



A church that loves God, loves people and loves life. Youthful in spirit; generous at heart; faith-filled in confession; and inclusive in expression.



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## Introduction

The parish of Cults in lower Deeside is located on the northern banks of the River Dee approximately four miles to the west of Aberdeen and includes the communities of Cults, Milltimber and Bieldside. Cults Parish Church was formed by the union of Cults East and Cults West Parish Churches in 2005 and has approximately 730 members. The current vacancy arises due to the retirement of the first minister of the united charge, the Rev Ewen Gilchrist.

The parish population is growing with 550 new homes being built in Milltimber and a large proportion of a 3000-home development taking place in Countesswells over the next 15 years falling into our catchment area. .

The vision for Cults Parish Church is ‘the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom through service to the community, while remaining conscious of our obligations to the work of the wider church’.

The vision for Cults Parish Church is that it will continue to be:

- A source of spiritual energy, emanating from worship and fellowship in the sanctuary and through prayer, bible study groups and other Church organisations.
- Accessible and welcoming to all who live in the parish.
- Willing to engage with the needs of the world beyond the boundaries of the parish. The Church will continue to be a significant provider of funds to Mission and Renewal, and continue to support Christian Aid, Traidcraft and local charities such as the Instant Neighbour Trust and the Cyrenians.

The life of Cults Parish Church is characterised by an energy and enthusiasm which frequently expresses itself in new initiatives. There are many ways in which the parish church makes a warm, inclusive and imaginative contribution to its community, for example: -

- Our Hub Cafe is open three days a week, courtesy of a team of approximately 60 volunteers. It is a popular meeting place for all ages and a significant proportion of the surplus income is donated annually to local, national and international charities.
- Saturday morning “Summer Strawberry Teas” in the Kirk Centre helps establish the Kirk Centre as a focal point and meeting place in our community.
- ‘Music to Remember’ is a popular fortnightly singing group for people with dementia, their family, carers and friends.
- Our Christmas Tree Festival receives several hundred visitors, with trees sponsored by local community groups, shops and individuals.
- Messy Church (a monthly mid-week church event with crafts, activities, and a shared meal) aimed at young families continues to grow in numbers.
- A summer holiday club run by our Youth and Families worker and is open to the whole community.
- The Friday Café for S1-3 pupils is run by our Youth and Families Worker with involvement of S6 pupils and provides a sanctuary for after-school relaxation.



We communicate with our members through a lively and informative newsletter covering all aspects of church life which goes out to members nine times a year. In September, it is delivered to every household in the parish. The Church website is updated regularly and the various groups within the church and the congregation are increasingly aware of its importance in communicating with the



community. It is accessed frequently and is often the first port of call for newcomers as well as wedding and baptism enquiries.

Cults Parish Church is an inclusive congregation and in that respect the Kirk Session have decided to allow individuals who are in a civil partnership or a same sex marriage to be considered for the vacancy.



Cults Kirk Centre

## History of the Charge/Congregation

Cults Kirk has currently 730 members of whom 40% are male and 60% female. There is an average weekly attendance of just under 200. The age profile of the congregation is indicated in the table below.

Age profile of the congregation (2016)

Age	0-15	16-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	8%	3%	4%	10%	14%	23%	37%

There are 69 Elders and 14 Congregational Board members with almost equal gender representation. The office bearers are conscientious, committed and have over the last number of years achieved a great deal in improving and redeveloping the buildings associated with the Sanctuary and in the building of the Kirk Centre; this has created many opportunities for outreach and mission in the wider community.

The **Kirk Session** meets around four times a year and is responsible for spiritual affairs within the church. Six themed teams comprising elders and members of the congregation support the areas of 'Worship', 'Justice & Peace', 'Pastoral Care & Fellowship', 'Outreach', 'Faith Journey', and 'Youth'. These teams report to the Kirk Session.

### Faith Journey

The aim of the Faith Journey Core Group is to offer meetings, events and resources which feed faith. This is done through House Groups, Prayer Cards, [Bible Studies](#), and [Conferences/Retreats](#).

### Justice and Peace

The aim of the Justice & Peace Core Group is to take the faith we talk about in church and make it a reality in the world. We look after the [Traidcraft](#) partnership, [Eco Group](#), & the [church's charity work](#).

### Pastoral Care & Fellowship

The aim of the Pastoral Care & Fellowship Core Group is to develop the fellowship of the congregation and create a sense of belonging by Providing Sunday Transport, Care Group, [Bereavement Support & Music to Remember](#).

### Outreach

The aim of the Outreach Core Group is to encourage and support initiatives which engage with the wider community eg [Hub Cafe](#), [O50](#), [Monday Lunch Club](#), [Walking Group](#), [Music in the Sanctuary](#), Summer Strawberry Teas and more!

### Worship

The aim of the Worship Core Group is to bring other voices and insights into our experience of worship. We organise [special services](#), [lead worship](#) on occasion, explore prayer and oversee the [Choir and Orchestra](#).

### Youth

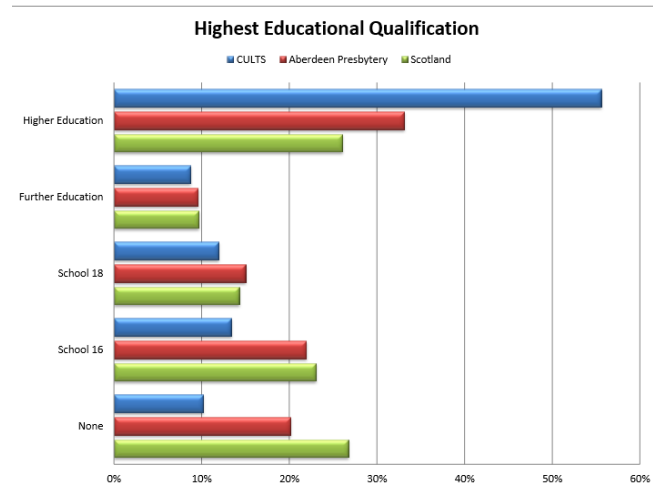
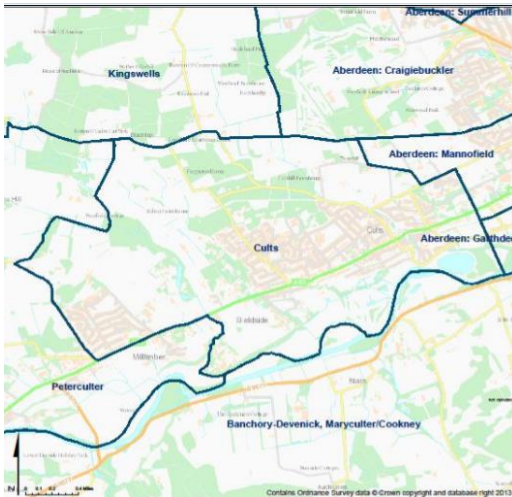
The aim of the Young People Core Group is to draw young people into the life of the church. We look after the running of the [Creche](#), [JAM Shed](#), [Friday Cafe](#), and [Messy Church](#), holiday clubs and cake-off specials.

The **Congregational Board** is chaired by the Minister and meets on average six times a year. The Kirk Session and Congregational Boards meet separately unless there is a specific reason to have all Trustees present. Delegated functions are allocated to the Finance, Property and Kirk Centre Management Committees

## Community profile of the congregation

Cults, on the northern bank of the River Dee is a highly desirable suburb some four miles to the south west of Aberdeen on the main route to Royal Deeside. The village itself has a semi-rural ambience and contains a number of shops and a hotel. It boasts a wealth of amenities, including a health centre, library and a golf course. The communities of Bielside and Milltimber lie further along the Dee to the west of Cults and they are all linked to the city by a regular bus service. There is a regular train and bus service to the central belt and there are very good air links to Europe and beyond through London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

The area is outwardly affluent, however it is not unaffected by the depression in the oil industry and beneath the surface lie the problems of unemployment, addiction, and an ageing population. There is a good choice of nursery and pre-school education and Cults and Milltimber both have well respected primary schools. Cults Academy, which was rebuilt in 2009 is a high performing six-year comprehensive state school serving the parish and beyond.



## Worship Life



Services of worship are conducted on a Sunday at 10.30 am. There is a crèche and Junior Church and during the summer months an additional family service is conducted at 9.30 am. Services are accompanied by both organ and piano with the involvement of a mini orchestra once a month. The organist is active in building up the choir and introducing new music to the services. Hymns mainly, but not exclusively, come from CH4.

Worship is best described as being Presbyterian in style, but contemporary with an emphasis on worshipping God with both emotion and intellect. What is said on a Sunday aims to help with everyday life during the week.

A much quieter, reflective evening service is held monthly during autumn and winter.

Morning services are recorded and CDs are delivered on Sunday afternoon to a number of people who are unable to attend. The recording is also available on the Church website. While data projection is

not currently available, consideration is currently being given as to how it might be installed without detriment to the ambiance of the sanctuary.

Formal communion takes place three times per year and children are welcome. Communion is celebrated informally, after morning service, in the months between the formal communion services and home communion is available on request.

During the past five years there have been 81 baptisms.

Special services take place at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, and for any special event such as Guild Week. Joint services take place with Peterculter Church (CoS) and St. Devenick's (Scottish Episcopalian) during Holy Week and a joint early morning service with St Devenick's on Easter Sunday.

The Worship Core Group is involved in the planning and conducting of the occasional service, particularly the 9.30 am services during the summer. There is a rota for readers of the scriptures and there is a printed order of service with intimations.

## Pastoral Care

Members living within the Parish, including the minister and his family are each allocated a District Elder. It is expected that in addition to delivering the magazine and communion invitations, the Elder will endeavour to keep in touch with those in their District ensuring that where appropriate the minister is made aware of any pastoral care issues. Members are encouraged to make the minister aware of all who are admitted to hospital and anyone at home in need of a visit.

The Care Group which operates under the umbrella of the Pastoral Care Core Group provides one-to-one visiting on a regular basis to those in need, assisting where necessary with activities such as shopping. In addition, many members of the congregation work away quietly providing care and supporting friends and neighbours on an informal basis. A transport coordinator can assist when required with the organisation of transport to hospital appointments, church, etc.

A Prayer Diary is produced monthly and the Prayer Group meets regularly for prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, and to talk about praying. A prayer team will pray for individuals or about more confidential matters as directed by the minister.

'Music to Remember', a singing group to support people with dementia and their carers, family and friends has grown from strength to strength and is now firmly established in our calendar of events as is a Bereavement Support Group. For those who are able to get out and about, there is an O50 (over-50s) group and a coffee shop within the Cults Kirk Centre.

Enquiry and marriage preparation classes are organised by the minister, and have been held over three Sundays each Spring.

There are three care homes within the parish as well as an assisted living facility and sheltered housing. Members of the congregation hold monthly services at the Deeside Care Home in Cults and the minister in conjunction with the ministers of St Devenick's and Peterculter churches conduct short monthly services at Tor-Na-Dee Care Home in Milltimber. Services have also been held at Dunmail Manor (sheltered housing) in Cults and the recently built Florence Court (assisted living development), also in Cults.



There are on average 40 funerals a year of which around 50% are members of the congregation.



## Christian Education

Our church continues to develop its philosophy for Christian education. This is not a one-person job but involves many of our members working with different groups, at different levels and in different capacities.

There is currently provision for young children (0-5), older children (6-11) and teenagers (12-17) by way of crèche, JAM (Jesus and Me) and SHED (they meet in a shed). Like all organisations we are affected by the challenges and pressures of 21st century living. Young families find it difficult to commit to regular church attendance. Considered religious evolution is required to attract and remain relevant to younger worshippers and volunteer fatigue is an on-going challenge. Attracting children, youth and young families into the life of our church continues to be a high priority for us.

As well as Sunday Worship, we have many other opportunities for youth, young families and the not-so-young to participate in. They can explore, learn about and develop their faith under the church umbrella.

- We have a Faith Journey Group offering bible studies, meetings and events to feed Faith.
- We ran an Alpha Course last Autumn which was well attended and not only by current Cults Parish Church members.
- We host "Questions and Croissants" monthly on a Saturday morning, a lively discussion about anything to do with religion and spirituality. These meetings are open to all.
- We currently have an Acts Group, a weekly meeting exploring the New Testament book of Acts and its relevance to modern day worship. We will be looking at Revelations next.

Wedding preparation groups are on-going and provide an important contact route to "young adults" looking to initiate contact with church life.

We strive to offer learning opportunities for all through a diverse range of faith-based groups and recognise the need to be relevant to different audiences and available at times that fit in with modern living.



## Ecumenical Context

Cults Parish Church is part of a cluster of churches set up by Aberdeen Presbytery and includes Peterculter, Mannofield, Craigiebuckler, Holburn West, and Kingswells churches. There have been various events to bring the congregations together. There are long-standing good relations with our close neighbours, Peterculter Church and St Devenick's Scottish Episcopal Church.

The other denomination within the parish is Hillview Community Church, formerly an International Baptist church. The clergy from the wider denominational churches meet monthly for food and fellowship.

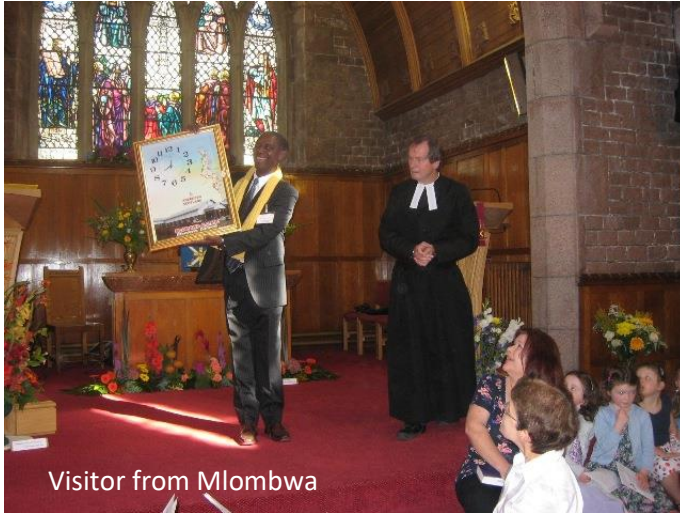
Joint services have taken place with the churches in the cluster and regularly during Holy Week with Peterculter Church and St Devenick's.

Nearly all the local churches take part in the World Day of Prayer service including St Mary's Roman Catholic Church at Blairs.

Every Saturday, Cults Kirk Centre is the meeting place for local Muslims, for the teaching of the Quran to their young people and good relations exist with this community.

## World Church

Cults Parish Church is always keen to engage with the needs of the world beyond the boundaries of the parish, both in the UK and abroad. The Justice and Peace core group exists to raise awareness of the Christian dimension to contemporary issues and is the umbrella under which a number of other groups operate. The Church is a significant provider of funds to Ministries & Mission and an enthusiastic supporter of Christian Aid and Traidcraft. There is also a real commitment to fair trade with a weekly Traidcraft stall and merchandise supplied to five other churches in Aberdeen. The Church is partnered with Mlombwa Parish Church in Blantyre, Malawi and there are continuing attempts to develop this partnership beyond that of financing projects in Malawi.



Visitor from Mlombwa

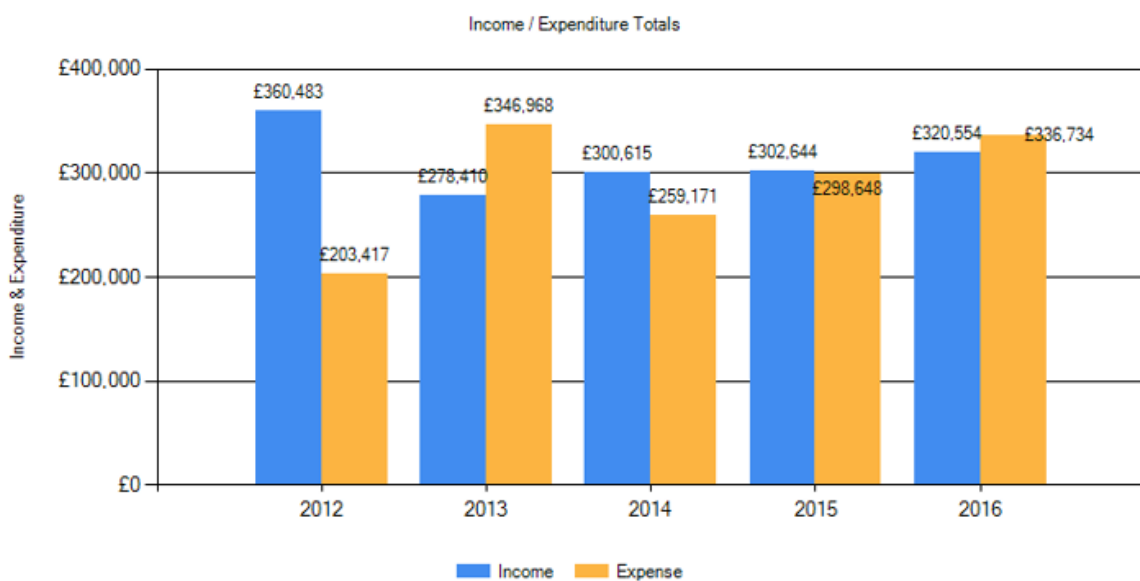


Traidcraft stall on Sundays

## Stewardship and Finance

The Ministries and Mission contribution (£99,194) paid by Cults Parish Church to the Church of Scotland is one of the highest in the Presbytery of Aberdeen. The Church has the good fortune to be located in an affluent suburb of Aberdeen and has a strong financial team who are committed to safeguarding its resources.

As far as income and expenditure are concerned, there was a surplus of £3,996 in 2015, and a deficit £16,180 in 2016. A further planned budgetary deficit of £5,794 has been predicted for 2017, however, this is against a background of over £400,000 in total funds. This will enable the church to extend its commitment to the employment of a Youth and Families Worker which is supported by 'Go For It' funding from the Church of Scotland through to the end of 2019.



A link is provided to the annual accounts submitted to OSCR at the end of this document and a one-page summary of the Church accounts is appended to this document.

The congregation participates in the National Stewardship campaign and in 2016 givings increased by £12k as a result. Another valuable source of income is from our hall rentals and contributions from church organisations and this offsets the running costs of the Kirk Centre.

The Church Eco Group is part of the Justice and Peace Core Group and the Church have two Eco awards, the second of which was awarded in 2014. Our new building was designed with an awareness of the impact on the environment and incorporates for example, an air source heat pump for the provision of heating.



## Staffing

The minister is supported by a full time Youth and Families worker, part-funded by a three-year grant from 'Go For It', two years of which remain. An organist has recently been appointed who plays both the organ and the piano in the sanctuary and leads the choir.



Secretarial support is available five mornings per week on a job share basis. The secretaries are based in the Church Office in the Kirk Centre and are supported, at busy times, by volunteer receptionists.

The Hub café is managed by two employees, one who works two days and the other one day per week. They are supported by about 60 volunteers.

The Church is fortunate in employing a maintenance supervisor, who works under the direction of the Congregational Board to ensure that the premises on both sites are properly maintained.

Cleaners are employed on both sites.

## Church, Manse and Halls

### Sanctuary

The medium sized sanctuary was designed by Marshall McKenzie and opened in 1916. It was refurbished in 2008. With comfortable chairs, carpets and underfloor heating the sanctuary provides an ambiance which is conducive to worship and fellowship. There is provision for wheel chair access, large print hymnbooks, and an induction loop system for the deaf. The sanctuary is not a Sunday-only building, but is also used for concerts and other one-off events.

Attached to the sanctuary is a traditional church hall with kitchen. This is used by a range of church based and community groups and is where coffee is served following Sunday worship. Separate from the main building is the smaller North Hall, built in 1980. The play group meets here during the week and it is used by JAM on Sundays. There is also a large shed which provides a relaxed venue for young people to meet.

### Cults Kirk Centre

The opening of the Kirk Centre at the former East Cults Church site in 2013 was the fruition of many years patience, generosity and hard work: it was one of the pivotal visions at the time of the union in 2005. Built on two floors, it comprises two large halls, which can be divided, two small meeting rooms, offices for the minister and secretarial staff, and the Hub café.

The Hub café is a major focus of outreach to the wider community and is open three days a week. It is run by two job-share managers, who are supported by about 60 volunteers. Profits are shared between the Church, local, and national charities.

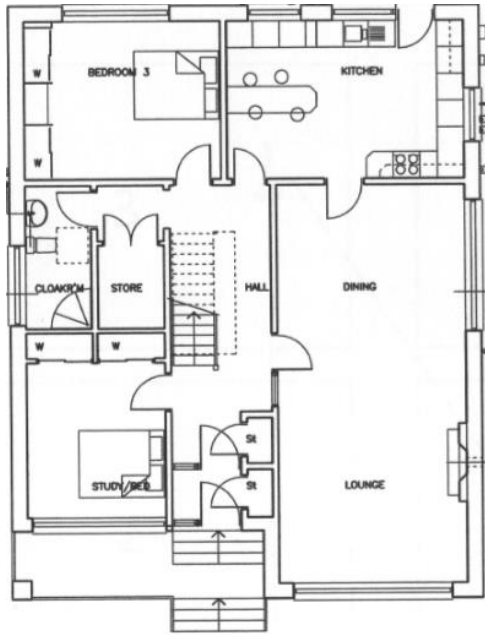
Wide use is made of all our buildings by our Church organisations such as the Guild, Choir, Badminton Group, and Short-mat Bowling and community groups such as the 050 (over 50s), playgroup, mothers and toddlers, dancing, exercise and yoga.

### Manse

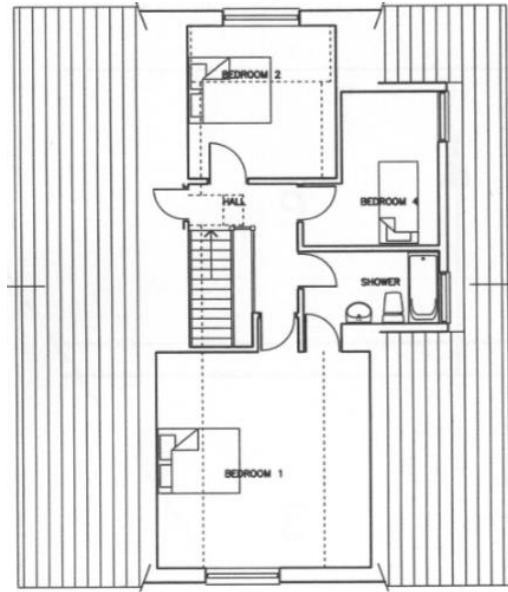
A modern well-appointed four-bedroomed manse is a short distance from the church.







GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Family Fun Day Cults Kirk



## Web links for further information

Church of Scotland Census Data

[http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics\\_for\\_mission/parish\\_profiles/311887.pdf](http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics_for_mission/parish_profiles/311887.pdf)

Cults Parish Church web site

<http://www.cultsparishchurch.co.uk/>

Cults Parish Church Magazine

<http://www.cultsparishchurch.co.uk/WordPress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/mag1706.pdf>

Cults Parish Church Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/cultsparishchurch/>

Cults Parish Church Annual Reports and Accounts

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/search-oscr/charity-details?number=SC017517#results>

## Appendix 1 – Financial Summary

## Cults Parish Church

## "One Page" Financial Summary 2015 to 2017

2015 Actual £		2016 Actual £	2017 Budget £
<b>Income</b>			
119,788	Offerings	126,093	128,200
21,478	Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	27,586	28,250
3,627	Contributions from Organisations	15,960	12,000
45,737	Rental income	56,137	60,000
13,020	Other Income	11,977	12,000
1,200	Legacies	1,300	-
<b>204,850</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>239,053</b>	<b>240,450</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
93,552	Church of Scotland Ministries & Mission	97,139	99,194
6,141	Ministry, Presbytery dues & Pulpit Supply	6,630	6,900
53,794	Salaries (after charging Youth/Appeal/GFI & Hub)	68,590	58,180
9,150	Fabric repairs, upkeep of grounds, etc.	9,123	8,650
14,412	Heat and light	14,933	15,000
5,646	Insurance	5,849	5,700
2,745	Council tax/Water & ACC Charges	4,294	6,900
6,153	Office expenses	5,848	5,800
13,314	Other Exps (Cleaning contract, Mag., Music Equip., Misc.)	15,104	14,200
9,037	Depreciation	11,850	12,000
213,944	Sub-Total	239,360	232,524
-	Extraordinary Property Refurbishment	13,863	20,000
<b>213,944</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>253,223</b>	<b>252,524</b>
<b>(9,094)</b>	<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>	<b>(14,170)</b>	<b>(12,074)</b>
7,738	Add: Increase in General Funds (re CKC Contents)	14,840	15,000
(12,000)	Increase/(decrease) in designated Youth fund	0	0
13,351	Increase/(decrease) in restricted Appeal funds	(17,112)	(8,720)
4,001	Increase/(decrease) in church organisation funds	262	0
<b>3,996</b>	<b>Net Movement in Funds per Report</b>	<b>(16,180)</b>	<b>(5,794)</b>
<b>31/12/2015</b>	<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>31/12/2016</b>	<b>31/12/2017</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>			
25,782	Fixed assets	28,772	31,772
9,942	Debtors - tax and interest	18,111	14,416
335,207	Bank and cash	307,143	302,044
(11,505)	less: Creditors	(11,042)	(11,042)
<b>359,426</b>	<b>Net Assets - church</b>	<b>342,984</b>	<b>337,190</b>
<b>65,489</b>	<b>Net Assets - organisations</b>	<b>65,751</b>	<b>65,751</b>
<b>424,915</b>		<b>408,735</b>	<b>402,941</b>
<b>Funds</b>			
213,446	General Funds	214,116	217,042
100,000	Designated Fabric Fund	100,000	100,000
1,726	Designated Youth Fund	1,726	1,726
39,335	Restricted Appeal Fund	22,223	13,503
3,318	Restricted Grant Family Fund	3,318	3,318
1,601	Endowment Fund: Maggie & Sidney Reid Bequest	1,601	1,601
<b>359,426</b>		<b>342,984</b>	<b>337,190</b>
<b>65,489</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds - Organisations</b>	<b>65,751</b>	<b>65,751</b>
<b>424,915</b>		<b>408,735</b>	<b>402,941</b>