesday prayer group, which had met each week around different Churches for many years, moved to The Edge and changed the meeting time in March 2020 to Wednesdays at 1pm. After only 2 meetings the Covid restrictions came into place and the meetings continued by Zoom from 1 to 2pm on a weekly basis for the remainder of the year with an attendance of around 10 to 12 people.

The 'Number 50' Inter-Church group, which meets twice a month on Thursdays from 10 to 12 noon, to pray for the town and community, also continued to meet by Zoom from April with attendance around 7 people.

#### **Prayer Ministry Team**

The team, of up to 16 persons, meets periodically for training and fellowship. In turn, members of the team provide prayer ministry in Church immediately after each morning service and at other times as required. This was not possible after

mid-March due to Covid restrictions although members can receive prayer by telephone.

#### Friendship Circle

The Circle is for our senior members and meets each month from October – April in the Hall at mid-day, for fellowship and food and often a guest speaker on a topic of interest. The normal attendance is 20. No meetings took place after February due to Covid restrictions and in the absence of a pre-Christmas function, a small Christmas gift was distributed to members instead.

#### Friends First (P.W.)

The Friends First meeting schedule is each month in the Hall from September to April. Financial donations are used to support PCI PW projects. Normal attendance is 20. No meetings took place after February due to Covid restrictions and the special springtime Church service followed by lunch was not held.

#### Choir and Worship team

The Church choir, made up of some 15 persons, meets twice a month for practice led by our Music Co-ordinator. In addition to the music, there is fun and companionship. The choir joins in worship at morning services. Special choir music and solos are rendered at services to mark Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We also have a Worship team, of 5 or more persons, and can call on members of this team to lead the praise along with the Choir at services. The choir is backed by 4 or more persons on keyboard, drums, flute and stringed instruments. After mid-March the choir did not practice nor participate in services of worship due to Covid restrictions. Members of the worship team recorded music remotely for the online services and when meeting in person resumed, leading praise was restricted to one musician and one singer.

#### Technical team

A technical team of 4 persons provides the amplification of sound through the audio system; and image projection onto walls and screens. When Church services were suspended in March, the team ensured our worship was able to continue by recording services and up loading them to be watched on line. Live streaming began in December.

#### Bowling Club

The bowling club schedule is to meet weekly, Wednesday evenings, in the Hall with matches for members, matches against visiting teams, and an inter-Church match with St Patrick's and Edengrove. Attendance of members in normal times is 20. The club was unable to meet after mid March due to Covid restrictions.

#### Creative Worship Group

The creative worship group meets bi- monthly in our Hall, and additionally as required for special events. The group meets to pray and listen, seeking to facilitate God communicating to us through visual and artistic media. The average attendance is 9. In-person meetings weren't possible after March 2020 due to Covid restrictions but the group stayed in contact and decorated the church building at Harvest and Christmas.



### Flowers

We maintain a “flowers rota” and when church was open, a person or a family provided flowers in the sanctuary as a visible demonstration of the beauty of creation.

### Foodbank

The Foodbank is open each week to distribute food from our church to those in need. This is an initiative supported by other churches in the town. The service remained open during lockdown with changed working practices to protect volunteers and recipients. The impact of COVID19 pandemic and lockdown resulted in an increased demand for support from the Foodbank. In the year to end-December 2020, the total number of meals provided was 18,325 – an almost 200% increase on 2019 when 6,500 meals were distributed. The stock in the Foodbank store is replenished by donations of food and by purchases of food, paid for by the very generous financial contributions of supporters.

### Meals Ministry

A volunteer runs a meals ministry to support members in need at a particular time.

### **Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees, covering administration duties, providing catering, helping with organizations, working at the Foodbank and all of the other activities that come with Church life.

### **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 organized 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 organizations, 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 weekly and monthly freewill and other offerings. There were 191 contributors during the year [213 in 2019] donating a total of £69,847.60 (£ 78,856.30 in 2019)

The Total Income of the congregation during the year 2020 was £135,507.55, compared to £137,248.09 in 2019. Total expenditure in 2020 was £121,516.13 compared to £133,125.44 in 2019.

### **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) 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 Kirk Session at a meeting on 09 09 2021 and signed on its behalf by Minister and Clerk of Session.

Signed            Rev Dario Leal  
09 09 2021

Signed Mrs Jill McKee