

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's [governing document], the Charities Act 2011 and "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

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

Portstewart 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 her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purpose is to proclaim Christ to all ages, for all ages, with our lips and with our lives. *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.*

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on twelve 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 (Treasure Hunters)
- Youth Club
- Mothers and Toddlers (Little Treasures)
- Bowling Club
- Presbyterian Women
- Girls' Brigade
- Bible Study and Prayer Time
- Youth Fellowship

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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#### Achievements and performance

##### Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 10.30am and a Sunday Evening Praise and Prayer Service is held twice monthly. During the week the Bible Study provides 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 with one Sacrament of Baptism and gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 126 communicant members and 237 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at morning worship is 90.

##### 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 one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

##### Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to support and equip all members to share their Christian faith, on a daily basis through their own lives and interaction with family, neighbours, work colleagues and during leisure activity. Some members have been involved in short-term mission teams throughout the country and overseas. Retiring collections and offerings were also taken up for appeals throughout the year.

On a wider basis, our congregation supports the United Appeal fund. United Appeal provides financial support at home and overseas, assisting 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 area of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care. The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal and any 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 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 2022.

##### Property

Expenditure of £8,914 was incurred to maintain our fabric and buildings.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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#### Organisations

We briefly summarise the activity of our organisations below:

Sunday School/Treasure Hunters – Weekly on a Sunday;

Bible Class – weekly on a Sunday;

Youth Fellowship – weekly on a Sunday;

Youth Club (Blaze and Chill) – weekly on Saturday during school term times;

Mothers & toddlers – weekly on Wednesday and Thursdays;

Bible study – weekly on Thursdays;

Presbyterian Women – monthly on 2nd Tuesday;

Girls' Brigade – weekly on Wednesday;

Bowling Club – weekly on Mondays and Thursdays

#### 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.

#### Financial review

During the current financial year the church generated a deficit of £20,073 (2022 Deficit: £46,903). The deficit is primarily the result of the Salary cost of Youth Workers. It has been agreed that these are funded by our reserves and kept under review. As at the year end the balance sheet also showed healthy net assets of £62,221 (2022: £82,294). The congregation also holds externally managed investments of £140,251 (2022: £134,130).

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

#### Structure, governance and management

The church is an unincorporated charity.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr J Wright

Mr B Hall

Mr N Lyttle

Miss J Ross

Mr D Turbitt

Mr P O'Neill

Mr J Jack

Miss R Hamilton

Mr S Moore

Mr A Friar

Ms H Hamilton

Mr R Gawne

Mrs C Martin

Rev S Morrow

J Watters

S Armitage-McPeak

H Davies

(Appointed 24 March 2024)

(Appointed 24 March 2024)

(Appointed 24 March 2024)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company.

#### **The Kirk Session**

The 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 ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held on the third Tuesday of each month excluding July and August.

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. Portstewart 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.



**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023***

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**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 organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

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

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

  
Mr R Gawne  
Trustee

28 October 2024