

Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Gordon- Presbytery Plan

Approved by Presbytery in March 2021

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1. Objective

The purpose of this plan is to set a trajectory for Gordon Presbytery with regards to the deployment of ministries over the next 5 years. In addition, the plan sets a trajectory for the management of buildings within the presbytery over the next 10 years.

The plan is in response to the instruction to the presbytery, from successive General Assemblies, most recently the 2020 General Assembly, to engage in robust planning, ensuring that the primary principle of planning – mission – is central.

It has been developed in accordance with Act 7 2003, the Appraisal and Adjustment Act, which covers all aspects of Presbytery Planning, including the principles of planning. A copy can be found at on the presbytery website.

The group responsible for preparing the proposed plan has endeavoured to consult as far as is possible in developing the trajectories laid out below. Whilst much of the plan deals with numbers and the challenging circumstances we find ourselves in, it is our hope that this plan enables and encourages collaboration and team working across our presbytery in such a way that sustainable forms of ministry are developed. We hope that as congregations work together they will find the shared opportunities and resources needed for mission. This plan is a starting point for working differently within our presbytery and it will require every minister, Kirk Session and congregation to engage with it in order for it to be successful.

The Five Marks of Mission will provide a framework for collaboration between congregations to enable the team ministry this plan envisages. Training materials on the Five Marks will be provided in the near future.

2. Background

2.1. 2012 Presbytery Plan

The Presbytery of Gordon developed and agreed its most recent Presbytery Plan in November 2012. This plan was subsequently concurred with by the Presbytery Planning Task Group (PPTG) of the then Ministries Council (now known as the Faith Nurture Forum). This plan followed the instruction from the General Assembly of 2011 regarding the production of a new plan using the numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) ministries outlined in the Ministries Council report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (GA) that year. The final allocation of FTE ministries for Gordon Presbytery was 31.4.

The 2012 plan was intended to be open ended and a Presbytery Planning Review Group (PPRG) was to be established to conduct an annual review of the Presbytery Plan and to undertake a major review of the plan every 5 years or earlier if new guidelines for ministries allocations were agreed by the General Assembly.

However, the PPRG was not immediately put in place and discussions regarding the 2012 Presbytery Plan centred on the advertising and filling of 2 additional Presbytery Wide posts allowed for in the Presbytery Plan. 0.2 FTE ministries was to be used for administrative support for the Presbytery Clerk but this was deemed unnecessary. We relinquished 1.4 FTE ministries back to PPTG.

2.2. 2018 Advisory Figures

In 2018 Ministries Council presented new advisory figures for full time equivalent Ministries of Word and Sacrament (FTEMWS) to the GA. These figures were a best estimate of the number of parish ministers likely to be ministering in each presbytery in 2023. The figures took into account ministerial retirement rates, the numbers of candidates accepted for training and the number of ministers coming from other denominations.

At this point in time Gordon Presbytery had 25 charges comprising 28 congregations. There were 21 FTEMWS in post, with 4 vacancies. In addition, there were 5 MDS (Ministry Development Staff) positions within the Presbytery Plan, located as follows:

- one deacon at Skene Parish Church of Scotland;
- one FTE parish worker (Ministries), 0.5 FTE parish worker (Children and Families); 0.5 FTE parish worker (Mission Development) (at Ellon Parish Church of Scotland);
- one Youthwork Facilitator working across Presbytery; and
- one Mission and Development Facilitator working across Presbytery.

The advisory figures for Gordon Presbytery stipulated that **by 2023** we could expect to have **14.9 FTEMWS**.

2.3. Gordon Presbytery Response

During the autumn of 2018, Gordon Presbytery agreed to establish a new Presbytery Planning Review Group (PPRG) to review the 2012 plan and the impact of the advisory figures. In April 2019 correspondence was issued by the Presbytery Planning Task Group (PPTG) confirming the necessity for each presbytery to use the figures in their planning, as well as information regarding the cap on MDS posts.

3. First Steps

The convenor of the PPRG met with a representative of PPTG to gather information and consider the best approach to developing a new presbytery plan. This included taking into consideration the emerging ministries within the church.

Having gathered information on the various tools available to us, we met a number of times as a committee to discern what our next steps should be. Our intention was to help congregations begin to think differently about mission and ministry and to enable those congregations that were already doing so to move further down the track. We realised the importance of communicating with congregations as early as possible and we strove throughout the process to respond to requests to meet with ministers and Kirk Sessions as much as possible.

Following a number of new vacancies within the Presbytery we explored the mechanisms available to us to encourage congregations to consider what would be the most appropriate route forward rather than simply looking for a new FTEMWS.

We received guidance from the Presbytery Planning Task Group that outside of objecting to each new request for a permission to call, the fairest way to move forward would be to sist the current Presbytery Plan.

Difficulties arose regarding vacancies which were less than 2 years old, which delayed the process of sisting the plan. However, in October 2019 it was agreed that the PPRG would bring a proposal for a temporary and partial sisting of the plan in January 2020 and this proposal was subsequently agreed. All congregations were cited to attend the January 2020 meeting.

4. Presbytery Planning Principles

The primary principle for Presbytery Planning is mission (as covered in Act 7 2003, Appraisals and Adjustment Act). We have encouraged congregations to consider how they could work with others in the presbytery to undertake mission. Following the Assembly Trustees updates in 2020, the Five Marks of Mission will be used in the development of Covenant Agreements for the new Parish Groupings (Basis of Parish Groupings). A copy of the Basis of Parish Grouping is available at Appendix A.

The Five Marks of Mission are as follows:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

All covenant agreements should make reference to the Five Marks of Mission with regards to identifying areas of joint working and priorities for the new Parish Groupings.

The secondary principles of Presbytery Planning are laid out in Appendix B of this plan. These are taken from Act 7 2003, Appraisals and Adjustment.

Aligning with these principles, we have taken seriously the importance of community identity and helping congregations to determine how worship can take place in a community in different ways from previously experienced. We recognise how important community identity is within our presbytery and we acknowledge the deep concerns within presbytery about losing access to worship in local communities.

With the rapid development of the use of technology during 2020, moving forward we will consider how worship can be livestreamed to different locations, allowing congregations to leverage the experience and expertise of others within presbytery. Technology will enable people to gather for worship locally without the same requirement for FTE ministries. This will create a mixed economy within our Presbytery and those congregations who are already connecting to new networks of individuals will be encouraged to pursue this further – as well as to share their resources more widely. We have an expectation that Covenant Agreements will reflect the importance of the use of technology in the mission and ministry of the Parish Groupings.

In addition, we are encouraging the Mission and Discipleship Committee to move forward with plans to provide local training to lay individuals and groups who will be tasked with conducting worship in our presbytery. This training is vital for congregations who are now facing the prospect of not being able to call a FTEMWS and is important considering our commitment to the principle of the whole people of God. It may be appropriate for this training to be expanded in time to include training regarding pastoral care.

We encouraged congregations to consider ecumenical relationships in response to our consultations. However, aside from the larger towns, there are relatively few opportunities for ecumenism and our ecumenical partners are facing similar challenges in ministry.

5. Methodology

Our main focus has been on communities and congregations and through this trying to identify how congregations can better work together to enable mission within our presbytery.

In October 2019, the PPRG presented to presbytery information regarding the Presbytery Plan, and the 2023 advisory figures – as well as an update on the national situation. In addition, the PPRG presented information regarding the tools available for adjusting the Presbytery Plan. Particular emphasis was given to Guardianship, Parish Groupings, Worshipping Communities as well as the recent pilots on Hub ministry.

From the outset, the PPRG was determined to generate a new plan through consultation with both the presbytery and congregations in the presbytery. The first step required each congregation to provide information in advance of the meeting on the following questions:

- Who do you work with currently in terms of other churches/parishes and who would you be willing to work with in the future?
- What do you perceive to be a sustainable model of ministry within your parish or together with other parishes for the future? This would include details of ministry resources e.g. FTEMWS, MDS, OLM, Readers, working in teams.
- How are your buildings fit for purpose currently and what if any plans do you have for your buildings?

To help with answering these questions, we recommended congregations consider using the information gathered at any recent Local Church Review (LCR) as well as looking at the following two documents:

1. General Trustees Land & Buildings Plan Consultation Paper – Well equipped spaces in the right places.

2. Gordon Presbytery Mission and Discipleship Discussion Paper from March 2019 (Available on the Gordon Presbytery website)

The second of these two papers was designed to help congregations consider what mission and discipleship could look like in their own context. We encouraged ministers to meet with each other to explore the possibility of working more closely together.

We identified that the Area Groupings established in the 2012 Presbytery Plan were, in the most part, not functioning. Our attention became focused on establishing new Parish Groupings within the Presbytery which would allow for collaboration. We indicated that these Parish Groupings could be extended across presbytery boundaries given the prospect of a presbytery union.

Within these Parish Groupings we encouraged congregations to identify areas where it would be possible to share resources and work together. This developed differently in each group, but included sharing worship and exploring youth work.

Over the course of 2019/2020 the PPRG met with representatives from each of the congregations within presbytery to gather information, to answer queries and to determine next steps. It was evident that there was considerable suspicion regarding Presbytery Planning resulting from previous experiences and a considerable amount of work went into building relationships between the PPRG and representatives from congregations. At times these discussions were incredibly robust but did give an opportunity for concerns to be raised and addressed. It should not be underestimated how difficult congregations find discussions regarding Presbytery Planning.

The intention had been to create a draft Presbytery Plan by June 2020. In January 2020 a special meeting of Presbytery was called to facilitate conversations between congregations regarding collaboration and moving towards covenant agreements. The initial groupings were set based on the feedback received in autumn 2019.

6. Impact of Covid19

It was not possible to proceed with the generation of a draft plan on our original timetable because of the impact of the global pandemic. This disrupted the working of local congregations and the presbytery. It made it very difficult for conversations to happen between congregations, especially with a number of people struggling with using the necessary technology.

However, by summer 2020 it became apparent that the shifting situation within the Church of Scotland nationally meant it was all the more important to move forward on Presbytery Planning. Whilst we would rather not deal with everything concurrently, it is not possible to delay the development of a new plan further.

A number of changes had occurred within the presbytery. Therefore, it was appropriate to take stock of the proposed Parish Groupings. Further consultation was undertaken in autumn 2020 where Kirk Sessions were instructed to respond to questions on Parish Groupings and Buildings and the Parish Groupings were revised. It was evident that this was the first time many Kirk Sessions were responding seriously to the challenges posed by Presbytery Planning despite the length of time discussions have been ongoing.

7. New Presbytery Plan – Ministry Resources

The PPRG have revised the 2012 Presbytery Plan following consultation with representatives from each congregation and taking into account the advisory figures for FTEMWS.

7.1. Key points

- Congregations in long-term vacancies or where Presbytery Planning principles indicate that ministry should be provided in a manner other than a FTEMWS are being encouraged to move into Guardianship. The Basis of Guardianship should be agreed within a one year timetable, commencing from the approval of the Presbytery Plan.
- Every congregation, with the exception of one, has been placed within a Parish Grouping. These have been developed and agreed with the congregations. In all cases it will be the responsibility of the Parish Grouping to develop a Covenant Agreement within 2 years of the approved Presbytery Plan. Particular focus is to be given to mission in these Covenant Agreements. The Five Marks of Mission are to be used. The Covenant Agreement (or Basis of Parish Grouping) will establish the areas of joint working and consider the ministry team for the Parish Grouping. Within the Parish Groupings consideration is to be given to the procedure that will be followed when a new vacancy arises and over the course of next 5 years, it is expected that each Parish Grouping will reduce in the number of FTEMWS. This is expected to occur through retirement and ministers moving voluntarily elsewhere e.g. in pursuance of a call.
- Following consultations with both congregations, it is intended that a Union take place between Huntly Cairnie Glass and Huntly Strathbogie Drumblade. The timing of this union will be dependent on negotiation with both congregations.
- Changes in local circumstances for Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Parish Church means further work is required to determine an appropriate future for this congregation. In the first instance the congregation will be encouraged to enter into Guardianship. However, other options will be explored in the coming year, including Dissolution and the establishment of a Worshipping Community. It is expected that ministry for this congregation would not be provided by a FTEMWS.
- Three congregations have agreed to pursue a wider Parish Grouping across the Presbytery Boundary. This is in light of the future union of presbyteries. It is expected that these congregations will similarly report back within a year as to the progress of this proposed Parish Grouping. We have applied a similar reduction of FTEMWS to this Parish Grouping as with the other Parish Groupings. However, we are aware that oversight of this Parish Grouping must be shared with Buchan Presbytery until such times as the proposed presbytery union.

7.2. Team Ministry

The success of this new plan is dependent on a move towards team ministry which includes all forms of ministry. This will be a challenge and support will be needed to help parish ministers, Kirk Sessions and congregations to operate with a different mindset. We are encouraged by the team working that has developed during 2020 and commend those who have found ways of collaborating during the pandemic. The Parish Groupings will only function in a healthy manner if a thorough understanding of the areas of collaboration as outlined in the Covenant Agreement are swiftly put into practice. Whilst a two year timeframe is being given for the negotiation and agreement of Covenant Agreements, the PPRG strongly recommend Parish Groupings to come to an agreement as soon as is possible.

In addition, we understand the focus given to Presbytery Planning by the Faith Nurture Forum and Assembly Trustees. We look forward to the legislative changes and tools that are currently in development coming to fruition. We envisage that some, if not all, the Parish Groupings may wish to avail themselves of these changes in the future – as and when they become available.

7.3. Vacancy Procedures

In the event that a church becomes vacant within a Parish Grouping, the right to call a minister will be dependent on the number of FTEMWS listed in this plan. In effect this means that the right to call a minister is not automatic for every church within the presbytery. We recommend that each Parish Grouping thoroughly discusses the consequences of a vacancy with regards to setting out in the Covenant Agreement how they will be dealt with by the Parish Grouping. In the case of a Parish Grouping where one church is in Guardianship, it may still be appropriate for a representative of that church to be part of a nominating committee for another church within its Parish Grouping, although that representative would not have a vote. In the case of other Parish Groupings, the need to developing good working relationships and a clear understanding of team ministry becomes more apparent when considering the impact of future vacancies.

8. New Presbytery Plan – Buildings

8.1. Background

Our primary focus in drafting a new Presbytery Plan has been on responding to the advisory numbers of FTEMWS. Whilst we have encouraged congregations to review the current status of their buildings, we have been unable to undertake a full analysis of buildings in our presbytery.

However, as indicated by the General Trustees report to the GA 2020 Presbyteries do have the responsibility for categorising buildings within the bounds of the Presbytery.

The Planning Principles contained in Act 7 2003 outline the following:

“Buildings: There is a connection between ministry and church buildings, although that connection is neither uniform nor universal. At a national level there is a consensus that the Church of Scotland has too many buildings, numerous buildings that are under utilised, buildings that are too large for present day needs and buildings that are in the wrong place. At a local level however, almost every church building is deemed essential. There is no simple solution to this problem. The starting point however should be mission. Presbyteries will want to consider which buildings are essential and useful for the mission they envisage.”

The most recent consultation process confirmed this summary, with the overwhelming majority of buildings deemed to be essential by Kirk Sessions.

It is necessary for presbytery, working together with the local congregations, to determine which buildings are required for the future and which buildings are surplus to the Church's needs.

The General Trustees report also referenced the impact of Covid19:

“The Coronavirus epidemic has reinforced the significant challenges facing the Church. In this environment there can no longer be the assumption that any particular building can survive without a critical assessment of its contribution to the mission of the Church. A key question in any Presbytery Plan has to be - is this building really necessary? And this should be asked irrespective of the congregation's financial position, or the building's historical importance. The first principle of 'Well equipped spaces in the right places' (which was widely supported in the Consultation responses) is 'Buildings and land are simply means by which the mission of the Church can be achieved'; this is followed by the further principle that 'the Church is not a building'. This does not mean that we do not value our historical legacy but much of it is part of local and national history, important not just to the Church but to the wider community so the future of a number of historic buildings will depend on partnership with local and national bodies.”

8.2. Toolkit and Review

The General Trustees are developing a 'Toolkit' which will be used by the PPRG, together with the Presbytery Property Committee, in consultation with the North East Buildings Officer (if and when appointed), to undertake a review of the relevant buildings in presbytery in the coming year.

In the first instance the toolkit provides the following:

- (a) Advice on setting minimum standards for existing churches and new planting and reviewing the current manse standards in response to legislative changes. What should a 'well equipped space look like? How do we create inclusive buildings that provide a welcome for everyone? This will include access, facilities, hospitality and sustainability.
- (b) Advice on location - where will the Church's functional buildings - old and new - be required for the next 10/15 years? How does Presbytery planning relate to Local Development Plans which set out anticipated population changes? Can we realistically afford duplication of church buildings - both ours and with other denominations? How does the Church achieve long term sustainability?
- (c) Advice on the management of surplus buildings. How can Presbyteries better handle the emotional relationship most people have to their building? Can the Trustees unburden the local congregation of the responsibility for managing and disposing of buildings which the Presbytery has identified as surplus to long term requirements? Will this help congregations focus on mission? Should Kirk Sessions as the local trustees rather than congregational members make the final decision about closure? How do we deal with historic buildings which are valued not just by the Church but the wider community? Could sales receipts be shared between congregations?
- (d) New procedures for applications for work at individual buildings, and for grant and loan assistance.

8.3. Trajectory

Whilst there is more work to be done on the review of buildings, it is necessary to set a trajectory in the new Presbytery Plan. The key points are as follows:

- Within each Parish Grouping where there are 4 buildings or less it is expected that at least 1 building will be closed over the next 10 years. Within each Parish Grouping where there are 5 buildings or more, it is expected that at least 2 buildings will be closed over the next 10 years. We have not at this point specified which buildings are to be closed. This will be determined in consultation with the congregations within each Parish Grouping.
- Two buildings have been designated by congregations as being non-essential for the purposes of the plan and therefore will be disposed of as soon as possible.
- The PPRG recognise that until the buildings review is completed, those congregations wishing to undertake refurbishment or building work, beyond the presbytery limit of £15,000, are in a difficult position. Therefore, it will be possible for congregations to apply for work to be approved on a case by case basis (where that work exceeds the current presbytery limit of £15,000). It will be necessary for the congregation to clearly demonstrate how the building meets the necessary criteria (as set out in the Toolkit). The application must be approved by the PPRG and the Property Committee, consulting with the Buildings Officer (if and when appointed) before being submitted to Presbytery.

8.4. Description of Buildings

It is vitally important that all buildings (apart from manses) are included in the presbytery plan. It is equally important that the layout of the buildings of each congregation can be easily identified. To this end, buildings are categorised according to the following criteria. This criteria is shown in the table.

1. Church building on its own (which may well include a vestry/session house/meeting room or small hall)
2. Integrated – church and significant hall space and ancillary rooms in an integrated building or suite of buildings
3. Adjacent – church and separate hall or other buildings within the same curtilage.
4. Proximate – church and hall are close by, but you have to leave the church grounds to get to the hall.
5. 3rd party – hall/toilets/kitchen provided by a 3rd party (normally a public hall)

9. Future Steps

It is important that congregations are given appropriate support in undertaking the tasks necessary to implement the plan. Therefore, the PPRG will work with ministers, Kirk Sessions and congregations (as appropriate) to help with negotiating and agreeing each Basis of Adjustment set out in the plan e.g. Basis of Guardianship and Basis of Parish Grouping (Covenant Agreement).

The PPRG undertakes to work with other presbytery committees on providing further guidance on the Five Marks of Mission as well as the provision of training around conducting worship and potential use of technology.

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and Kirk Sessions will be required to provide updates on progress against the plan.

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10.0 Summary Table

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation by end of Presbytery Plan	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
1	Upper Donside	2300	314	Unrestricted Charge (Vacant)	Guardianship 0.25 FTE Currently provided for by OLM acting as locum	Auchindoir Church & hall (1) Towie Church (5) Strathdon Church & hall (3)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period. Exploration of potential working relationship with Parish Grouping 2.
1	Noth	1600	185	Unrestricted charge	Unrestricted charge One FTEMWS	Noth Church & Fourteen Hall (4)	
						At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
2	Howe Trinity	4000	460	Unrestricted charge	Unrestricted charge One FTEMWS	Howe Trinity Church & Hall (2)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period. Exploration of potential working relationship with Parish Grouping 1.
2	Cushnie & Tough	1000	223	Unrestricted Charge (Vacant)	Guardianship 0.25 FTE Currently provided for by OLM acting as locum	Cushnie Church (1) Tough Church (1)	
						At least 1 building will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 2.5 FTEMWS		

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
3	Cluny	1171	164	Unrestricted Charge. Linked with Monymusk	It is expected that over the course of the next 5 years. There will be a reduction of 1 FTEMWS for this Parish Grouping.	Cluny Church & Hall (3)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
3	Monymusk	817	90	Unrestricted Charge. Linked with Cluny		Monymusk Church (5)	
3	Echt & Midmar	1400	244	Unrestricted charge		Echt Church (5) Midmar Church* (1)	
3	Kemnay	4500	413	Unrestricted charge		Kemnay Church & Church Centre (4)	
3	Kintore	3200	619	Unrestricted charge		Kintore Church (2)	
						At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 3 FTEMWS		

*This building has been categorised as 'C' rating by the Kirk Session

"Our building is not essential to ministry and/or there are other resources in our parish that can be used or purchased which would be a better fit."

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
4	Fintray Kinellar Keithhall	2950	131	Unrestricted Charge (Vacant)	Guardianship with potential locum 0.25		Fintray Church (1) Kinellar Community Hall*	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
4	Skene	12000	1033	Unrestricted charge	Unrestricted charge One FTEMWS One MDS (Currently Associate minister)	Children and Families Worker	Skene Kirk (1) Trinity Church Westhill (2)	
							At least 1 building will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 1.25 FTEMWS & 1MDS			

*This building is not owned by FKK but there are time slots available in the building for worship and other church activities. The church office is located here.

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
5	Foveran	2400	199	Unrestricted charge	<p>It is expected that over the course of the next 5 years there will be a reduction of 1 FTEMWS for this Parish Grouping.</p> <p>Total FTEMWS: 3</p> <p>One FTE Parish Worker (Ministries)</p> <p>0.5 FTE Parish Worker (Children and Families)</p> <p>0.5 FTE Parish Worker (Mission Development)</p>		Holyrood Chapel & Church hall (4)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
5	New Machar	3200	343	Unrestricted charge			New Machar Church & Pathway Centre (4)	
5	Ellon	15000	1265	Unrestricted charge			Ellon Parish Church (4) Ellon Church Centre	
5	Belhelvie	4750	305	Unrestricted charge			Belhelvie Church & Hall (3)	
							At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 3 FTEMWS & 2 MDS			

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
6	Methlick	1200	310	Unrestricted charge	It is expected that over the course of the next 5 years there will be a reduction of 1 FTEMWS for this Parish Grouping.	Shared Youth worker	Methlick Church & Stables (3)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
6	Barthol Chapel	800	66	Unrestricted Charge linked with Tarves		Shared Youth worker	Barthol Chapel Church (1)	
6	Tarves	2000	243	Unrestricted Charge linked with Barthol Chapel		Shared Youth worker	Tarves Church & Youth Hall (3)	
6	Udny & Pitmedden	2800	227	Unrestricted charge		Shared Youth worker	Udny Church* (1) Pitmedden Church (1)	
							At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 2 FTEMWS			

*This building has been categorised as 'C' rating by the Kirk Session

"Our building is not essential to ministry and/or there are other resources in our parish that can be used or purchased which would be a better fit."

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
7	Huntly Cairnie Glass	4000	568	Unrestricted charge	It is proposed that a Union take place between these two congregations with One FTEMWS. The timing of the union is to be determined through negotiation with the congregations.		Huntly Parish Church & Hall (3)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period in the new parish grouping.
7	Huntly Strathbogie Drumblade	2500	366	Unrestricted charge			Strathbogie Church (2)	
7	Insch Leslie Premnay Oyne	4000	309	Unrestricted charge		One FTEMWS	ILPO Church & Hall (4)	
							At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 2FTEMWS			

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
8	Inverurie West	5500	536	Unrestricted charge	It is expected that over the course of the next 5 years there will be a reduction of 1 FTEMWS for this Parish Grouping. It is recommended an OLM be appointed to this parish grouping as and when that becomes a possibility, and the congregations to consider the appointment of locally funded staff.		Inverurie West Church & Hall (3)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
8	Inverurie St Andrews	8300	887	Unrestricted charge			Inverurie St Andrews Church and Hall (2) New Hall (3)	
							At least 1 building will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 1 FTEMWS			

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
9	Culsalmond & Rayne	1150	153	Unrestricted Charge linked with Daviot	It is intended that these three congregations form part of a wider Parish Grouping across the Presbytery Boundary. There will be a reduction of 1 FTEMWS for this Parish Grouping.		Rayne Church (1)	Covenant Agreement to be developed within a 2 year period.
9	Daviot	1050	135	Unrestricted Charge linked with Culsalmond & Rayne			Daviot Church & Annex (3)	
9	Meldrum & Bourtie	4500	359	Unrestricted charge			Meldrum Church & Hall (4) Bourtie Church (1)	
							At least 2 buildings will be closed in 10 years.	
					Total: 1 FTEMWS			

Parish Grouping	Congregation Name	Population (2011 Census)	Roll at end of 2020	Current status	Plan for Congregation	Locally funded staffing	Buildings (numbers in brackets represent categorisation in 8.4)	Comments
10	Blairdaff & Chapel of Garioch	2000	285	Unrestricted Charge (Vacant)	Further options to be explored, including incorporation into a parish grouping, but in the first instance this charge is to be placed into Guardianship.		Blairdaff Church (1) Chapel of Garioch Church (1)	
							The future of the buildings will be determined by the further option agreed upon.	
					Total: 0FTEMWS			

Additional Posts	Presbytery appointment	One FTE Youth facilitator
	Presbytery appointment	One FTE Mission and Development Facilitator
Totals		15.75 FTEMWS 3 FTE MDS serving charges 2 FTE MDS Presbytery Posts

11.0 Presbytery Planning Review Group Membership

Rev Stella Campbell (Convenor)

Rev Dr John Cook

James McPherson

Rev Douglas McNab

Rev Joshua Mikelson

Heather Mikelson (currently on parental leave)

Margaret Pate

Rev Dr Alison Swindells

CONCURRED WITH

Appendix A – Provided by Presbytery Planning Task Group

BASIS OF PARISH GROUPING

The congregation of _____ (SC0_____) and the congregation of _____ (SC0_____) (and others if appropriate) shall form a Parish Grouping for a period of _____ years from the _____ day of _____, and that on the following terms and conditions:

1. **Name:** The name of the Parish Grouping shall be _____.
2. **Territorial Responsibility:** The bounds to be served by the Parish Grouping shall be _____ or as the Presbytery may determine.
3. **Property and Funds:** The property and funds belonging to or held on behalf of each congregation shall remain the property and funds of each congregation as at present.
4. **Kirk Sessions:** [*Statement defining the Moderator(s) of each Kirk Session concerned and whether or not the Kirk Sessions will come together as a joint meeting. If they are coming together, a definition on frequency and purpose is important.*]
5. **Congregational Management:** The temporal affairs of each congregation shall be administered as at present. The office-bearers of the congregations shall meet together annually or as they deem necessary to decide on their portion to related expenses, listed expenses and maintenance of the manse(s) and the salaries and related expenses of the other team members.
6. **Ministry Team:** [*Statement of those who will comprise the Ministry Team to serve the Parish Grouping, with details of method and terms of appointment(s).*]
7. **Ministry Team Support:** The stipend of the minister(s) shall be payable in terms of the National Stipend Scheme.
8. **Manse(s):** [*Statement concerning Manses available at time of agreement of Basis.*]
9. **Areas of Co-operation:** [*Statement about areas in which congregations agreeing to the Parish Grouping wish to co-operate, eg youth work, pastoral care, mission, etc.*]
10. **Power to Adjust:** While the articles and terms shall form the Basis of Parish Grouping for the congregations now agreeing, the congregations shall be free, like any other congregation, to adjust arrangements under the authority of the Presbytery as need may arise.

Appendix B – Secondary Principles of Presbytery Planning

[ACT 7 2003 CHURCH LAW - VII. APPRAISAL AND ADJUSTMENT ACT (ACT VII 2003) (AS AMENDED BY ACTS VIII 2004, III 2006, III 2008, VI 2011, VII 2014, VI 2015, VIII 2016 and XI 2017)]

(a) Communities:

Every community of every size in every location within Scotland is part of a Church of Scotland Parish. While population should no longer be the only principle in shaping Presbytery Plans, it still remains the starting point. Our calling as a church is not primarily to resource congregations: it is mission to everyone in the land.

(b) Ecumenism:

“The Commission readily acknowledges that reaching the people of Scotland is an ecumenical task and one to which the Church of Scotland contributes along with other denominations as partners in the gospel.” (8.8.1). If a particular community is well served by another denomination, there may be no need for the Presbytery to duplicate that. Where a community is equally well served by the Church of Scotland and another denomination the Presbytery should explore what local possibilities there might be for recognising each other’s ministry so that resources can be used elsewhere.

(c) The poor.

The General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed that the gospel imperative is priority to the poor. At a time when resources are scarce, it is tempting to take away from the most marginal communities where churches are often very fragile and small. However pressing the reasons may be locally, this must be resisted because it makes a mockery of the gospel and the repeated commitments of the General Assembly.

(d) Whole people of God:

This material’s primary aim is to assist the church in making the most effective use of paid ministries. However this takes place in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God. The Commission noted that “the living out of the commitment of Article III may well involve an increasing number of communities where the ministry is exercised largely by the eldership and membership of the Church, albeit under the oversight of an ordained minister.” (8.5.6) Therefore a further principle to guide Presbyteries in their deployment of ministries is how they might be used to encourage and enhance the ministry of the whole people of God.

(e) Congregations:

The church has “a commitment to maintain worshipping, witnessing and serving Christian congregations throughout Scotland.” (9.3.5). One of the ways in which the gospel finds visible expression is in committed congregations under the power of the Holy Spirit. They both express the gospel and commend the gospel. In their Planning, Presbyteries will identify congregations that are outward looking, which engage with their communities and the wider church and consider how they might build on these strengths.

(f) Mixed economy:

Whilst affirming the importance of the Parish system and recognising the importance of a sense of ‘place’ the Special Commission stated that this needs to be expressed in a variety of ways. It quotes Martyn Percy, “For the Church to find its place in the modern world, it will have to create new spaces for new communities and different opportunities for differentiated niche groups.” While in many communities the sense of place is best expressed in something physical and tangible, that is not universally true. The Church will need, for example, to discover how to relate to those whose belonging is primarily through networks or the virtual world.

(g) Financial responsibility:

Presbytery Planning does not mean ensuring that congregations which make a net contribution to central funds take priority. Nonetheless a degree of financial realism is required and it is appropriate that some consideration is given to congregational financial responsibility. Some congregations are more generous than comparable ones and all congregations are expected to make a financial contribution appropriate to their means. At present one third of congregations are net contributors and two thirds are net receivers. However, per capita giving can be much higher amongst some of the poorest congregations than it is in some of the wealthiest. It makes sense for Presbyteries to consider the complex financial picture and allocate ministerial resources to congregations that take their financial stewardship seriously.

(h) Buildings

There is a connection between ministry and church buildings, although that connection is neither uniform nor universal. At a national level there is a consensus that the Church of Scotland has too many buildings, numerous buildings that are under utilised, buildings that are too large for present day needs and buildings that are in the wrong place. At a local level however, almost every church building is deemed essential. There is no simple solution to this problem. The starting point however should be mission. Presbyteries will want to consider which buildings are essential and useful for the mission they envisage.