

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BALLYNAHINCH

A CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended
31 December 2023

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

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; Ann Armstrong, Joanne McFadzean.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister:	Rev Dario Leal
Clerk of Session:	Mr. Brian McKee
Treasurer:	Dr. Tom Morrow
Children, Youth and Family Worker	Mrs. Heather Anthony

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 generally held monthly with a summer break, however a minimum of 2 Kirk Session meetings per annum are 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. 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 attend. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on *circa* five occasions during the year. All those who have been baptised, 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 group – 'First Steps'*
- *Sunday School – 'First Kids'*
- *Creche – Sunday morning*
- *Bible class*
- *Youth Programme – 'First Youth'*
- *'Friends First' Presbyterian women*
- *Home Groups - Small group ministry for discipleship*
- *Creative Worship Group -*
- *Bowling Club*
- *Friendship Circle for senior members – 'Whatever Wednesday's'*

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11 am. Special services of worship are conducted during Holy week, at Harvest and at Christmas. Special All Age Services are also held regularly.

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 also part of an inter-Church prayer group in Ballynahinch, via Zoom, on a Wednesday afternoon.

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 conduct funerals of congregational members, to give thanks for faithful service and seek to comfort those who have experienced the loss of a loved one.

At 31 December 2023 there were 158 communicant members and 147 families connected with the congregation. The weekly attendance at morning worship, was typically 70-100 persons.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited by the minister or elders.

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); Alpha courses where we host and/or participate in the courses. We support and engage in these areas of Mission with prayer, voluntary manpower and finance.

At Halloween we organise a 'Light Party' for the congregation and local community, to bring the Gospel alternative to the usual children's parties or traditions held outside the church at this time of year.

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 held annually in August is supported by teams of young people including young leaders from the congregation. These teams deliver programmes geared to children and teenagers as well as providing socially responsible, practical assistance to members of the community. The Edge also utilising our Hall building for some of their weekly programmes including the P7 Drop in every Wednesday afternoon with approximately 40 children each week.

Our Halls are also used by the local Scouting and Guiding organisations. Scouting includes Cubs, Beavers and Squirrels.

Similarly, the Guiding organizations, comprising senior Guides. At Christmas, they organize a "Giving Tree" donating gifts, which are provided by members of the congregation, to children in less fortunate circumstances in the locality, distributed by Social Services.

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.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and one of the ruling elders. This representation provides an important link between the congregation and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and a nominated ruling elder are entitled to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in June.

Property

Small scale, routine maintenance to property was carried out during the year; There were no major building projects during the year.

Organisations

Children's Ministry

First Steps

First Steps is a pre- school ministry that takes place each week in the Church 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 up to 20 children and 16 adults.

Sunday morning crèche

Crèche is held during our Sunday morning worship service in the Hall to support parents with very young children who wish to avail of the facility, enabling them to be part of the Worship Service.

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 4 - 10.

Youth Ministry

We have a dedicated youth ministry for junior and senior young people, meeting Sunday Evening with special events during the year. Numbers averaged 15. We encourage attendance at the Presbytery's Down Youth events, and the Ballynahinch Churches Together Youth Event which meets once a month.

First Bible Class

The Bible class is held in our Hall during the latter part of the morning service on Sundays. It is for children of 11yrs + and has an attendance of up to 8.

Adult Ministry

Home Groups

Home groups are held in members' homes on any one of three nights in the week (Mon – Weds), for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. 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 in the Bible, the use of good

teaching materials, worshipping together and fellowship that bonds brothers and sisters in faith. The average overall attendance was up to 40 attendees.

Sunday morning prayer

Prayer time is normally held in the prayer room prior to the morning service, with an average attendance of up to 7.

Prayer

We encourage participation in the Churches Together Prayer meeting by Zoom on Wednesdays, 1.00-2.00pm.

Whatever Wednesday

Every Wednesday morning the Hall is open for anyone who wants to drop in for a chat, share hobbies etc. Senior members are especially encouraged to come along

Friends First (P.W.)

The Friends First meeting schedule is each month in the Hall from September to April with an organised programme around an annual theme. Financial donations are used to support PCI PW projects. Normal attendance is up to 20.

Worship Team

We have a worship team, which leads the praise on a rota basis each Sunday morning

Technical Team

A technical team provides the amplification of sound through the audio system, and image projection screens.

Bowling Club

The bowling club schedule is to meet weekly with a summer break, Wednesday evenings, in the Hall with matches for members, and matches against visiting teams. There would be approximately 30 members.

Creative Worship Group

The creative worship group meets as required for special events, e.g. Easter harvest and Christmas, to provide visual opportunity to express worship in and outside the Church building.

Flowers

We maintain a "flowers rota" whereby , a person or a family provides flowers in the sanctuary as a visible demonstration of the beauty of creation.

Foodbank

The Foodbank is open each week to distribute food to those in need. This is an initiative supported by other churches in the town and organisations in the wider Ballynahinch area. In the year to end-December 2023, the number of people seeking help was 3,862 and the total number of meals provided was

34,958. 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.

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 running and leading organisations and groups, working at the Foodbank and all of the other activities that are part of Church life and community.

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 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 123 contributors during the year [159 in 2022] donating a total of £84,882 (£84,677 in 2022)

The Total Income of the congregation during the year 2023 was £154,023, compared to £178,490 in 2022. Total expenditure in 2023 was £168,539 compared to £149,958 in 2022.

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 via email on 31/10/2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Brian McKee

Brian McKee
Clerk of Session