

Shore Street Presbyterian Church

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended

31st December 2023

Registered With the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC105199

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

Reference and Administrative Details

Shore Street Presbyterian Church
1 Warren Road
Donaghadee
Co Down
BT21 0DS

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105199)

Charity Trustees

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

Rev Graeme Fowles	Mr Nigel Montgomery
Mr David Carson	Mr Jim Pollock
Mr Thomas Cheevers	Mr Gordon Semple
Mr Alan Steele	Mr Maurice McAuley
Mr Jim Hill	Mr Gareth Bell
Mr Bryan Johnston	Mr David Wilson
Mr Denzil Morrow	

Principal Office Bearers

Minister:	Rev Graeme Fowles
Clerk of Session:	Mr Jim Pollock
Chair of Church Committee:	Minister
Hon. Church Secretary:	Mrs Gillian Pollock
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr Stephen Jamison

Independent Examiner

Mr William McAdam, Stanley Woods & Company,
Certified Accountants
Alexander House,
49/51 Church Street
Newtownards BT23 4AN.

Bankers

Ulster Bank Ltd
Unit 13, Springhill Shopping Centre,
Bangor BT19 1ND

Solicitors

Russell & Co. Solicitors
11 Lower Mary Street
Newtownards, Co Down
BT23 4JJ

Structure & 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 congregations. 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 approximately 10 times a year.

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. Shore Street Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee has been assigned to the Ards 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 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 third 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

Shore Street Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee 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 its members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

Mission and Vision Statement

Shore Street Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee has adopted the following statement to describe its Mission and Purpose:

- Our Mission and our Passion: To see everyone in Donaghadee and beyond become fruitful disciples of Jesus.
- Our Goal: To delight God's heart, enjoy God's Presence and glorify God's name in everything.
- This statement is subject to review and change under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and God's Word as found in Scripture

Core Values

We aim to achieve our Mission and Vision by the adoption of the following core values:

- Welcoming to all
- Community
- Generosity
- Missional
- Worship

This current vision statement and values are being reviewed in 2024. We do not foresee any changes in the core principles, although some new phrasing may be applied.

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 two stated occasions, with other 'casual' times, during the years. All those who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are welcome to the Lord's Supper. The congregation has a wide range of organisations providing Spiritual, Social and Recreational activities for all ages within the congregation. These are listed further in this document.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

The congregation normally met for worship each Sunday at 9:30am, 11.00 am. and 1st & 3rd Sunday at 7.00pm. The evening services varied during the month with a Healing Service on the first Sunday and a teaching service on the third Sunday. Following on from the impact of the Covid years, we continue to stream Sunday worship through Facebook and YouTube. During the week the church provides a prayer and Bible study group and some small groups which meet in personal homes.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life through the Sacrament of Baptism - 1 baptism is recorded. We also conducted 5 marriage services and gave thanks for faithful service and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 256 communicant members and 431 families connected with the congregation. Numbers gathering in person remain consistent with the online presence being difficult to gauge with the fact that one view online may have more than one person viewing it, e.g. we stream into the local care homes. Through the year we have seen numbers decline slightly due to a number of funerals through the congregation.

Pastoral care

The church places a high value on pastoral care for its members. Such care is offered to all members of the congregation and to the local community if a person approaches the church for help. The church concentrates such provision in two areas; prayer ministry and home visits. The provision is shared among the minister, the Deaconess, a retired minister, the prayer ministry team, the elders and members of the congregation. As well as visits from the staff of the church, members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited by other members of the congregation as part of the "Pastoral Care Team" and by district elders. Recently bereaved members are also cared for by the pastoral team of ministers and members. The church does not provide counselling services. If, during a pastoral visit, it is observed that counselling might help, the pastoral visitor may encourage the recipient to seek help from an appropriate counsellor.

Mission and Outreach

We believe in the "priesthood of all believers" and as such we encourage a full level of every member ministry. Each person is to engage in Christian mission, from the spiritual to the physical. To this end we are an open people who will welcome all people in as they are to introduce them to the transformative work of Jesus. Some specific ministries are:

Food bank: since starting the food bank has reached numerous households with parcels through the year, this is coupled with a specific delivery through the local schools for families at Christmas time. The number of referrals is growing every month.

Coffee with Kids: this weekly meeting for those with preschool toddlers or babies, is open to all people from any background. Following the difficulties of lockdown it has been encouraging to see the numbers return with many new faces using this time to connect with other parents/carers and let the young ones learn how to socialise after months of isolation.

YADA: The congregation of Shore Street are also encouraged to think beyond their own shores. To this end we are actively involved in a mission in Burundi. This is to give people a better world view and apply their understanding of needs to people near and far.

Uniformed organisations: The Girls' and Boys' Brigades have been running within the town for decades and are widely recognised for the work they do in bringing up young girls to women and young boys to men. Families from across the town, from various backgrounds, are more than welcome to bring their children to the relevant organisations.

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, assist 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.

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 congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders normally attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

Our staff also attend online conferences during the year to help in personal growth.

Property

The Church Property Sub-committee regularly reviews the fabric of its suite of buildings and brings recommendations to the Church Committee for work required to the premises. The church undertakes preventative maintenance and repairs any damaged property or equipment on a timely basis. There were no major works undertaken in this year.

Organisations

The wide range of organisations at Shore Street are listed below and have welcomed the return to a more regular schedule from mid-2023.

Youth Fellowship - teaching group for teens

Sunday Schools - Bible teaching for the youngest children to the younger teens

Coffee & Chat - a Monday morning meeting for chat and fellowship

GIFT - Growing in Faith together - a monthly meeting on Monday evenings for women of all ages to come together in support and prayer for one another

Girls' Brigade - open to girls up to the age of 18

PW - a ladies group meeting on a Wednesday evening and afternoon, hearing various speakers and social topics

Men's Fellowship - bi-monthly gatherings on Wednesday mornings for all men to share with one another, support one another and learn more about the life and work of the Church.

Home Groups - various groups meeting to help each other in their faith, to support one another at spiritual, emotional and social levels.

Prayer & Bible Study - weekly Wednesday evening meeting

Boys' Brigade - open to boys up to the age of 18

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.

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). Our Food Bank and 'Coffee with Kids' programme are a concrete demonstration of God's love into our community.

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. A full review under the GDPR legislation was undertaken with all necessary measures put in place.

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.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 272 contributors during the calendar year 2023 donating a total of £172,804 (£176,985 in previous year, 2022)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £316,166, compared to £374,293 in the previous year. The main reasons for the fall of c£58k was the receipt of two bequests in 2022 that weren't repeated in 2023 (c£40k), a fall in giving to a new building project that was paused in 2023 (£16.5k fall) a reduction in some restricted giving such as the World Development Appeal (c£2k fall), Foodbank (c£5k fall) and the absence of a Moderators Appeal in 2023 (£6.5k fall). This was in part partially mitigated by an increase in donations to the Repairs & Maintenance fund of c£12k during 2023.

Total expenditure decreased from £327,837 in 2022 to £232,209 this year mainly as a result of Manse repairs carried out in 2022, following the retirement of our previous Minister, not being repeated in 2023 coupled with a reduction in staffing costs due to having one less staff member during all of 2023 compared to most of 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 exceeds £250,000 but does not exceed £500,000, the Trustees have considered that an audit is not required but an independent examination of the financial accounts be carried under Section 65(9) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. Under the same applicable law the accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis in accordance with SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) and have been independently examined as such.

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 13 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Proposer

Second

Maurice McAuley

Nigel Montgomery