

## FIRST AHOGHILL CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

### TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

First Ahoghill congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
274 Galgorm Road,  
Ahoghill  
Ballymena  
BT42 1JU

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105602)

### CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Thomas Boyd	Desmond Kernohan	Joseph McMullan
Roy Boyd	Joseph Kernohan	Garreth Mills
James Crabbe	Robert Logan	Rev Mark Neilly
John Crawford	Robert McCord	David Shaw
James Erwin	William McDonald	Leslie Shaw
Brian Gilmer	James McDowell	Ian Small
Trevor Gilmer	Steven McDowell	James Small
William Graham	Gavin McFarland	Samuel Small
David Hayes	John McKay	James Turtle
William Hill	Desmond McMillen	Roy Wilson

### PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. Mark Neilly
Clerk of Session	Mr Robert McCord
Treasurer	Mr Garreth Mills

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

John Finnegan  
Potter Finnegan Limited  
Unit 25 The Courtyard Business Park  
190 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 1HL

### BANKERS

Danske Bank  
1-2 Broadway  
Ballymena  
BT43 7AA

### SOLICITORS

Sara Edge Solicitors  
Ballymoney Road  
Ballymena  
BT43 5BY

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

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least 4 times per 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. First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ballymena 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 a 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**

First Ahoghill 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.

First Ahoghill Congregation's earnest desire is to reach out in love to the village and community; to challenge those who do not yet know the true meaning of – John 3: 16.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

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.

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**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on four 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, prayer times and has a wide range of organisations.

- Sunday School
- Senior Bible Class, Connect
- Midweek Meeting for Bible Study and Prayer
- Small Groups
- Boys' Brigade
- Girls' Brigade
- Mothers and Toddlers
- After School Club
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Fellowship
- Bowling Club
- Olive Branch for senior citizens
- First for Care
- Ladies Bible Study

Members of the local community are encouraged to get involved and are made most welcome.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**Worship and prayer**

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday morning at 11:30am and 6.15pm every third Sunday evening and visitors are made welcome to the services. On Sunday evenings we share worship with our sister congregations in Trinity and Brookside. During the week, a mid-week Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, study of the scriptures and for a time of corporate prayer. Prayer cells also meet at times each week.

As well as our in person and on-line services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life with 6 Sacraments of Baptism, and we conducted 1 marriage service. There were 11 funeral services and we sought to comfort those who had been bereaved.

At 31 December 2023 there were 294 communicant members and 368 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 330.

**Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who were unable to attend church due to sickness or age were visited or contacted on a regular basis by the minister, district elder, pastoral visitor or by one of the congregation's care team. Some also received DVDs of the services.

**Mission and outreach**

First Ahoghill has a Missionary and Outreach monthly envelope and the offerings are administered by a committee who support various missionaries and those who have gone out from our congregation. They support twenty home and overseas missions and missionaries. These include London City, Belfast City and Irish Missions, Bible Society, Release International, Asia Link, Wycliffe, Hamsayeh, Majed Tinawii and Scripture Union.

Our PW supports the Home and Overseas mission and the organizations listed earlier are also all encouraged to support a mission or missionary each year.

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The congregation also supports, by a monthly envelope, the United Appeal 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 meetings of Presbytery by our minister and/or representative elder. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

**General Assembly**

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

**Property**

There was no major expenditure from the property fund.

**Organisations**

**Sunday school**

Sunday school and Bible class met each Sunday at 10:15am. There are 89 young people on the roll and there are 14 teachers and helpers. Year 10 and above now attend our new Connect groups. The teachers follow an agreed programme and the children learn catechism and memory verses. There was no outing organized but there was a Holiday Bible Club.

**Youth**

Our full-time youth coordinator worked with all our youth organizations, young people, and youth within the local community.

Connect meet on Friday and Sunday evenings at 8pm. Friday nights have 70-100 young people on the roll with 8-12 leaders, Sunday nights has an attendance of 20-25 with 6 leaders.

An after-school club ran each Tuesday during school term with 15/20 children on the roll.

**Presbyterian Women**

PW meets on the second Monday of the month. The 80 ladies who attend have a missionary focus and they support the Home and Overseas Mission.

**Boy's Brigade**

50 boys meet each Friday evening September – March. Anchor Boys and Junior Section meet 6:45 – 8:15. The normal BB activities of scripture, badge work and games are provided and supervised by 11 officers and helpers.

**Girl's Brigade**

74 girls meet each Thursday evening September – March. Little Stars, Explorers and juniors meet 6:15 – 7:30. Scripture, crafts, games etc. are led by 19 officers and helpers.

**Bowling Fellowship**

The Bowling Club, although not an organization under the control of Kirk Session uses our main hall and facilities. 25 members participate in the activities and compete in the Churches league and cup matches.

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**Olive Branch**

The Olive Branch meet once every month and provides afternoon teas and fellowship for our senior citizens, approx. 45 people attend with 10 involved in the preparation.

**First for Care**

12 people provide support to bereaved, sick and the elderly with visitation and meals.

**Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organizations 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).

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.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 298 contributors during the year (309 in previous year, 2022) donating a total of £139,542 (£124,152 in previous year, 2022).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £328,106 compared to £291,342 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased from £255,685 to £265,718.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (Cont'd)**

**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.

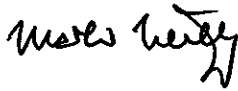
The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregations and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Funds will continue in operation.

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 2015)". 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 22 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Rev Mark Neilly  
Trustee



Robert McCord  
Trustee

