



Prison Fellowship  
NORTHERN IRELAND

pfni.org

# News Focus

Spring  
2024

## OFFERING HOPE & A NEW BEGINNING

### New Beginnings

The theme of the *Spring News Focus* is 'New Beginnings' and I would like to share with you about the tremendous new developments in Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland.

Christine has retired from her role as PF Administrator, and by the time you read this, a new person will have taken on the office duties. Christine did much more than administration; she was responsible for the production of *News Focus* and *Prayer Focus* and turning the amateur efforts of a Board chairman into articles that made sense!

We need the right person to take on this essential supporter communication role and expand into the online world. There are so many stories to tell; those full of joy and wonder, tales of broken lives put back together, of redemption and salvation. My hope is that we will build a treasure trove of real-life records of what God can do and pray He has someone to fill this technical and innovative position.

It is over a year since PFNI moved back into No 39 University St. It is the same address but essentially a new building with new rooms, new layout...a new beginning! We have wonderful facilities and want to share them with others through our Aftercare work. We hope families and groups will come to visit and use them. Our plan is to recruit a new coordinator who will maintain a calendar of events and be a friendly face to greet scheduled visitors and those who 'drop in'.

While the core work of PFNI remains the same, there are always new faces, new needs, new stories to tell. 'God is the same yesterday, today and forever' and the story of His love for us never changes. We long to see that love bring change in the lives of the people our staff and volunteers engage with daily. What a joy it is to hear the stories of those new beginnings!



### CEO Spotlight

Over nine and a half years ago, **Christine Tan** became our Administrator at Prison Fellowship NI. She brought a wealth of experience in global Christian ministry and a passion for Christ to serve those we work alongside.

Christine was the first face visitors saw and the voice callers heard when phoning the office. Countless calls developed into conversations which became a key part of this front-line ministry. She also developed our administration systems, *News Focus*, and online *Prayer Focus*, all to facilitate PFNI's ministry effectively and efficiently.

Christine, as you leave us, we want you to know that you have created a great legacy. We pray you may know God's richest blessing as you move into what will be New Beginnings for you.

Robin Scott (CEO)

Gordon McIlroy (Chairman)

## Visit to the New PF Centre



Left to Right: Maggie Chesney, Patric Kells, Marina Williamson

It all began one Sunday evening in January 2023 when Robin Scott visited **Castlereagh Fellowship** to tell us about the work of Prison Fellowship. His visit sparked a real interest within the congregation and we decided that we would visit the newly refurbished premises in University Street.


We received a very warm welcome by the PF team as our members packed into their premises. After a time of praise, Dean told us about the work with the male prisoners and Joanne spoke about her role with the female prisoners. Sandra shared about supporting families then Neil enlightened us about the follow-up work with released prisoners.

The relaxed atmosphere encouraged the Castlereagh Fellowship folks to ask questions. We had supper together and ended with a tour, a prayer, and further conversations with the PFNI team. Feedback was very positive:

'It was wonderful to hear about the freedom the Prison Fellowship team has in the prisons and how they are welcomed by staff and prisoners alike. The information gleaned during this visit will help me to pray for [them] in a more informed way.'

Since the visit, some members of the church have joined PFNI prayer groups while others helped with the Christmas Hope project in December.

Maggie Chesney

 Would your church like to visit PFNI? Email [info@pfni.org](mailto:info@pfni.org)

## New Church Partnerships

**Glenabbey Church** has a longstanding relationship with Prison Fellowship with some members serving on the PFNI Board. A few years ago, we wanted to formalise this through a partnership and have been incredibly blessed as a result. Our congregation has helped in Christmas Hope, volunteering, giving financial support and even hosting the 40th Birthday Celebrations!

The CEO, Robin Scott, has been a frequent visitor to our services. We felt that we were only getting snippets of the huge amount of work going on, so we suggested bringing a group to the 'Purple Door' for a bigger insight.

On Wednesday 24th January, a group of 20+ descended on Belfast and were not disappointed. The staff team spoke passionately and without a note! They shared story after story of their work on the prison landings, in aftercare and through family support. I can't overstate how incredible they were; a real encouragement and testament of what it means to live a life of service and bring hope to those who are often left on the margins of society.

We had the privilege to pray with the team, take a tour, and to learn about the future. Here is some feedback:



Left to Right: Willie, Sharon, Keith & Phil

'It's inspirational how God is using Prison Fellowship to impact and change lives inside and outside prison. The humility and devotion of everyone who shared was really challenging. These people truly care and are committed for the long haul.' - **Willie and Sharon**

'Please pass on my thanks to PF for last night. A very informative evening. Their dedication, authenticity, and sincerity were very evident.' - **Phil**

Thanks again Prison Fellowship and God bless you in your work for the King.

Keith Jackson



## New Kid on the Block

Hi, I'm **Michael**, the 'new kid on the block' within the Prison Fellowship team. My journey with PFNI began in November 2022 when Robin Scott visited our church in Ballyward. I hadn't heard of PF, but as I listened to the amazing work they do for prisoners and their families, I picked up their book *Bringing Hope Beyond Bars*. I read it twice and after lots of prayer, I felt God calling me to this ministry. I Googled PFNI and sent an enquiry. This was the start of my 'New Beginnings'.

I met with the Volunteer Co-Ordinator Grace to get an insight into the day-to-day activities and about Sycamore Tree. I was fully aware of the real value of Restorative Justice within our society and although I felt the most unlikely person to be entering such a work, this was what God wanted me to do.

After the applications and clearances were processed, I entered the gates of HMP Maghaberry on 26th May 2023 to meet the PF Prison Worker Dean. We immediately hit it off and a tremendous six weeks of Sycamore commenced. This was followed by visits on the landings. I loved volunteering and wanted more!

I learned there was a vacancy for a part-time PF Prison Worker at Maghaberry. Was this God calling me?

After much prayer, I went for the interview last September. A very nervous guy entered 39 University Street but God was in control! I commenced work on 1st November 2023.

Presently, I'm on my third Sycamore Tree programme, including helping PF staff at Hydebank Wood. I regularly visit a number of guys and have made many good relationships. On a Thursday afternoon, I run a "life's plan" group attended by ten enthusiastic men for an hour each week, working through the Ten Commandments.

I've really settled into this new ministry and am so thankful to everyone who has prayed for me. Please continue to pray as I reach out to prisoners in my New Beginnings.

Michael



 Will you pray for the work of PFNI? Visit [pfni.org/prayer-groups](https://pfni.org/prayer-groups)

## Meet Max



**Max Brockmeyer** is the new Regional Manager for PFI Europe & Central Asia. We asked him to share a little about himself.

'I am originally from Russia but was raised in USA. I was born with no toes and shortened fingers and combined with the tragic death of my brother, I severely questioned God. I almost ended it one night, but God [made me] come to my senses and I realised His calling.

I graduated from Bible College and started my ministry journey. I was a pastor until God called both my wife and I to be full-time missionaries in Europe. We helped plant a church in Antwerp, Belgium, reaching the local culture. God transitioned our roles to a more humanitarian approach. We moved to Spain, where I worked for a Christian NGO called Convoy of Hope. I oversaw the agricultural programmes throughout Europe as well as assisting with major disaster relief services and refugee response work.

Last September, we moved to Stuttgart, Germany. We are excited to be part of the Prison Fellowship International family. In my new role I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know others involved in the work.'