

First Garvagh Presbyterian Church a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Trustees Annual Report For the year ended 31 December 2024

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NI105322

FIRST GARVAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
For the year ended 31 December 2024

The Trustees present their Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

First Garvagh congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
31 Kilrea Road, Garvagh BT51 5LR

Registered charity in Northern Ireland (NI 105322).

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. M. Donald	Mr. A. Galbraith
Mrs. B. Glass	Mr. D. Gurney
Mrs. A. Henry	Mr. S. McKee
Miss L. Paul	Mr. J. Moody
Mr. M. Campbell	Mr. D. Torrens
Mr. W. Doherty	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. M. Donald
Clerk of Session	Mr. A. Galbraith
Secretary	Mr. I. Matthew retired 2 February 2024 Mr A Wilson appointed 2 February 2024
Treasurer	Mr. W. Henry

AUDITOR

Stevenson & Wilson
22-30 Broadway Avenue
BALLYMENA
BT43 7AA

BANKERS

Ulster Bank Limited
30-32 Catherine Street
LIMAVADY
BT49 9DB

SOLICITORS

W.B. Thompson & Co
36 Catherine Street
LIMAVADY
BT49 9DB

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE 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 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 at least twice 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 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. Upon election, the Elders are subject to in-house training pertinent to their role.

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 Garvagh congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Coleraine and Limavady 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.

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DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

First Garvagh 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 purpose is 'Sharing and Serving Jesus Together', by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. 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;
- is 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.

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 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 meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School, Bible Class & Crèche
- Presbyterian Women
- Parents & Toddlers Group
- Bowling Club
- Time for You - Seniors Group
- Girls' Brigade
- Boys' Brigade
- Good News Club
- Saturday Night Live – Youth Club
- Youth Fellowship
- Holiday Bible Club

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.45 am and fortnightly at 7.00 pm. During the week the Bible Study and Home Groups provide an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at 1 Sacrament of Baptism and we sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year. There was one marriage service conducted this year.

At 31 December 2024 there were 243 communicant members, including 4 new full members and 190 families are connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 120.

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 and elders. DVD and CD recordings of the services are distributed to the housebound. A live stream of services is available along with Zoom Bible Studies and Prayer meetings.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to witness for Christ through the organisations and activities we provide within the church halls: Parents & Toddlers, Good News Club, Girls' Brigade, Saturday Night Live, Holiday Bible Club and Time for You. These organisations draw people from the local community. The provision of a minibus enables us to reach out to children from local housing areas who would probably not attend our activities. As a neighbour to Trinity House residential care home, run by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we support the staff and residents in many practical ways including the provision of the minibus to bring residents to church and take them out on day trips. Each month we also support the local foodbank.

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

The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals. We also support financially and prayerfully James and Julia McMaster serving with Unevangelised Fields Mission in the West of Ireland, and Rev Brian Wilson serving in the Peter Achimugu College of Theology in Nigeria.

The congregation also supported: Presbyterian Children's Society, European Missionary Fellowship, Ukraine aid organisations, the Leprosy Mission, and the Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal, amongst others.

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Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or 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 were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

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 committee undertakes preventative maintenance and repairs any damaged property or equipment on a timely basis.

Organisations

Sunday School 'SonSeekers', Bible Class 'CY' & Crèche have around 40 children and young people in attendance each Sunday. The children have a time of worship, follow a bible lesson, make crafts and fundraise for various mission projects along with supporting a sponsored child. A big breakfast is a popular feature of the programme. Crèche can have up to 8 infants on a Sunday morning.

Presbyterian Women meets monthly on a Tuesday evening. The PW is a fellowship group made up of around 30 ladies from the congregation. The program consists of visiting speakers, supporting missions and a devotional time. An annual church service and dinner are part of the programme.

Tots & Co. Each Wednesday morning our main hall is used by our parents and toddlers' group-15-20 children and their carers are regular in attendance. Tea, toast, cakes and fruit are served at break time. Easter and Christmas celebrations are part of the programme.

Girls' Brigade meets weekly on a Friday evening. It is a Christ-centred uniformed organisation with around 60 girls in attendance of primary and secondary school age. A program of badge work and bible study is followed, along with fun and games and the occasional outing. The program begins with an enrolment service and concludes with a parents' evening.

Boys' Brigade is a shared organisation with Main Street Presbyterian and St. Paul's Church of Ireland. The Boys' Brigade meets weekly on a Friday evening. It is a Christ-centred uniformed organisation with around 60 boys in attendance of primary and secondary school age. A program of badge work and bible study is followed, along with fun and games and the occasional outing. The program begins with an enrolment service and concludes with a parents' evening.

Bowling Club meets weekly on a Monday evening and consists of around 20 members. Competitions are held within the club and they also have several external competition fixtures.

Time for You meets on Tuesdays on a monthly basis and provides a program of events and activities for our senior members, along with visitors and friends. There are around 30 members. Speakers, outings and lunches make up the program. Each gathering concludes with an epilogue and prayer.

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Saturday Night Live – Youth Club meets on Saturday evenings each fortnight. Up to 20 young people aged P7+ come along and most are not members of First Garvagh. Sports such as football, volleyball, basketball and uni-hoc take place in the main hall. The minor hall is the venue for table tennis, pool/snooker and X-Box. The choir room is used for further computer games, TV, board games and crafts. Each evening concludes with an epilogue and prayer. There have also been outings to play ten-pin bowling and watch ice-hockey.

Holiday Bible Club runs during the second week of August from Monday to Friday in the evenings. An action-packed programme of bible teaching, songs, crafts, snacks, puppets, fun and games is followed with around 80 children in attendance from across the Garvagh community.

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.

Plans for future periods

The Trustees do not envisage any change in activities in future periods. The Charity is committed to its ongoing Mission as detailed above.

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 of 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 advertisements, 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.

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PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT (cont'd)

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 Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 274 contributors during the year (275 in previous year, 2023) donating a total of £93,908 (£88,465 in previous year, 2023).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £711,846 compared to £257,953 in the previous year. The main reason for the change was increased donations to the Renovation Fund. The success of this fundraising campaign has enabled the Charity to further progress the renovation project in line with the expected timeframe.

Total expenditure decreased from £190,054 to £159,034, with a further £517,225 expenditure on the renovation project being capitalised. The Renovation Project which commenced in the year and is due to complete in October 2025.

The Trustees are pleased that the financial position of the Charity remains robust as shown on the balance sheet.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregations and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- Make judgments 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 a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the funds will continue in operation.

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RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (cont'd)

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregations and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2019)". 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.

GOING CONCERN

The activities of the congregation are dependent on ongoing contributions from its members. The Trustees are of the opinion that the congregation has sufficient resources at the date of approval of these financial statements to meet commitments which will arise in the year from the date of signing this report and subject to the continuing support from members to fund on an ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments

RESERVES POLICY

Total reserves of the Charity amounted to £2,407,916 at the balance sheet date. This amount is held in unrestricted, restricted and endowment funds in the amounts of £173,880, £2,125,235 and £108,801 respectively.

The Trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves that it is appropriate to hold taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the policy of the Trustees to hold at least 12 month's normal expenditure from unrestricted funds. At the year-end unrestricted bank balances were £159,497 which represents a higher level of reserves. The Trustees, however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent on the ongoing financial support of members.

RISK REVIEW

A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of ongoing financial support from members. These risks are mitigated by the Trustees, and the Congregational Committee, regularly monitoring the various activities of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 25th Mar 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Rev. M. Donald

Date: 5/4/2025



Mr. A. Galbraith

Date: 5/4/2025