

Angus Presbytery
Presbytery Mission Plan 2022



Background

Each Presbytery of the Church of Scotland has been charged with producing a Presbytery Mission Plan, this to be completed by the end of 2022. The context for this process is now well understood and centres on the dramatic decline of the denomination since the mid-1950s, and at an increased pace since the year 2000:

- From 1.5 million members to approx. 280,000
- The widespread disappearance of children and young people from congregations
- The processes of pluralism and secularisation which have seen the Church moved from centre stage to sidelines
- Increased pressure on financial resources
- The serious decline in numbers of people offering themselves for the full-time ministries of the Church (and for congregational office-bearer roles.)

Talk of Scotland being a 'Christian country' makes much less sense than once it did. Even until fairly recently, we were able to comfort ourselves by asserting that more people attended Kirk services on a Sunday than football matches on a Saturday. That is no longer the case; not even nearly. We're living in a different world and the Covid-19 Pandemic has served only to further illuminate the problems and intensify the challenges.

(While it is perfectly natural to examine ourselves in all of this, it should be remembered that the Church of Scotland doesn't stand alone. Of course there are local anomalies and some churches and some countries are faring better or worse in relative terms, but across Europe - and increasingly so in North America too - the decline of the established Church is glaringly obvious and statistically undeniable.)

But if one good thing has emerged from all of this it is that there is now a much more widespread acceptance that **mission** must be central to the life of the Church. As a country, Scotland was famed for sending missionaries around the world. Throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, many thousands went from these shores carrying with them the light of the gospel to peoples who had had no opportunity to hear of Jesus. It's now accepted that the 'mission field' begins the minute we step outside. The Presbytery Mission Planning process is designed to take account of this renewed understanding.

Indeed the Presbytery Mission Planning Act is clear that these Plans will not be judged 'competent' unless mission is front and centre:

'If it cannot be reasonably demonstrated that a proposed Presbytery Mission Plan furthers the effective mission of the local church, then it does not satisfy the basic requirement of the Act.'

Mission in the local church is the beating heart of the Act. A draft Mission Plan which does not demonstrably prioritise mission will not be approved.'

Though the term 'mission' is widely used, there's never been universal acceptance as to what exactly is meant by it. Some emphasised evangelism and the need to 'Tell Scotland' while others focussed on social justice work and on ministries of service. Most now accept that it isn't either / or but both / and.

We've been helped in this by the writings of missiologists such as Lesslie Newbigin, David Bosch, Darrell Guder (and those who've followed them) who together have focussed on the concept of *Missio Dei*, through which we come to see that our mission is in fact an expression of what God is doing through his ongoing redemptive work in creation (Colossians 1:19-20.) To put it another way, we've come to see that **it is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world.**

In practical terms, there is now a realisation that mission is not an occasional activity of the Church; not a box that can be ticked with two weeks of 'summer mission' and then put away till the next year. We appreciate better now that mission must underpin all that the Church is and does. Understood in this way, mission is not so much about gathering new people in, that our congregations might be sustained, but more about the coming of the Kingdom. We might go on to say that the strength of a congregation is measured not so much by how many people come to it but by how many people go out from it.

The Church has been aided further in its ability to define mission by the emergence of, and acceptance of, the so-called **Five Marks of Mission**. Though every such scheme has its limitations, the General Assembly has enthusiastically endorsed this one as being most helpful to us at this time. It has its roots within the Anglican Communion but is now widely used by various different strands of the Church around the world.

The Five Marks of Mission are as follows:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service

- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth developed

Here we have a way of assessing the life of the Church. We might say that a Church - denominationally or congregationally - can be considered to be in good health or otherwise depending on the extent to which the five marks are exhibited. But here, too, we have a succinct means by which the Church can design its shared life and activity - a means by which it can allocate its resources and set priorities. Of everything we do, it can be asked: how does this fit one or more of the five marks?

Two other points might be helpfully added at this point.

1. The mission of the Church should be understood as an ecumenical endeavour and that, where there are opportunities, partnerships and shared approaches should be explored. Working together locally should be the natural consequence of the kinds of agreements that the Church of Scotland has recently entered into with, for example, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Bishops' Conference of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. The mission of the Church will best be served by a thoroughgoing embracing of the idea that ministry belongs to the whole people of God and not just to ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament (MWS.) Whilst that can certainly be endorsed theologically, the shortage of MWS candidates makes it a practical imperative too. That shortage means that for Angus, the allocated number of ministry posts is dropping from 24.8 to 15.5. It goes without saying that fewer ministers can hardly do what was possible by a larger number in former days and, therefore, that ministers, elders and members will all be involved.

This then is the background to the Presbytery Mission Planning process; a rediscovery and embracing of mission and a prayerful hope that the process will ensure that the Church is in much better shape for that to which it has been called. The extent to which mission is embraced will ultimately determine whether history describes this process as simply having been an exercise in the management of decline or that it was the beginning of a new era of revitalisation.

While each presbytery is required to have its Plan approved by the end of 2022 (as stated above,) it should be noted that every Plan will be subject to annual review - in our case with the new Presbytery of Perth taking responsibility for this review process. It should be understood, therefore, that the Plan will be

subject to constant revision depending on circumstances, such as the movement of ministers and any as yet unseen major issues with buildings. These reviews will be done in partnership with the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees.

Biblical Framework

The above theology of mission is, of course, rooted in Scripture and finds expression in the Church's worshipping life, as it sings '*Sent by the Lord am I*' and '*As a fire is meant for burning... so the church is meant for mission.*' (CH4 no: 250 and 252)

We can hardly be exhaustive in this regard but the calling and sending of people in fulfilment of God's purposes is an obvious thread - even people who were reluctant and by most standards, less than qualified!

Moses is called to go to Pharaoh and to declare liberty for his captive people. Through an ecstatic vision, the prophet Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "*Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?*"

The prophet's answer perfectly sums up the response of so many others, throughout the biblical narrative and through all the generations since: "*Here am I. Send me!*" (Isaiah 6)

Of course the business of being called and sent finds its fulfilment in Jesus, whose earthly ministry was bookended by these things:

'As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.' Mark 1:16-18

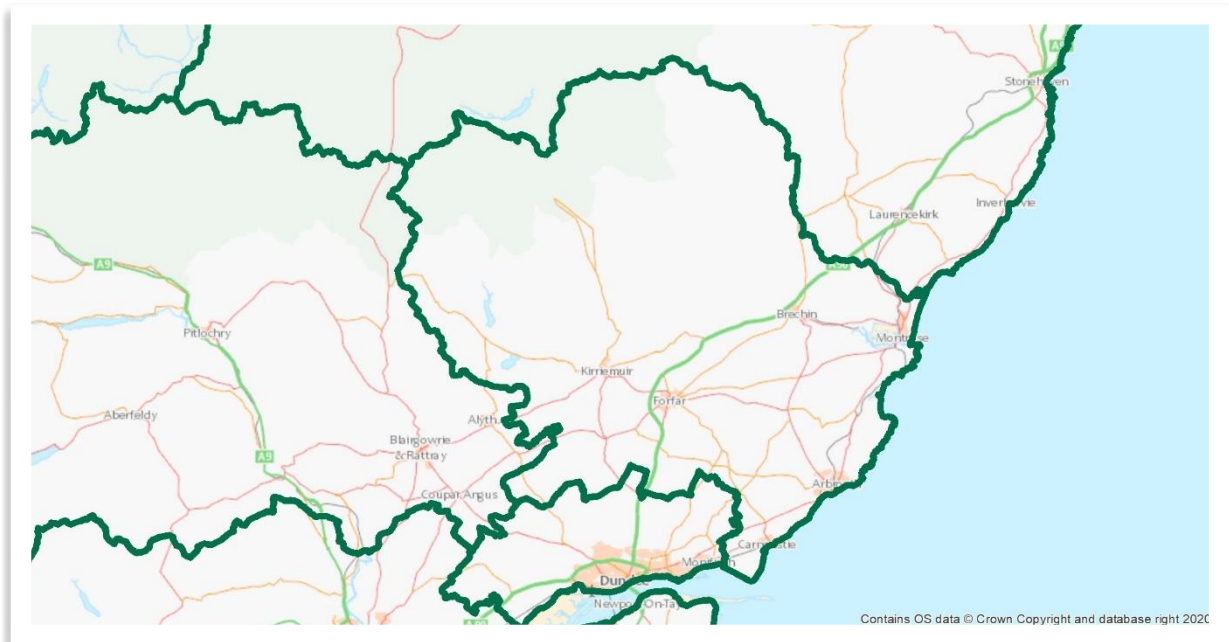
'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."' Matthew 28:18-20

It is for the Church in these days to embrace a new sense of this 'being called and sent' that we might in turn have our place in God's purposes for this nation and beyond. All of this is to say that Presbytery Mission Planning is considerably greater in scope than were previous exercises in union and readjustment.

Angus

The bounds of the Presbytery of Angus broadly correspond to the county of Angus. Made up of six burgh towns, picture-postcard villages and some of Scotland's most beautiful countryside, there has been Christian community in this place since the 8th century C.E. or earlier, this evidenced by, for example, the classic stones at Aberlemno and St. Orland's Stone, between Forfar and

Glamis. And of course both Resteneth Priory and Arbroath Abbey, founded in the 12th century C.E., were sites of both national and ecclesiastical significance.



The bounds of the Presbytery of Angus, May 2022

The Process

In terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan, the planning group (led by the Supporting Congregations Committee aided by the Supporting Mission Committee) devised a plan which sees six clusters based around the six burgh towns and their respective hinterlands. These clusters are well understood locally and largely correspond with the spheres of influence exerted by each town - that is, where the young people attend secondary school, where people shop and where medical services etc. are accessed.

From the beginning of the process, each cluster area was encouraged to begin conversations with ministers and representative elders from each congregation. It was felt that the ideas would be better received if they were 'ground up' rather than 'top down.' And so with various start dates and with one or two meetings in some cases and six or seven in others, each cluster has engaged in discussion as to the missional needs of the area and, thereafter, how best to deploy resources to meet these. These meetings were complemented by the AMBA process through which every congregation completed the buildings survey in tandem with a visiting team arranged by the planning group.

This process resulted in the following proposals.

The Clusters

Cluster 1 - Arbroath

Of the six burgh towns, Arbroath is the biggest with the most recent figures suggesting a population c.24,000. The town is served by two sizeable secondary schools and seven primary schools and is home to the main Angus-based campus of Dundee & Angus College.

With the ruins of the Abbey at its heart, it is a town which thrived in former days on the twin pillars of fishing and weaving.

The demise and almost complete



disappearance of these economic drivers has left the town with significant challenges, not least in terms of the social disintegration that often goes hand in hand with industrial decline. This is not difficult to quantify. For example, of the ten most deprived data zones in Angus, eight are in Arbroath and a study of the Statistics for Mission data produced by the Church of Scotland's statistician demonstrates that the districts of Arbroath, particularly to the north and east of the town, score more poorly than any other parts of the presbytery in terms of SIMD indicators. The most recent version of the '*Angus Joint Child Poverty local Action Plan*' indicates that poverty is worst in Arbroath East and Lunan and that within that zone, 28.5% of children are being brought up in poverty.

It's with these things in mind that the missional priorities outlined below have an emphasis on addressing human need and working with families and under-40s more generally.

The surrounding countryside features various villages with Friockheim being the largest of these (having a population c.1,000), the others being Arbirlot, Carmyllie, Colliston and Inverkeillor. Though there is considerable affluence in much of Angus's farming countryside, the villages have suffered from gradual depletion in terms of local services and from significant reduction in terms of public transport options.

Current Ministry

- Arbroath: Old & Abbey - vacant
- Arbroath: St. Andrew's - 1 FTE MWS
- Arbroath: St. Vigean's - guardianship
- Arbroath: West Kirk - 1 FTE MWS
- Arbirlot I/w Carmyllie - vacant
- Colliston I/w Friockheim Kinnell I/w Inverkeillor & Lunan - 1 FTE MWS_

Proposed Ministry

- All congregations brought into one united congregation with one Kirk Session
- Served by 3.5 FTE posts - the 3 sitting MWS and 1 MDS Children & Family Worker (0.5 from the allocation and 0.5 paid locally)

Buildings

- Arbroath: Old & Abbey - B *

- Arbroath: St. Andrew's - A
- Arbroath: St. Vigean's - A **
- Arbroath: West Kirk - A
- Arbirlot - B
- Carmyllie - A
- Colliston - B
- Friockheim - B ***
- Inverkeillor Church - A ****
- Inverkeillor Hall - B_



Underlying Thinking

The Arbroath Cluster area serves a population of almost 30,000, with 24,000 in the town itself. Ministering to that area with 3 MWS represents a considerable decrease from previous plans and thus a significant challenge - but will be possible with the three ministers and MDS worker working in a collaborative team and with a mobilisation of elders and members.

The cluster meetings agreed the following to be key objectives:

- Proclamation of the Good News of new life in Jesus Christ - **worship and evangelism**
- Inclusion and nurture of children, young people and families - **prioritising under-40s**
- Practical support towards the alleviation of poverty - **meeting needs through service**
- Friendship solutions addressing isolation and poor mental health - **building community**

Point 1 keeps us focussed on 'the main thing being the main thing' - that we are to 'Glorify God and enjoy Him forever' and that we are to 'go into all the world.' Using 0.5 of the ministries allocation (topped up by 0.5 paid for locally) to focus on work among children, young people and families takes seriously Point 2. And Points 3 and 4 steer us towards the practical outworking of faith without which no amount of words will matter.

In terms of buildings in the town, West Kirk and St. Andrew's scored most highly in AMBA and should be retained. Both are in good order, one being more traditional the other having been refurbished in 2009. But the halls suite at Old & Abbey scored highly and is recognised as being an excellent facility which could operate as a Mission Centre and as the Administrative Centre for the area. *** It is proposed that further work be done as a matter of urgency to determine the feasibility or otherwise of separating the sanctuary from the halls and thus determining whether or not the sanctuary could be repurposed or disposed of appropriately, with a resolution of this by 31/12/2023.**

St. Vigean's is situated where town meets country and is the oldest of the sites in terms of Christian worship. There are clearly issues around accessibility and facilities, with the sanctuary sitting atop a small steep hill and with no toilets etc. However **plans are already approved to address these issues and funds are available and so it is agreed that, ** dependent on these works being carried out by 31/12/2023, that St. Vigean's be retained.** Thought should also be given to maximising the use of the site in terms of Christian heritage and modern day pilgrimage. The other associated buildings are 'on the level' with appropriate car parking facilities and should be retained for missional enterprise through the week.

Colliston, Arbirlot and Carmyllie are situated to the west and north west of Arbroath. Each serves a rural community with a small population and, particularly in the cases of Colliston and Arbirlot, with small worshipping congregations. Both Colliston and Arbirlot churches lie just outside of Arbroath while Carmyllie is set further from the town and its retention would allow for rural worship for those scattered communities among which it is set. That said, the congregation needs to give considerable prayerful consideration as to what its mission is (over and above the provision of Sunday Worship) and the forwarding of this agenda will determine the longer term future of the site. **To allow time for thoughtful and sensitive repurposing or disposal of the buildings at Colliston and Arbirlot e.g. to consider some kind of community ownership, a date of 31/12/2023 should be set for disposal.**

Further to the north and to the north east of Arbroath lie the villages of Friockheim and Inverkeillor. Friockheim is the largest of the villages in the Arbroath Cluster area and both it (and Inverkeillor) have seen new housing developments recently. Inverkeillor has two buildings - the Church and the hall, which are at a distance from one another. The hall might be said to be 'in the village' where other facilities such as the primary school and village hall are also situated. The Church sits at the edge of the village. **** **In this case, there is felt to be merit in disposing of the hall and retaining the church building** but as with Carmyllie above, thought needs to be given to what

mission will mean in that community. As for Friockheim, there was a degree of surprise that it scored as highly as it did under AMBA with there being an acknowledgement that it requires work. At the same time, there is an excellent community facility (The Hub) in the heart of the village and increasingly so, it serves as the site for community life with a good cafe, a gym and high quality meeting spaces and car parking facilities. *** **The potential for The Hub to be used by the Church is clear and it is proposed that further investigation be carried out to fully examine the 'pros and cons' of such a decision and to weigh up the long term viability of it - this to be done by 31/07/2023.**

A glance at the map above shows the overall effect of the retention of the stated buildings, with there being continuing provision in the town where the population is greater but with an 'even spread' of rural worshipping congregations.

Cluster 2 - Esk

The main centres of population in the Esk Cluster are Brechin and Edzell. There are a number of smaller rural villages and settlements including Fern, Careston, Menmuir and Farnell, which have small Churches.

Brechin has a population of 7,500 while Edzell, 5 miles north of Brechin has a population of 850. Edzell is the gateway to Glen Lethnot and Glen Esk.



The 19th century saw the real growth of Brechin, based largely on textiles. By 1870 there were four major mills in the town employing around 1400 people. 1895 saw the arrival of the Caledonian Railway. In the meantime brewing and distilling assumed considerable importance in the local economy. The brewing has since gone. The last distillery in the town is Glencadam.

Brechin Cathedral closed in 2021 and Brechin Parish Church, based in Gardner Memorial Church, presently linked with Farnell, is the Church of Scotland Congregation in the town. To the north there is Edzell Lethnot Glenesk I/w Fern, Careston, Menmuir.

Current Ministry

- Brechin Parish Church (Gardner Memorial) I/w Farnell - vacant

- Edzell Lethnot Glenesk l/w Fern Careston Menmuir - 1 FTE MWS

Proposed Ministry

- Two parishes, one on either side of the A90 trunk road which runs between Dundee and Aberdeen and which splits the area of the Esk Cluster between Brechin and Edzell
- Served by 2 FTE MWS - 1 serving Brechin united with Farnell and 1 serving Edzell.



Buildings

- Brechin Parish Church (Gardner Memorial) - A
- Farnell - A
- Edzell - A
- Fern = B
- Careston - B
- Maule - B

Underlying Thinking

In some senses, decisions in this cluster are obvious - namely that there be ministers serving the two population centres either side of the A90. That said, the populations vary quite markedly and some account of this should be taken in terms of sharing of workload when necessary.

As of now, and when this plan is finally approved, the parish to the south will focus on 1) cementing the readjustment already in place and welcoming Farnell into that union and 2) preparing themselves to call a new minister. Thereafter, and by the time of annual review, work should be underway in terms of identifying missional priorities.

The parish which will be to the north of the A90, centred in Edzell and formed by the union of the various congregations in that area, has formulated the following as its missional priorities.

Collaboration: We will work collaboratively where appropriate in sharing resources and ministry in strengthening and supporting Brechin and Farnell Churches within the North Esk Cluster, as well as those that comprise the presbytery area and wider church. We also renew our willingness to share with and work alongside non-Church of Scotland congregations within the area in ecumenical partnership as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Commitment: We renew our commitment to Christ-centred worship through the ministry of word and sacrament. We aim to communicate the good news in word and through our works. We will strive to show the relevance of the Christian faith for today. We will continue to teach the Bible and the Catholic Creeds to enlighten, equip, and encourage God's people and to bring those that are yet strangers to grace into fellowship. We aim not only to be a learning church but a loving one also. And so, we will continue to cultivate fellowship and friendship that is rooted and built up in love. We will warmly welcome all that join with us in worship and fellowship. New church windows, heating system, lighting, and audio-visual have enhanced our worship experience at Edzell and the church hall and lounge provide additional aids in building strong links within the community.

Co-missional: We will continue to communicate the Gospel in word and in good works both in the church and in the community. We are presently growing and hope that will continue by encouraging one another therein and by graciously engaging our neighbours and by inviting people to church services and other events. We will also use our church magazine, website, and social media presence as a means of outreach.

We will encourage people to join us in our monthly heritage meetings which include trips to historic sites, with teaching on different aspects of the faith, and with worship, and fellowship through sharing lunch together. We will also warmly invite others to join us for different social events which are periodically held at the church and throughout our parishes as a means of making contact with non-church folk in the community. We will continue to cultivate good relations with the local primary schools and are privileged to welcome them to the church for services at Easter and Christmas, and on other occasions. We provide Christian literature and appropriate materials to school age children. And provide packs for young families in the church. We have made improvements to our church sanctuary to make it more family friendly for those with young children. We have also made appropriate space for wheelchair access and welcome those from the local residential home on occasion, as well as others.

Communitarian: we will seek to build good relationships with those that comprise our community. Our prayer and pastoral groups have good links in the community and offer care to those in need. We act as chaplain to the local

schools. Our members are well connected with local businesses and recreational groups as well as with social care ones. Our members participate in and we as a church support Brechin Community Pantry. We also take a keen interest in the requirements of our predominantly rural and scattered communities. We support residential homes in the area with pastoral care and worship cover. And will continue to support Crossreach, Christian Aid, Blythswood Care and other charitable organisations locally and nationally.

Considerate: we aim to be salt in an unsavoury environment and light in a dark world. We strive to speak and act with integrity, kindness, and respect. To keep the moral law by not only loving God but by loving our neighbours as followers of Jesus Christ. We aim to be peacemakers and will continue to labour for justice and the common good. We strive to be good stewards of God's creation and encourage others to do likewise.

Following the dissolution of Brechin Cathedral (the buildings are now in the hands of the GTs) the former Gardner Memorial congregation stands now as Brechin Parish Church. It is well located and, as the AMBA results make clear, in reasonably good shape. Similarly, Edzell Church is well located and has been both maintained and developed in recent times meaning that it is a 'well equipped space in the right place.'

Farnell is more complicated. The buildings are in good order but serve a very sparsely populated area - a population of not much more than 200 as of the last census (c.f. Arbroath's West Kirk which has served a parish population in excess of 10,000.) Nonetheless this plan sees the merit of retaining it as a worshipping community but in a union with Brechin instead of the current linkage and with strong encouragement that serious consideration be given to what the missional needs of the community are. The success of the proposed union - **to be established by 31/07/2023** - and the attention to mission will determine the long term viability of Farnell.

It is proposed that the buildings of Fern Careston Menmuir and Maule be classed as B and therefore that they be disposed of appropriately by 31/12/2023. These buildings are set in very scattered communities with no population centres as such but are within reasonable driving distance of both Edzell and Tannadice (part of the Kirriemuir Cluster and to be retained.)

Cluster 3 - Carnoustie

The town of Carnoustie, population approx. 12,000, lies half-way between the Dundee suburb of Monifieth and the town of Arbroath, and has three primary schools (two twin-stream and the third single-stream), and a High School with approx. 750-800 pupils. The town has three Residential Care homes and a residential Dementia Care unit with supported accommodation, and three



sheltered living complexes. Industrial units and new housing have replaced former heavier industry sites, and the town is home to an International Championship Golf Course, a British Army firing range, and a residential Caravan Park at Barry Downs.

The town is served by three Church of Scotland Parishes. The largest parish is Barry, taking in the Western half of Carnoustie, along with the village of Barry and the farming communities to the North and West; in the town centre is

Carnoustie; and Panbride parish takes the Eastern third of the town, with communities of Easthaven and Muirdrum and the farming communities in the East and North-East. There is an Episcopal Church, a United Free Church, a Baptist Church and a Roman Catholic Church in the town, all with good relationships with each other and involved with shared services and outreach to the town.

Current Ministry

- Barry I/w Carnoustie - 1 FTE MWS and 1 Ordained Local Minister (OLM) (presently locum at Arbirlot I/w Carmyllie)
- Carnoustie: Panbride - 1 FTE MWS_

Proposed Ministry

Much of the discussion regarding the Carnoustie Cluster is coloured by ongoing discussions with neighbours in the Presbytery of Dundee about the formation of a South Angus grouping. Nonetheless as things presently stand it is envisaged that there would be a union resulting in one Congregation served by 2 FTE MWS.

Clearly, future changes as a result of a South Angus arrangement would be dealt with by the annual review of the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Buildings

- Newton Parish (Carnoustie) - A
- Carnoustie Church - A



- Panbride Church - B
- Barry Church - B *

Underlying Thinking

Local meetings have led to the following in terms of missional priorities - some of these already in place and others planned - but all of them aligning with the Five Marks of Mission.

1. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 - Shared Chaplaincy: Schools/Uniformed Organisations/local Football/Care Homes
 - Social Media, websites and Live Streaming
 - Messy Church, Movie Nights and Community Events spread over church buildings
 - Explore use of Worship Teams for Care Home Services (and schools) e.g. others may already have a connection with the school
2. Teach, Baptise, and nurture new believers
 - Worship Leaders accredited in all three congregations – to work across the charge.
 - Programmes: ACORN; Christianity Explored; Alpha.
 - Small Groups for Study, Fellowship and Prayer
 - Prayer Chain telephone network
 - Pastoral Care teams and training
3. Respond to human need by loving service
 - Support and promotion of Foodbank; Uniform Swap shops; Food is Free and other ecumenical projects
 - Warms spaces (Cafes) with other churches
 - Dementia Hubs (Explore with Carnoustie, Monifieth & Sidlaws Communities Team Angus Council have funds in 2023)
 - Musical Memories (for residents - at Kinloch and also for community - at Carnoustie Panbride)

- Pastoral Care Training
- Support and promote Cycling without Age
- 4. Transform unjust structures in society, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation
 - Christian Aid – ecumenical partnership already in place
 - Fairtrade – partnership with other churches, schools and the wider community
 - Tearfund; Crossreach; Other agencies and partnerships
- 5. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth
 - Work towards Eco-congregation Award across the charge
 - Work towards Net Zero
 - Congregational Walks; Forest church; Church gardens
 - Repair Shops

Based on these priorities, and to restate the above, a full understanding of how this cluster will look in the coming days awaits the outcome of the developing ideas of a South Angus arrangement. Indeed given the proximity of Carnoustie and Barry to Monifieth, such discussions are to be encouraged.

That notwithstanding, it is proposed that for the time being the town of Carnoustie, with Barry, continues to be served by two MWS and that both the Newton and Carnoustie buildings be retained. Of these the Newton Church buildings scored more highly under AMBA but there is certainly potential for developing the Carnoustie Church building to bring it up to a higher standard.

The case for the retention of the Barry site is less clear. In terms of the geography, Barry (which has a parish population of 5,600) is distinct from Carnoustie and yet only by a short distance meaning that travelling to Carnoustie from Barry is less of a journey (in terms of time and road quality) than is being envisaged for some of the more rural communities. And of all the buildings in the cluster, Barry scores most poorly in the AMBA table. * **Final decisions regarding the Carnoustie Cluster, and Barry in particular, will flow from the South Angus discussions and should be resolved by 31/12/2023. Similarly, the Church at Panbride should be disposed of by that date.**

Cluster 4 - Forfar

The town of Forfar is at the heart of the Parish grouping. It has a population of some 16,000, based on 2021 figures. It is the county town of Angus where the council headquarters are based and was formerly a Royal Burgh. Malcolm

Canmore and his Queen Margaret had a royal residence in the town.

The area has been occupied by the Romans, was an important site for the Picts who fought and won a significant battle in 685 at Nechtansmere near Letham where they defeated the invading Northumbrians. A number of Pictish stones are located in the area.



Forfar has been a significant centre for the flax and jute industry with a number of factories around the town, now only one factory remains. There are obvious signs of social deprivation and many struggle to get by and even the surrounding farming communities, which add an additional 3,000 to the population, are suffering from a move away from rural community life and an eroding of their identity.

Today the main activities are agriculture and tourism around the scenic fertile farming area of Strathmore. There are a number of small villages such as Letham and Aberlemno, with strong community spirits.

If Arbroath is known for the 'Arbroath Smokie' then Forfar is famed for the "Forfar bridie" a popular meat pastry!

Current Ministry

- Forfar: East & Old - 1 FTE MWS
- Forfar: Lawson Memorial - 1 FTE MWS
- Forfar: St. Margaret's - 1 FTE MWS
- Dunnichen, Letham & Kirkden - vacant
- Aberlemno l/w Guthrie & Rescobie - vacant

Proposed Ministry

- 2 Kirk Sessions in the first instance with a road map towards one Kirk Session. While no date has as yet been agreed for this 'road map,' it should clearly be understood that moving towards it must be a priority and that a working timetable should be established for the first annual review
- 3 FTE MWS supported by 1 OLM working in a team_

Buildings

- Forfar: East & Old - A
- Forfar: Lawson Memorial - A
- Forfar: St. Margaret's - B **
- Letham - A
- Aberlemno - A
- Guthrie - B
- Rescobie - B ***
- Inverarity - B *



Underlying Thinking

To be able to serve the whole population, town and country, a team of 3 MWS along with an OLM will work as a team, with the addition of locally trained worship leaders and a whole army of elders and members.

With priority for worship and evangelism (to not only survive but thrive) the East & Old building in the centre of the town will be retained, along with the Lawson Memorial building set at the eastern end, in the heart of community housing. Both buildings are in good order scoring well in the AMBA process, with East & Old undergoing considerable modernisation, and Lawson Memorial certainly fitting the right space in the right place criteria.

There is already a huge Church involvement with food poverty and youth and family work and this needs to be maintained and prioritised in the future. There is an obvious need for a Mission Station operating in the town, and with one of the ministry team focussed on the rural community, Forfar Mart may open up possibilities, especially when the farming community gathers. There are also other community buildings that open up exciting possibilities for missional activities within the town.

The buildings in the village of Letham will also be retained, where the congregation are also at the very heart of community life. The buildings have undergone considerable modernisation and open up the possibility of community activity in the village.

* Regarding the buildings at Inverarity, further work requires to be done to assess the viability of retention and this should be carried out **timeously** to allow a **final decision to be made by 31/12/2023**.

** In the light of what is happening elsewhere in the Presbytery and across the country, it would be hard to justify the retention of all three existing suites of buildings. (Information from elsewhere indicates that most similarly-sized towns will go to just two buildings while elsewhere one town of 12,000 is going to just one.) Of the existing Forfar town churches, **St. Margaret's scored most poorly in the AMBA process and should be sold or otherwise disposed of by 31/12/2023**.

*** It is equally difficult to justify the retention of the three buildings that presently make up the Aberlemno l/w Guthrie and Rescobie charge. Aberlemno stands somewhat apart and should be retained. Neither Guthrie nor Rescobie fared well under the AMBA process. The Guthrie building is only a short distance from Friokheim (where a worshipping community will be sustained) and relatively close to Aberlemno. **It has been classified as 'B' and should be disposed of by 31/12/2023**. The Rescobie building lies close to Forfar. Its long term future might be more likely under the ownership of a community trust, through which it could become a local community asset - this perhaps more viable with the likely closure of Reswallie Hall. Similarly, therefore, **Rescobie has been classified as 'B' but with the proviso that should the congregation find ways to increase the use of the building, in a definable missional sense, the possibility of retention under future review remains - a final decision to be taken no later than 31/12/25**.

Cluster 5 - Kirriemuir

The Kirriemuir cluster is predominantly rural, encompassing a large part of Strathmore and bounded by the A90 dual carriageway to the east, stretching to the Angus Glens in the north and touching the fringes of Perthshire towns to the west. Kirriemuir is the main population centre, with sizeable communities in Glamis and Newtyle, then many smaller, rural communities around. The geography does not necessarily make Kirriemuir the natural focal point, with many looking to



Forfar, Alyth, and Blairgowrie for access to services. Even so, local communities have a very strong sense of individual identity.

Kirriemuir itself, in common with many small towns, has its mix of social challenges. In recent years though it has shown itself to be a community willing to reach out to those in need, locally and in surrounding areas; work often aided by church members, though not always done through the churches themselves.

The present congregations are: The Glens and Kirriemuir United I/w Oathlaw Tannadice; Eassie, Nevay and Newtyle; Glamis, Inverarity and Kinnettles; The Isla Parishes

Current Ministry

- Glens & Kirriemuir United I/w Oathlaw Tannadice - 1 FTE MWS
- Eassie, Nevay & Newtyle - 1 FTE MWS
- Isla Parishes - 0.6 FTE MWS *
- WAAM - 0.4 FTE MWS *
- Glamis, Inverarity & Kinnettles - guardianship

* These parishes have for some time operated as a grouping; the West Angus Area Ministry (WAAM.) One MWS post was divided 0.6 to the Isla Parishes and 0.4 to work within the grouping.

Proposed Ministry

Going forward, the Plan envisages the continuation of WAAM but with a reduced ministry allocation, with additional unions and with a reduced stock of buildings

- Glens & Kirriemuir United united with Oathlaw Tannadice - 1 FTE MWS
- Eassie, Nevay & Newtyle united with Glamis, Inverarity & Kinnettles - 1 FTE MWS *
- Isla Parishes **

* For some time, there has been talk about the coming together of Eassie, Nevay and Newtyle (ENN) with Glamis, Inverarity and Kinnettles (GIK). (The minister of the former congregation has served as Interim Moderator for the latter congregation) **The Plan recommends that now is the right time and that this should happen no later than 31/12/2023.** Meantime, discussions with neighbours in The Presbytery of Dunkeld & Meigle have

Taking worship out to the locations of previous church buildings – Such as 'Harvest Songs of Praise' in Kingoldrum Village Hall.

Reaching out to the wider community at Christmas, Easter and other opportunities.

Modernising Kirriemuir Parish Church to improve facilities for congregational and community activities.

Supporting Kirriemuir Churches Together and especially their plans to hold a Summer Christian Festival 2023.

Building on existing House Groups, Prayer Breakfast and other initiatives.

PRIORITISING UNDER 40'S

Providing quality chaplaincy to all primary and secondary schools in our area.

Organising quality holiday club events.

Engaging with local uniformed and non-uniformed youth groups.

Supporting Alpha and other initiatives in Webster's High School.

MEETING NEEDS THROUGH SERVICE

Maintaining and expanding the existing Skein Tryst lunches and other activities.

Supporting and promoting Kirriemuir Food Hub as it addresses issues of food insecurity and food waste.

Exploring other possible avenues for service to the community.

Highlighting the existing overseas mission work supported by our congregations and further developing support of those serving in places of need beyond our own community.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Partnering with a wide range of local groups – such as Rotary, Sustainable Kirriemuir, etc.

Modernising Newtyle and Glamis Church buildings to make them more accessible for Community use.

Developing our IT and social media skills and access.

Continuing to host a range of community events in our premises.

Inviting the community into our buildings while also reaching out to the community.

Using local publications, such as Alyth Voice, and established community groups on social media platforms to advertise and promote the work of our congregations.

Currently, the town of Kirriemuir has one main worship centre at the heart of the town using the Kirriemuir United building. The Church also provides office facilities and meeting rooms for the ministry team. Whilst this team will only have 2 MWS posts, it is expected that local elders, readers and retired ministers will also join the team. The current linkage with the more rural Oathlaw Tannadice congregation to the north, will become a union to reduce the number of business meetings and release the eldership to carry out more missional roles, with a focus on community growth and engagement.

It is proposed that the more rural congregations of Eassie, Nevay, Newtyle & Glamis (and Kinnettles) will not only form a union, but will also unite with Ardler Kettins and Meigle from the neighbouring Presbytery. This larger geographical congregation will have 2 – 3 main worship centres with possible mission centres in appropriate buildings.

It is also suggested that discussion takes place between representatives from the Isla Parishes congregation and those from the congregation of Alyth in the neighbouring Presbytery of Dunkeld and Meigle regarding the possibility of union as they have shared rural identity and are located within a few miles of each other. Notwithstanding these discussions, and given the considerable readjustment that has taken place in that particular area over a number of years, it is proposed that the building at Kilry be kept.

*** Decisions regarding buildings will be finalised when the AMBA process for Dunkeld and Meigle is complete.**

Cluster 6 - Montrose

Montrose, a historic town of some 12,000 people, is situated at the north eastern end of Angus, bounded by the Arbroath Cluster to the south, the Esk Cluster to the west and the Presbytery of Kincardine & Deeside to the north. Its broad main street blends civic buildings and a range of independent retail outlets. Significant employment is associated with pharmaceuticals (GSK) and with the port authority and oil-related industries. Similarly to Arbroath and Carnoustie, the main rail line from Aberdeen to the south passes through Montrose meaning that it well connected in each direction by rail and road and by sea.

While there is a degree of affluence across the area served by the Montrose Cluster, there are pockets of deprivation in some of the low-amenity housing areas. Nonetheless, there is a discernible community spirit with the annual 'MoFest' musical festival being a highlight in the calendar. Visitors also come to enjoy the noteworthy birdlife associated with the Basin and the historic golf links.



Current Ministry

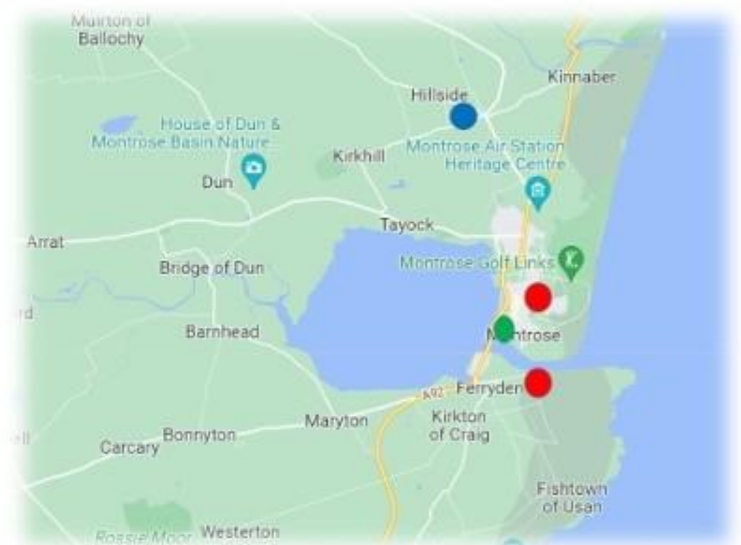
- Dun & Hillside - vacant
- Montrose: Old & St. Andrew's - 1 FTE MWS and 1 OLM (presently Locum at Hillside & Dun)
- Montrose South & Ferryden - 1 FTE MWS
- Cluster Youth Worker - 0.5 MDS and 0.5 locally funded

Proposed Ministry

1 Parish with 1 Kirk Session served by a team made up of 2 FTE MWS, 1 MDS focussing on young people and families and 1 OLM

Buildings

- Hillside - B *
- Montrose: Old & St. Andrew's - A
- Philo's Hub - A
- Ferryden Church - B
- Ferryden Hall - A_



Underlying Thinking

The three parishes in this cluster are partly separated by natural geography – the mouth of the basin to the south and farmland to the north and whilst all are linked in that they use the retail and medical facilities of Montrose with primary

schools feeding into Montrose Academy, each area has its own identity, community centres and traditions, not least in worship.

In a series of discussions, however, it became clear that there was a desire and openness from all three existing Kirk Sessions to serve God by working as one – spiritually for we all follow the same Lord and practically to enable the best use of our resources. In the last year, the appointment of a Youth and Families Worker (currently 50% locally funded) has provided several encouraging examples of how missional work – for example, the new monthly Lego Church – can be centrally coordinated but take place in each community.

The Team, will of course, be far more than the ministries allocation but will require even more involvement of elders and members. There are already those who are trained or are committed to training provided by the Presbytery in such things as Worship Leadership and Pastoral support.

The Mission Plan seeks to take account of these strands of thinking.

First in its structure of one Kirk Session with the strapline “One Vision – One Mission – One Family” with ministries operating in a team setting, guided by their gifts, ensuring that one of the posts is an MDS position focused on youth and families continuing to build on existing work and acknowledging the General Assembly’s stated priority of focusing on work among the under 40’s.

Second, in its intention to maintain a worshipping community in each area, whilst being realistic about the burdens of our building stock. Hillside Church performed poorly under the AMBA review but the rural community it has traditionally served is being significantly expanded by the building of 450 new homes on an old hospital site together with new community facilities, providing a new demographic and opportunities to engage with. In Ferryden, there is already vision and a desire to develop the church hall into a multi-purpose building which will better meet the needs of the locale (see website for draft plans). Old and St Andrews remains a significant landmark and focus for Church activity in the centre of Montrose, ideal for worship and fellowship together but also as base for missional activities with it being literally on the High Street.

Third, in that the initial discussion group recommended as part of the proposal, that a transition group be formed immediately to not only consider the structural details required for such a union, but to coordinate existing work (of which there is much including Messy Church, Philos Friendship Cafe, soup lunches, until very recently a food bank and a Ukrainian support hub). The emphasis will be on sustaining and developing this kind of work and to begin new initiatives, for example an Alpha Course resourced and delivered for the whole cluster to encourage and enthuse existing membership, practical

evidence of the vision. We need to be fleet and responsive to changing needs and opportunities.

Union does not mean uniformity and along with a belief that while the Great Commission is global (to take the gospel in word and action to the whole world), it must also be relational and local; as in the Trinity, there is scope for our distinctives to shine through our united purpose to worship and serve our one Lord and our neighbours for Jesus' sake.

We believe that the above is a partial and local reflection of the five marks of mission and is the starting point for a new beginning in joined up mission to the wider community of Montrose and beyond in worship and proclamation, in priority to the younger generations and in friendship and practical service to the community, not least the most vulnerable.

* Of the three buildings, Hillside Church performed most poorly under the AMBA review and would require significant investment to improve it. And yet it serves a community somewhat distinct from the town of Montrose and has already seen the disposal of Dun Church with which it was linked. **The plan proposes, therefore, that a worshipping community be maintained at Hillside but that full exploration is given to identifying a suitable community building within which it would meet - the church building itself to be disposed of by 31/12/2023.**

Conclusion

Should the Presbytery decide to approve this Plan, it will be forwarded to the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPiG) and to the General Trustees. These bodies will go through the Plan in considerable detail, satisfying themselves that it both meets the terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (ACT VIII 2021) and of the overall direction of travel for the Church, as agreed by recent General Assemblies. If acceptable, our Plan will be forwarded to the Faith Nurture Forum for final approval - and if not, it will be returned to us for further consideration. (It is worth noting that the experience thus far, in terms of those presbyteries that have already submitted plans, is that almost without exception, plans have not been approved at the first time of asking.)

An exercise such as this one, in which significant change is called for in the face of unprecedented challenges, is a daunting one and the prospect of everyone being 'happy' with the outcome is nil. And yet, if the Presbytery is not at this time ready to face up to these challenges in a thoroughly realistic manner then firstly, the plan will have little chance of being accepted by the Faith Nurture Forum and General Trustees and secondly - and more

importantly - we will simply be avoiding that which is necessary and leaving it for others to do somewhere down the line.

In all of it, together may we be reminded that Jesus declared it to be His Church (Matthew 16) and that He continues to be Lord over it. In our fearfulness let there be faith as we seek a mission-centric future for the Church in these parts, through which God will be glorified and Jesus lifted up that all will be drawn to Him.

In the name of the The Presbytery of Angus Planning Group

Glossary of Terms

PMP - Presbytery Mission Plan

PMPIG - Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group

GTs - General Trustees

MWS - Ministers of Word and Sacrament

MDS - Ministries Development Staff

FTE - full-time equivalent

AMBA - Asset Management Buildings Audit

C.E. Common Era

SIMD - Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation