

NEWTOWNSTEWART 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 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Newtownstewart congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
43A Moyle Road
Newtownstewart
Co. Tyrone
BT78 4AP

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105616)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev JJ Boyd (Appointed 1 January 2024)	AM Kemps
RS Brown	RS Moore
N Donald	WJ Baxter (Resigned 31 December 2023)
DJ Dunbar	AW Dunbar (Deceased 16 April 2023)
RA Jack	Rev J Cowan (Resigned 31 st December 2023)

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Convenor in charge of Vacancy	Rev JJ Boyd
Clerk of Session	DJ Dunbar
Treasurer	RS Moore

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

McFarland Arnold & Co
8 Main Street
Newtownstewart
Co Tyrone
BT78 4AA

BANKERS

Danske Bank
5-7 Market Street
Omagh
BT78 1BN

SOLICITORS

McConnell & Fyffe Solicitors
21 Church Street
Omagh
BT78 1DG

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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 have 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 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.

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. Newtownstewart congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Omagh 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.

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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.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

Newtownstewart 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 statement is as follows:

- We, the congregation of Newtownstewart Presbyterian Church which is part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, seek to worship God in a manner that reflects scripture, is passionate about people and Centred in Christ. God has revealed Himself to us as our loving Heavenly Father. He has sent his Son to be our Saviour and He has granted us His Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus individually and corporately, and to lead us in His mission to the world. We seek to live out our faith through commitment:
- To God in worship
- To the Bible in obedient discipleship
- To sharing the good news of Jesus in faithful evangelism
- To the world in compassionate mission
- To one another in caring fellowship

NEWTOWNSTEWART CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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 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
- Presbyterian Women (PW)
- Bowling Club
- Badminton Club

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation has been blessed with the reappointment of Rev John Hanna as a 'Stated Supply' Minister for the year 2023. Rev Hanna works on a part-time basis, leading Sunday Worship in Newtownstewart Presbyterian Church and our joint charge, sister church in Gortin. Rev Hanna also carries out Pastoral visitation and chairs any necessary Session and Committee or other church related meetings on a Wednesday. A further 'Stated Supply' Minister, Rev Dr. Rob Craig, has been secured to take over from Rev Hanna following the conclusion of his term of office on 31st December 2023. This will provide much needed continuity to the Ministry and pastoral work of the church during 2024. The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 10.45am and for special missionary or praise services from time to time. During the COVID pandemic Sunday Services were either cancelled altogether or managed in strict accordance with Government and Presbyterian Church in Ireland guidance. Thankfully, due to the relaxation of these COVID restrictions, Sunday Services have more or less resumed to pre-COVID activities and attendance levels.

Church organisations have also resumed including Sunday School, Presbyterian Women's group and Mid-Week Bible Study / Prayer Group.

During the year 2023, one Sacrament of Baptism was conducted but no marriage services took place. Again, as a result of the relaxation of COVID restrictions it has been possible to conduct funeral services within the Church building to give thanks for faithful services and to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

As of 31 December 2023 there were 219 communicant members and 120 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 60.

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 Stated Supply Minister or the Church Elders.

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Mission and outreach

During the year the Church held a number of fellowship and outreach events, including an Autumn Mission Weekend with the surplus of funds after expenses (£287) going towards the Presbyterian Church's United Appeal for Mission. Other outreach events included a Holiday Bible Club Summer Scheme for young persons, a Praise and Pudding Evening and Praise Service featuring the Ballyclare Male Voice Choir. A very successful Coronation Tea Party held on 19 May 2023 attracted a wide and appreciative audience from the local community. A cross community Golf Tournament also proved to be very popular and successful, raising much needed funds for the church. Donations to outside bodies included £525 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, £391 to the Presbyterian Children's Society and £250 to the Child Evangelist Fellowship Organisation.

The congregation donated over £4,640 to 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 contributed over £832 to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, as well as meeting its commitments to central church funds through payment of quarterly assessments.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our Convenor and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The Convenor 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

Throughout the year, all church property has been maintained to a very high standard and the church continues to rent out the Manse property to a family who are members of the congregation. The tenancy is subject to a contract drawn up in accordance with Church House rules and regulations. The adjoining grounds, including lawns and hedges, have been regularly attended to. All Church buildings are considered fit for purpose.

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Organisations

The Bowling Club, which normally meets every Thursday evening in the main hall, has not resumed activities since the COVID lockdown but this decision is being kept under review, as is the resumption of Badminton Club activities.

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).

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.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were a total of 108 contributors during the year, down slightly on the previous year (120 in 2022), however, the level of giving increased by £2,265 to a sum of £46,919 (£44,654 in previous year, 2022)

Total income of the congregation during the year increased to £88,848 compared to £81,873 in the previous year. This represents an increase of £6,975 and reflects a continued growth in income following on the back of last year's increase of £13,363. This is a very positive trend for the church given the financial pressures faced by the members of our congregation and the wider community as a whole.

Total expenditure has shown an increase to £58,137 compared to £44,866 in 2022, an increase of £13,271, which includes a one off sum of £5,904 for supply and installing of display screens in church. This results in a surplus for the year of £30,711.

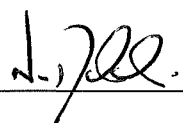
STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

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 does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

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 29/04/2024 and signed on its behalf by





Dated: 29/04/2024

Dated: 29/04/24.