

## Ballygowan Presbyterian Church

### Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2024

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

#### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

##### Objectives and aims

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of the Christian religion.

The Ballygowan congregation of the Presbyterian Church 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 members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission statement reads:

**'for the glory of God, Ballygowan Presbyterian Church desires to see the making and maturing of disciples of Jesus Christ, this through worship, fellowship, service and evangelism'**

Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- remains relevant to people of this time and place.

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another.
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.

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.

##### Significant activities

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is usually observed on three 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 meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School / Bible Class
- Youth Club / Young Men's Group / Girls' Group
- Midweek Fellowship / Life Groups / Energise
- Presbyterian Women's Group
- Parent and Toddlers
- Boys Brigade
- Girls Brigade
- Bowling Club
- Badminton Club
- Various other groups

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#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Public benefit**

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 organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

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

##### **Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with our organisations and other church activities. We continue to have robust child protection policies and procedures in place.

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#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Ministry team**

The ministry team is led by our minister the Rev Nick Cooper.

Andrew Martin, our student assistant, was installed in Loughgall and Tartaraghan Churches in November 2024.

Pastoral care and visitation is supported by Robin Fairbairn our pastoral care worker.

##### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation usually meets for worship each Sunday at 11:30am and for half the year in the evening at 6:45pm. Average attendance at Sunday morning worship is around 125. During the week there are opportunities for members to meet together again for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular Sunday services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at 2 Sacraments of Baptism and 1 Dedication and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year. 5 marriage services were conducted in 2024.

At 31 December 2024 there were 296 communicant members and 480 families connected with the congregation, 75 of whom do not contribute financially.

##### **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, elders or by the congregation's pastoral care worker.

##### **Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation normally reaches out to our community regularly through the work of our part-time pastoral care worker and through the work of our various action teams who organize regular events e.g. Café Church, Family Fun Days, Holiday Bible Club, Cinema nights, Concerts, picnics, trips and other special events.

At an international level the congregation previously completed a substantial fund-raising effort to help refurbish the outpatient and emergency departments of Kiwoko Hospital in rural Uganda - a Christian hospital we have developed strong links with. During 2024 we continued to sponsor rural eye clinics from Kiwoko Hospital and it is anticipated that this sponsorship will continue year on year. Another overseas mission focus is in helping encourage and support the local church and villagers in a small village (Budai) in Moldova. A team from our Church went out in 2024.

The church continues to make regular donations to other various external missions and agencies and this continued in 2024.

The congregation also 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 financially supports congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

##### **Presbytery**

The congregation is 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.

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#### General Assembly

The meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast.

#### Property

The congregation continues to maintain its buildings and facilities.

#### Finances

The trustees give thanks for the ongoing support of so many who continue to give financially to the work of the Church. However, our financial situation continues to give us concern as there has been no increase in the number of contributing families.

#### Organisations

The table below gives a brief summary of the organisations and average attendances.

Organisation	Age Range	Frequency of meeting	Average attendance	% non members
Ballygowan PW Group	45-90	Monthly (Sept-May) Bi-Weekly	25-30	3
Midweek Fellowship	40-90	(Sept-June)	15-20	0
Badminton Club	18+	Weekly (Sept-Apr)	15	66
Girls Brigade	3-Adult	Weekly (Sept-Apr)	Sat 21, Wed 90-110	unknown
Bowling Club	18-90	Weekly (Sept-Apr)	24	50
Boys Brigade	3-18	Weekly (Sept-Apr)	90-100	70
Choir	45-80	Twice monthly before (Easter, Harvest, Christmas)	18	0
Energise	40-80	Twice monthly (Sept-May)	14	7
Parents & Toddlers	0-4	Weekly (Sept-June)	30-35	80
Life Groups	18-90	Twice monthly (Sept-Apr)	20	0
Female Focus	40-65	Alternate months	12	0
Sunday School & Bible Class	3-18	Weekly (Sept - June)	35-40	0
Youth Club	11-18	Junior YC, once per month, Senior YC twice per month Sept-June)	Junior 40 Senior 20	13
Evening Services	6-85	Weekly (Oct-May)	25	0
Cafe Church	3-85	Twice Yearly	80	10
Catering Corps	18-80	As required	21	0
Young Mens/Girls Groups	11-18	Twice monthly (Sept-June)	20	10

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#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Reserves policy**

The Congregational Committee have examined the Church's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the Church. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the Church should be between 3 and 6 months of the expenditure.

The reserves are needed to meet the working capital needs of the Church and the Congregational Committee are confident they would be able to continue the current activities of the Church in the event of a drop in funding. At the year end the level of reserves available to the Church is £568,386. £525,396 of this is represented by investment in fixed assets. The remaining £42,990 is sufficient to cover the 3 months reserves policy.

At 31 December 2024 the Church also held £48,360 of restricted funds which have been provided for the purposes specified in note 15.

##### **Review of the year**

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 9 to 22. The results show unrestricted net outgoing resources for the year of -£12,703 (2023 -£12,743).

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

The Church plans continuing the activities outlined within the Annual Report in the forthcoming years.

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **The Kirk Session**

The charity trustees of the Ballygowan congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 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 the 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 and beyond. 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 (Rev Nick Cooper) 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 every two months and sometimes more frequently if 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. Six elders were ordained to Session on 19 May 2024, Mrs Heather Alexander, Mr David Cleland, Miss Jennifer Gabbey, Mr Andrew Gilbert, Mrs Sharon McCloy and Ms Wendy Patterson.

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#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **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. Ballygowan 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 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.

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

##### **Registered Charity number**

CN105295

##### **Principal address**

14 Church Hill  
Ballygowan  
Co Down  
BT23 6JA

##### **Trustees**

Rev N Cooper  
Mr R Burgess  
Mr S Cleland  
Mrs S Cleland  
Mr J Gabbey (Emeritus 04/06/2024)  
Mrs M Gibson  
Mr R Gibson  
Mrs J Gribbon (resigned 29/8/24)  
Dr R Harper  
Mr M Hiles (resigned 29/8/24)  
Mr J Johnston (Emeritus 08/04/2024)  
Mr M Lyons  
Mr D McKee (Clerk)  
Mr J McMordie (Emeritus 04/05/2024)  
Mr M McMullen  
Mr J Megraw  
Mr D Milligan  
Mr J Ralph  
Mr C Scott  
Mr H Scott  
Ms S McCloy (appointed 19/5/24)  
Ms W Patterson (appointed 19/5/24)  
Ms J Gabbey (appointed 19/5/24)  
Mr D Cleland (appointed 19/5/24)  
Mr A Gilbert (appointed 19/5/24)  
Ms H Alexander (appointed 19/5/24)

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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Independent Examiner**

Chartered Accountants Ireland  
McIlveen Howard Limited  
Chartered Accountants  
169a Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3HZ

**Bankers**

Danske Bank  
Donegal Square West  
Belfast  
BT1 6JS

**Solicitors**

Hewitt & Gilpin  
Thomas House  
14-16 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 7GA

**Minister**

Rev. Dr. Nick Cooper

**Clerk of Session**

David McKee

**Secretary to Congregational Committee**

Sharon McCloy

**Church Treasurer**

Wendy Patterson

**Independent Examiner**

McIlveen Howard Limited have been re-appointed as Independent Examiners for the ensuing year.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 20/8/2025 and signed on its behalf by:

N Cooper  
Trustee