

Information on Parish Groupings

According to the current legislation it is possible to create a formal parish grouping between two or more churches in our Presbytery. The APPRAISAL AND ADJUSTMENT ACT (ACT VII 2003) states:

(vii) Parish Groupings

The Presbytery may declare that two or more charges shall have responsibility for a single area. The Basis of such an adjustment shall determine the extent to which the charges shall operate as a Parish Grouping, for instance in the sharing of worship, personnel, education resources, mission initiatives, congregational organisations etc.

More recently Ministries Council reported to the General Assembly that parish groupings could be used to create a 'Hub' style ministry. Their report in 2016 gave this as an example:

A parish grouping with a steering group with overall oversight regarding all the activities in the grouping. This would be a voluntary agreement, with ministers and Kirk Sessions having the power to opt-out or possibly veto decisions. (Possible under current legislation).

In order to create a Parish Grouping, we need to establish a Basis of Adjustment and agree this in our Presbytery Plan. Below you will find a template for such a basis which sets out an agreement between the churches as to what they will do together and what they will separately retain responsibility for. This would appear to fit with the discussions that have been ongoing between Howe Trinity and Cushnie and Tough.

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.