

**Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church**

**a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

**Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC104268**

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
a 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 2021, including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Saintfield Road congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland: Myrtledene Road, Belfast, BT8 6GQ, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland: NIC104268

**CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Malcolm Buchanan  
Gordon Campbell  
Robert Clarke  
Iris Francey  
Andrew Hamilton  
Gavin Hamilton  
John Hamilton  
Jean McClune  
William McClune  
Alison Mullen  
Ian Mullen  
Jonny Patterson  
Lorna Rodgers  
Neil Templeton  
David Thomson

Johnny Bell  
Patrick Buchanan  
John Francey  
Eileen Hamilton  
Harold Hamilton  
Derek Henderson  
Heather Lowry  
Kevin Maguire  
Jonny McClune  
Alistair McCracken  
Heather Montgomery  
David Rice  
Alison Templeton  
Alf Thompson  
Ben Walker

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister  
Clerk of Session  
Treasurer

Rev. Ben Walker  
Dr. Alistair R. McCracken  
Mr. David Thomson FCA

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS**

Finegan Gibson Limited

**BANKERS**

Danske Bank Limited  
Donegall Square West  
Belfast  
BT1 6JS

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

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held eight times per year, monthly September to May.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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.

**Presbytery**

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's 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. Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the South Belfast 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 Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 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**

Saintfield Road 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 its members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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.

During the year, the Kirk Session commenced work on a new vision statement. A document outlining thinking on a number of broad areas was made available in June, along with three short videos, on the Church website. Several members of the congregation made useful comments and suggestions. Later in the year the Kirk Session set up four task groups to consider some issues more fully and these groups, each led by an elder but involving others who are not on Kirk Session, will report back early in 2022.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The congregation usually 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 prayer and Bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations. Other external organisations also use our church premises, and are supported by the congregation.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and the services are also broadcast through life streaming. On some Sunday evenings, and during the week, meetings for prayer are held or also live streamed. Life Groups meet in homes or in the Church for Bible Study and prayer.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

The Covid-19 situation continued to have a significant impact on the congregation. The year started with society in lockdown. At the start of the year, Sunday morning services continued to be held online, as did a number of other church activities. In-person services recommenced on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April with Districts 1- 7 and 8 – 15 coming on alternate Sundays. This arrangement operated more or less throughout the rest of the year.

At 31 December 2021 there were 286 communicant members and approximately 290 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at Sunday morning worship, before the lockdown was introduced and public worship was suspended, was approximately 230.

**Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are normally visited on a regular basis by the minister, elders or by a member of the congregation. Although physical visiting continued to be limited during the year, there has been regular contact with members, including the delivery of a number of letters.

**Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation is usually involved in many differing types of mission activity throughout the year. The Covid-19 situation meant that it wasn't possible to continue with these in the normal form. The congregation also supports workers overseas, providing financial support. On four occasions during the year distributions were made to the houses surrounding our church building. In December over 500 houses received a Christmas booklet written by our own members and highlighting some of the things going on within our church building.

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 carry out mission and outreach on a denominational basis, beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The PCI 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

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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

**Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of the Presbytery of South Belfast 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**

Usually, an elder is nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. Due to the Covid-19 situation, the General Assembly was held in October 2021, rather than in June 2021.

**Property**

Following two significant fires in July 2016, major restoration work was carried out to the church halls and the main church buildings and the new premises were officially opened in May 2018. During the year, further maintenance work on the church and the manse was carried out. Grants were received to enable the construction of a community garden.

**Organisations**

There are a range of other organisations in the church, although these were not able to meet for a large part of the year.

**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. The Trustees acknowledge, in particular, the efforts made by members in the ongoing difficult circumstances caused by Covid-19.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

**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 notice boards, 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 only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to ministers and employees who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment or, on occasion, members serving either locally or overseas. 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 and statutory guidance.



**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through Freewill Offering, together with donations to the Support Fund (specifically for mission and property) and the Restoration Fund (to pay the costs of the refurbishment of the church building following the fires in 2016). The external loans connected with the refurbishment were settled during 2021 and the Trustees and the Congregational Committee decided to close the Refurbishment Fund at the end of December 2021 by making a transfer from the General Fund.

There were approximately 230 contributors to the General Fund during the year donating a total of £132,327 (£131,093 in 2020), excluding Gift Aid.

Despite the Covid-19 restrictions and the fact that the church was not able to meet together for a considerable period, members continued to give generously. Total income of the congregation during the year was £238,471, compared to £269,920 in the previous year, although that included a bequest of £27,308. Grants of £5,063 were claimed and received.

Total expenditure was £266,960 compared to £266,274 in 2020.

**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 congregation 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 Congregation will continue in operation.

**SAINTFIELD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (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.

**POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN**

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 on-going basis, the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

**RESERVES POLICY**

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 between three and six month's normal expenditure. The Trustees also bear in mind the bank balance available and the net current asset position. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £93,512 (2019 £140,473), after clearing the outstanding deficit in the church restoration fund.

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a Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

**RISK REVIEW**

Following the fire damage, the Trustees have considered the risks around security and have enhanced the measures which were in place. A review of other major risks, including child protection and data security, 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 on-going 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.

Regular training with regard to issues such as child protection is given.

Approved by the Kirk Session on 17 February 2022 and signed on its behalf on 11 April 2022  
by:



Rev Ben Walker

Minister



David Thomson FCA

Treasurer