

The Presbytery of Aberdeen

Proposed Plan for the Presbytery
October 2019



The Church of Scotland

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Foreword

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”^a, comments the writer of Hebrews. The writer’s sentiments seem an appropriate place to begin as we prepare, in faith, for the future of the mission and ministry of the Church of Scotland in our city. Not only do we look forward to the vision of the Kingdom of God to which Jesus encourages us but also to a renewal of our Church as we seek to share the good news of the gospel in our city and its varied communities.

The purpose of the Presbytery Plan is to help all of us in our shared future to find a shape and structure which will help us be most fruitful in sharing that good news we have in our city, recognising that our congregations are varied both in their character and location within the city. That diversity is, we believe, a strength rather than a weakness. The Plan is a tool to help us renew our life, to regroup our strength, and to go out into our communities reinvigorated to share the gospel in new and innovative ways.

The Plan as you receive it is what we believe to be a faithful attempt to build on the foundation of years of work in praying, reflecting on, and imagining what it means to be church in our time. We seek to build on the work of Presbytery’s Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) over a number of years in its ‘Our Shared Future’ dialogue with Presbytery and our congregations, and most recently on the foundational VISTA Committee Report presented to Presbytery last March at a Conference Session, and approved at the June meeting of Presbytery as the basis for the new Plan.

Over the last number of years it has been exciting for us in PDC to have many congregations within the Presbytery’s bounds come to us looking for resources to work together on new initiatives for mission together, and to see how in some areas of Presbytery congregations have naturally, and without any prompting by PDC, envisaged a future together, both in ministry and mission. All of this evolving change also laid the foundation for this Plan.

Of course, the national context of the Radical Action Plan and the acceptance of the need to radically move our resources from buildings to investing more in people also provided a helpful backdrop to the Plan contained in this document. We feel that the Spirit has been gently guiding us to this point. We are gratified that so many of you in Presbytery have already been journeying along the direction of travel which the Plan seems to imbed in our shared life for the next 10 years in the Presbytery of Aberdeen.

We, as a Committee offer this Plan as our best endeavour to be faithful to the principles set by both Presbytery in its VISTA Committee Report, and by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It provides a shape and structure for the future, and we commend it to you.

^a *Hebrews 11:1 (NRSV)*

A Vision for the Future of Aberdeen Presbytery^b

Context

*The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
Knowing they're wanted and loved by their Lord.
The Church is wherever Christ's followers are trying
To live and to share out the good news of God.*

Carol Ikeler

This Vision Statement should be read in the following context: the instruction to the Council of Assembly “to return to the General Assembly of 2019 with a radical action plan for 2019-2022 to achieve much needed reform within our Church”; the instruction to Presbyteries “to challenge themselves in their Presbytery Plans to be robust, imaginative and courageous in reducing the number of charges, creating ministry hubs, and enabling new pioneer and new church planting opportunities”; the instruction to Kirk Sessions “to meet in conference, to reflect on the state of decline of the national Church and in particular how that affects the Church locally and determine what their vision and mission is for the next three years in collaboration with Presbytery Planning teams;”^c and the forthcoming consultation by the General Trustees on their vision of a church estate as “well-equipped spaces in the right places.”

Like other Presbyteries, Aberdeen faces the challenge of responding to a continuing decline in nominal church membership (down by nearly 12% between 2014 and 2017) as well as attendance; a reducing and aging cohort of active volunteers; a shortage of office-bearers with expertise in finance and property matters; fewer Ministers of Word and Sacrament (only seven of our current parish ministers were ordained this century); a national commitment to maintaining a territorial ministry; and a secular society that regards the Christian Church as irrelevant or even harmful. While half of our congregations in Aberdeen still contribute more than is needed to meet the costs of providing a parish minister, one third are unable to generate enough income to do so.

This is all the more challenging for Presbytery in its role as an effective agent for change, since the primary allegiance of many of us is, understandably, to our own congregational family (however small, elderly or poorly resourced); to our own church building (however much in need of major repair or refurbishment), where our friends and family attended Sunday School and were baptised or married; or to our local parish (which is part of our identity as citizens even if we now live elsewhere in the city). Overcoming such emotional and social barriers to change is not an easy undertaking, requiring as it does an acceptance that the status quo is not a viable option.

Finally, the current plan for reshaping the provision of ministry and mission envisaged and agreed by the Presbytery of Shetland is at once a challenge, a stimulus and an opportunity for us too to reimagine our future as part of the worshipping and witnessing Body of Christ.

^b Approved as a basis for the Presbytery Plan by Presbytery on 25 June 2019

^c General Assembly 2018 Remits Booklet p.31

Vision

Our vision is a Presbytery which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, encourages and enables our congregations to re-imagine and renew their life and work for mission in the 21st century, worshipping and witnessing in a sustainable and mutually supportive network of Christian communities, using well-equipped spaces strategically located across the city, served and led by ministry teams, with the knowledge and skills needed to inspire and equip our members for service and discipleship.

In practice this will mean that Presbytery:

- Seeks always to discern God's will for us through prayerful reflection
- Focuses on our mission: to worship, to serve and to make disciples
- Agrees a plan for getting from where we are now to where we want to be, together with a series of short- and medium-term targets for measuring progress
- Supports our congregations to re-imagine what it means to be "church" in 21st century Aberdeen; encourages them to commit to reshaping our physical presence in the city; and facilitates discussions as to how they might contribute to this reshaping
- Encourages new forms of church born out of mission among those on whom existing forms have little or no impact
- Fosters in our congregations a strong sense of mutual responsibility and a commitment to sharing resources, in furtherance of the General Assembly's "priority to the poor"
- Works with the General Trustees to identify and redevelop or dispose of those church buildings that are either no longer fit for purpose or in the right place; and re-invests the proceeds of sale in a number (yet to be agreed) of strategically placed and well-resourced church centres, each serving a defined area of the city and supporting a network of local expressions of church to worship and witness in their particular community
- Ensures that these church centres and the networks they support are appropriately resourced and are staffed by teams with a variety of roles and gifts; and invests in the training and development of our members for leadership, mission and service.

"They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40: 31)

31 December 2018

Principles of Presbytery Planning

This Presbytery Plan seeks to be faithful to the Vision for Presbytery, agreed by Presbytery in June, as well as the direction of the General Assembly of the Church which set Mission as the primary principle for Presbytery. In addition, General Assembly has provided eight secondary principles: Communities, Ecumenism, The Poor, the Whole People of God, Congregations, a Mixed Economy, Financial Responsibility and Buildings. The new Plan also seeks to take seriously the looming shortage of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and the need to lose seven posts from the current Plan which has a total of 38 posts in it.

Mission Mission remains the primary principle for planning. This Plan is not about decline, although it is shaped by that reality, and that of an ever more secular environment. The Plan seeks to bring us together that we might draw strength from our faith, fellowship and shared resources to go back out into the mission field of our city and communities. We believe the future can be bright for the Kirk and this Plan is not in any way presented despondently. It is an active plan.

Each part of the Presbytery Plan is deliberately structured to resource localities with Ministers and full-time equivalents in order to lead and train the whole people of God in mission and outreach, in worship and service. Each locality has been given a goal to do a new thing in their area. We have tried in every area to set a goal and some direction. Yet, at the same time, we have no desire to take away autonomy from these localities but rather to leave to their discretion and imagination the working out of how these initiatives may be carried forward. The Plan does aim to ask much of us, but not to be overly prescriptive about how we might all respond to the challenge it sets us over the next ten years. Critical to the plan in each locality is the creation of new worshipping communities across Presbytery. The Joint Emerging Church Group Report to the 2019 General Assembly set the Church a target of 100 new worshipping communities in a decade's time. The union of charges to form larger, team-based units, is not meant to encourage retreat. The opposite is true. We hope these units will then use their resources to explore and plant new worshipping communities across the city. We believe there is the resource, experience and expertise across Presbytery to make this an achievable goal.

Communities We have tried as best as we are able to shape the Presbytery Plan along the lines of current and future geographical patterns within the city, including taking in to account areas earmarked for development in the recent Local Area Plan by the City Council. This is also reflected in the balance of resourcing between localities in the Plan.

Ecumenism Previous attempts to engage with partner churches and denominations in the city have had mixed results. Sometimes our denominational structures can get in the way of formal ecumenical partnership or overcomplicate relationships. On the other hand, many congregational ecumenical relationships (and most recently cross-Presbytery working in areas of social concern, such as support for the New Scots Refugees) have provided a significant context for collaborative working across denominations. The Monthly Prayer Gatherings, held in churches of different denominations, have over the past three years also provided opportunities for meaningful engagement. Some congregations have also shared their worship spaces with other denominations. While this Plan does not contain any formal

new ecumenical structures, we believe that local congregations should be encouraged to collaborate with ecumenical partners wherever possible.

The Poor In this Plan we continue to support poorer communities with resources for ministry: through the provision of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and indeed by pooling resources for the future in localities to better support mission and ministry in these communities. We do not believe ministry should be confused with the presence of a building, and certainly not buildings which are neither fit for purpose nor which impose an impossible burden on a congregation. This burden inevitably ends up distracting from rather than enabling mission in these communities. The balance of resources allocated to localities in the Plan seeks to embed this principle.

Whole People of God The emphasis on the provision of full time Ministers of Word and Sacrament continues to recognise the need to support and enable ministry to the whole people of God. We believe that a primary function of Ministers of Word and Sacrament is to build up the ministry of the whole people of God. Although not specifically dealt with in this document, PDC believe Presbytery must urgently consider how to organise and invest in training of lay people in our churches to share in the leadership and task of mission and ministry, and organise such training at a local level rather than depend on the national agencies of the Church.

People are the greatest resource Presbytery has, and we must set aside the resources and mechanisms for investing in people locally if we are to meet future challenges.

Congregations Recent encouragement and support for congregations to be increasingly outward looking, engaging with communities and the wider church, and building on these strengths is the basis for the future envisioned in our Presbytery Plan.

Mixed Economy “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.”^d Our Plan addresses this principle by encouraging and supporting the establishment of new initiatives in a number of the localities within Presbytery, whilst leaving to each locality the working out of how to form that Fresh Expression of a worshipping and serving community or initiative. The Plan seeks to be ambitious but not burdensome.

Financial Responsibility This has been a principle in all our considerations – we must take financial sustainability into consideration as we plan for the future. Financial responsibility does not mean that we abandon our principle of sharing resources across the Presbytery, but rather take seriously the need to be responsible with our resources. That financial responsibility will mean church life is not marked by constant scrabbling to make ends meet, eating up investment income to fund day to day expenses, or building up unsustainable deficits in order to try to maintain the status quo.

Buildings The future of our buildings is integrally caught up with the future of our congregations. A joint Committee of Presbytery’s Property Committee and PDC with the assistance of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland undertook consultation and then visitation of each and every church building within Presbytery, and then through thoughtful consideration produced for PDC a report with recommendations. We are grateful to the Committee and to the General Trustees for completing this considerable and

^d Martin Percy, quoted in the report of the Special Commission on the Third Article Declaratory 2010, and subsequently in the Ministries Council’s paper on the Principles for Planning.

challenging task. We were greatly reassured by the unanimity of their findings as a committee and we wholeheartedly accept their recommendations. They are incorporated into this Plan, with our gratitude and wholehearted support.

To comply with Act VII (2003) on Appraisal, Presbytery is expected to classify every ecclesiastical building in every charge in the Presbytery (except manses and houses occupied by retired ministers and/or their spouses), according to one of the following declarations:

- a) That the building is expected to remain in use beyond the lifetime of the Plan;
- b) That the building is expected to be closed during the lifetime of the current Plan, under an adjustment contained therein or otherwise;
- c) That the building is expected to be disposed of as soon as possible under an adjustment contained in the Plan or otherwise;
- d) That the Presbytery is unable to make a determination in relation to a building;

and in cases (b), (c) and (d) the General Trustees shall be empowered, at their discretion and in consultation with the Assembly's Committee, to refuse any application made in respect of that building in terms of Regulations I 1998 regarding Work at Ecclesiastical Buildings (as amended by 2000 Regulations VII).

In some cases, buildings are earmarked for disposal and are listed C in the Presbytery Plan. While in some cases disposal may not be possible until change occurs through the demission of ministers and subsequent readjustment of congregations, we hope in some cases it may be possible for localities themselves to embrace the Plan by moving ahead more quickly. However, Ministers with unrestricted tenure in particular, have rights in church law, and change can only happen with their consent. It is our hope that even where this is the case, Ministers may feel secure enough to be flexible, be courageous enough to provide leadership, and assist Presbytery in moving towards implementation of the Plan.

In some cases where we recommend disposal of buildings, we also recommend the building of new purpose-built facilities. Where these are to be shared by a future congregation brought about by readjustment, we recommend that those congregations, together with the assistance of the appropriate Presbytery committees and the General Trustees, begin work on planning for such a facility (e.g. earmarking a new site, gathering costs estimates etc.) as soon as possible after the agreement of the Plan by Presbytery. In each instance Presbytery will look for a report on progress not more than one year following the agreement of the Plan.

Where in a locality any buildings are recommended for retention and placed in category A, it is with the understanding that certain suggested investment may be required in them for future shared use by the coming together of a number of congregations which will inherit them as one congregation. Again, in this instance, together with the assistance of PDC and the General Trustees, we ask that those congregations collaboratively plan for a scheme of works with cost implications, reporting back to Presbytery not later than one year after agreement of the Plan.

In every case the decision on buildings has been with future mission needs in mind, and a realism about how much we can afford to invest in buildings. In the city centre there are two buildings, one categorised as being A (subject to refurbishment) and the other D. More is said about them within the Plan, suffice to say, the future of both, as with all buildings, should be influenced by the Presbytery's needs for mission and ministry. The shape of mission and ministry should determine what buildings we need, and not vice versa.

The full Report of the Necessary Buildings Group is attached to this Plan in Appendix A.

The Presbytery Plan – Overview Table

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Bridge of Don Oldmachar | 178 | 11,263 | 9,845 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | RT | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | |
| Bridge of Don St Columba's | 213 | 11,253 | 9,835 | UT | | RT | | | A | |
| TOTAL | | | 19,680 | | | | | | | |

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|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Bucksburn Stoneywood | 384 | 4,321 | 3,854 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | C | New build church in Stoneywood Corridor |
| Dyce | 873 | 5,908 | 5,262 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Newhills | 355 | 3,684 | 3,312 | UT | | | | | A | |
| TOTAL | | | 12,428 | | | | | | | |

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|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Mastrick | 204 | 11,066 | 9,647 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 1 building with satellite worship | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | New build church on new or Mastrick site, continued community worship in Stockethill |
| Northfield | 141 | 6,625 | 5,756 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Stockethill | 87 | 4,062 | 3,360 | UT | | | | | | |
| Summerhill | 115 | 5,026 | 4,083 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Total | | | 22,846 | | | | | | | |

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|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Craigiebuckler | 715 | 6,248 | 5,162 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, multi-site | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | Transportation to new site at Countesswells |
| Cults | 694 | 9,059 | 6,984 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Kingswells | 308 | 4,915 | 3,877 | UT | | | | | C | Community worship |
| Mannofield | 912 | 4,951 | 4,169 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Peterculter | 523 | 5,639 | 4,731 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Total | | | 24,923 | | | | | | | |

Presbytery of Aberdeen

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Ferryhill | 307 | 6,915 | 5,271 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | |
| South Holburn | 409 | 6,210 | 4,904 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Garthdee | | | 4,000 | | | | | | | Fresh Expression |
| Ruthrieston West | 301 | 4,578 | 3,858 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Total | | | 14,715 | | | | | | | |

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| South St Nicholas Kincorth | 317 | 14,359 | 11,747 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | C | New build church in Cove |
| Torry St Fittick's | 306 | 11,803 | 8,596 | UT | | | | | A | |
| TOTAL | | | 20,343 | | | | | | | |

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| High Hilton | 298 | 6,183 | 4,941 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 1 building with satellite worship | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | |
| Middlefield | 94 | 5,844 | 4,687 | G | | | | | C | Fresh Expression |
| Woodside | 235 | 7,468 | 5,731 | UT | | | | | C | |

| | | |
|-------|--------|--|
| TOTAL | 15,359 | |
|-------|--------|--|

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|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| St Machar's Cathedral | 467 | 5,134 | 3,557 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 3 buildings | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | A | St George's Tillydrone used for ancillary accommodation, new build church on new site |
| St Mary's | 291 | 6,794 | 4,995 | UT | | | | | C | |
| St Stephen's | 147 | 7,369 | 5,060 | UT | | | | | C | |
| St George's Tillydrone | 82 | 4,110 | 2,753 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Total | | | 16,365 | | | | | | | |

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Holburn West | 317 | 4,022 | 3,130 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 4 buildings (1 in city centre) | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | |
| Midstocket | 423 | 7,473 | 5,828 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Queen's Cross | 403 | 6,815 | 5,112 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Rubislaw | 398 | 1,970 | 1,529 | UT | | | | | C:Church A:Centre | |
| Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting | 305 | 3,422 | 2,371 | LEP; URC termed tenure | | | | | D | |
| St Mark's | 422 | 14,177 | 10,355 | UT | | | | | A (if refurb) | |

Presbytery of Aberdeen

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| City Centre Initiative | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | 28,352 | | | | | | | |

Total Staffing Requirement 31

The Presbytery Plan – A Summary for Each Locality

The Bridge of Don

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Bridge of Don Oldmachar | 178 | 11,263 | 9,845 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | RT | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | |
| Bridge of Don St Columba's | 213 | 11,253 | 9,835 | UT | | RT | | | A | |
| TOTAL | | | 19,680 | | | | | | | |

We suggest the Plan for the Bridge of Don be one united charge, with three full time staff including two ministers of Word and Sacrament working in a team. Both buildings are to be retained and the recommendations of the Necessary Buildings Survey (NBS) to be carried out.

Following conversation between both charges and with PDC earlier in the year we suggest Oldmachar be allowed to call a minister on Reviewable Tenure for a seven-year period, and the situation then to be reviewed. If in the meantime there were a change in the status of St Columba's the plan would be implemented before the end of that seven-year period.

Work on mission in this area of the city is already well underway and we encourage both congregations in their collaborative efforts in this task.

Brimmond

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Bucksburn Stonewood | 384 | 4,321 | 3,854 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | C | New build church in Stonewood Corridor |
| Dyce | 873 | 5,908 | 5,262 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Newhills | 355 | 3,684 | 3,312 | UT | | | | | A | |
| TOTAL | | | 12,428 | | | | | | | |

In the Brimmond area the Plan foresees one congregation with two centres of worship and other activity. One of those centres is a new worship space and facility in the Stonewood/Dyce Corridor, the other being the current church and halls at Newhills. In line with the NBS we agree that neither of the current buildings in Bucksburn or Dyce is likely to best serve a united congregation going forward. The opportunity to secure a purpose-built modern facility for mission and ministry in the area is one that should be seized, using the resources gained by sale of the current buildings. The area would be served by one team, on two sites following any vacancy taking place at Newhills in the future. Meantime, a team should begin to be formed by a Union of Bucksburn Stonewood and Dyce congregations if at all possible, within the restraints of the planning process.

North Aberdeen

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Mastrick | 204 | 11,066 | 9,647 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 1 building with satellite worship | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | New build church on new or Mastrick site, continued community worship in Stockethill |
| Northfield | 141 | 6,625 | 5,756 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Stockethill | 87 | 4,062 | 3,360 | UT | | | | | | |
| Summerhill | 115 | 5,026 | 4,083 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Total | | | 22,846 | | | | | | | |

In this locality, Mastrick and Summerhill are already both in Deferred Union, and we believe this would make a good genesis for a Team Ministry for the future, with Northfield and Stockethill to be added as soon as possible. As in many parts of the city, we believe the sooner moves could be made to Union the better, while respecting the rights of ministers and congregations. The Northfield, Mastrick and Summerhill buildings should all be disposed of and worship moved to one site in the locality – either a brand-new site or else a new build on the Mastrick site. No other site should be retained. We believe that the inclusion of the Stockethill congregation (whose current parish straddles North Anderson Drive) would bring much benefit with their considerable experience of forming ecclesiastical communities in community buildings. Even after the regrouping of worship and activity on one site, we believe across the new parish it may be possible to offer worship or other activities in other buildings and in innovative ways. Together we believe these congregations and their leadership have the potential to discern how this might be done successfully.

West Aberdeen

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Craigiebuckler | 715 | 6,248 | 5,162 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, multi-site | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | Transportation to new site at Countesswells |
| Cults | 694 | 9,059 | 6,984 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Kingswells | 308 | 4,915 | 3,877 | UT | | | | | C | Community worship |
| Mannofield | 912 | 4,951 | 4,169 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Peterculter | 523 | 5,639 | 4,731 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Total | | | 24,923 | | | | | | | |

West Aberdeen is a large geographical area containing distinct communities with places of worship. The other notable feature is the presence, in its centre, of the burgeoning Countesswells development. This presents both challenge and a great opportunity. The Plan foresees a transition to a Team Ministry with five buildings – the current church and Kirk Centre in Cults, Mannofield Church and Halls, Peterculter Church and Centre, and a potential new build facility in Countesswells to serve the Craigiebuckler, Countesswells, and Kingswells areas going forward. As was noted in the NBS, Presbytery's story is of congregations moving from the city centre westward as the population moved. We believe it would be advantageous for the future for this pattern to continue, with departure from the Craigiebuckler buildings and site with a move to Countesswells. Accepting the assessment of the buildings in the area, we suggest that community worship should continue in Kingswells, with a ministry team member settled there in the future, but in a community building in the new centre of the village rather than in the current building.

We believe that the congregations in this locality have both the financial, but, more importantly, people resources to achieve such a transition to a new pattern of ministry for the future.

Presbytery of Aberdeen

Riverside

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Ferryhill | 307 | 6,915 | 5,271 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | |
| South Holburn | 409 | 6,210 | 4,904 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Garthdee | | | 4,000 | | | | | | | Fresh Expression |
| Ruthrieston West | 301 | 4,578 | 3,858 | UT | | | | | C | |
| Total | | | 14,715 | | | | | | | |

In the Riverside area, north of the River Dee we recommend the formation of one parish with a Team ministry, focussed on two buildings – Ferryhill and South Holburn. We believe the cumulative parish should be strong enough to sustain some new initiative for mission focussed on the Garthdee community. We are content to leave it to local parties to discern what form this mission and ministry should take. There is a distinct but changing community in Garthdee to which the locality should turn its attention.

South Aberdeen

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| South St Nicholas Kincorth | 317 | 14,359 | 11,747 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 2 buildings | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | C | New build church in Cove |
| Torry St Fittick's | 306 | 11,803 | 8,596 | UT | | | | | A | |
| | | TOTAL | 20,343 | | | | | | | |

Of all of our localities in Presbytery, South Aberdeen have been most pro-active in growing into the future pattern that lies ahead for all of us. They are to be commended for their foresight and enterprise. We recommend they continue on their path by coming together into one united Parish, based on two sites – one in Torry at St Fitticks, and the other in a new building in Cove, towards which (as was true in the case of West Aberdeen) the population centre is moving. We believe this area deserves investment in a new purpose-built facility for these communities in a central location and that disposal of other sites should help to make this change a possibility. A Team ministry working together in this community, and already coming together in educational form, offers a sustainable and exciting future.

Donside

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| High Hilton | 298 | 6,183 | 4,941 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 1 building with satellite worship | | 2 Ministers, 1 MDS | 3 | A | Fresh Expression |
| Middlefield | 94 | 5,844 | 4,687 | G | | | | | C | |
| Woodside | 235 | 7,468 | 5,731 | UT | | | | | C | |
| | | TOTAL | 15,359 | | | | | | | |

In the Donside locality discussions are set to begin to bring about a Union between the High Hilton and Middlefield congregations. In the longer term we believe a new congregation focussed on the High Hilton site comprising all the congregations in the locality is the goal, with disposal of the other sites and buildings. The parish boundaries in the Woodside area of

this locality should also be redrawn along Great Northern Road which seems now to be a natural boundary with the area to the north.

University and Surrounds

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| St Machar's Cathedral | 467 | 5,134 | 3,557 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 3 buildings | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | A | St George's Tillydrone used for ancillary accommodation, new build church on new site |
| St Mary's | 291 | 6,794 | 4,995 | UT | | | | | C | |
| St Stephen's | 147 | 7,369 | 5,060 | UT | | | | | C | |
| St George's Tillydrone | 82 | 4,110 | 2,753 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Total | | | 16,365 | | | | | | | |

We believe these congregations form a natural area for collaboration and a coming together in mission and ministry. They share two things in common – their proximity to the university bringing a significant student population to their parishes and the concentration of significant pockets of poverty in their community. The Cathedral Church of St Machar has a distinctive and valuable tradition of worship and presence in the University and Old Aberdeen community, and we believe the potential for synergy between these charges as they come together in common purpose and mission can be great and life giving to all. The building and work ongoing at St George's Tillydrone is important for the whole Church and should be continued, and their facility could, and should be a great resource for this grouping. To that end we believe a move to Team Ministry should begin with the calling of a minister to a united charge of St Machar's Cathedral and Tillydrone, with that Team building upon further readjustment if not before. In line with the recommendations of the NBS we believe St Mary's and St Stephen's should explore over the year following approval of the Plan a possible site for a new church facility to replace both their buildings. As part of this exploration, work should be done, with the assistance of PDC and the General Trustees, to investigate if part ownership/use of the King Street site should be retained for work with the student community. This exploration is a significant piece of work but of fundamental importance for the future of a united charge.

City Centre and West End

| Name of Congregation | Congregational Membership | 2011 Gross Population | 2011 Net Population | Current Status | Plan for Congregations by end of Plan | Interim Steps Required | Structure of Staffing Required | Total Staffing in Plan | Building Classification | Notes |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Holburn West | 317 | 4,022 | 3,130 | UT | Team Ministry, 1 Kirk Session, 4 buildings (1 in city centre) | | 3 Ministers, 1 MDS | 4 | C | |
| Midstocket | 423 | 7,473 | 5,828 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Queen's Cross | 403 | 6,815 | 5,112 | UT | | | | | A | |
| Rubislaw | 398 | 1,970 | 1,529 | UT | | | | | C:Church A:Centre | |
| Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting | 305 | 3,422 | 2,371 | LEP; URC termed tenure | | | | | D | |
| St Mark's | 422 | 14,177 | 10,355 | UT | | | | | A (if refurb) | |
| City Centre Initiative | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | 28,352 | | | | | | | |

In the West End of the city, we recommend the move to one charge, with three buildings – Midstocket Church, Queen's Cross Church and facilities, and the Rubislaw Church Centre. This charge would have a Team Ministry of 3 Ministers of Word and Sacrament with 1 MDS. As with other localities, we believe the West congregation(s) should see the City Centre as

their opportunity for creativity and mission, and we recommend that they be charged with supporting any future City Centre Initiative which Presbytery enables.

The City Centre provides a real challenge in terms of buildings. St Mark's is a building in a good location but, as is, it is not the kind of building we believe the Church needs for future ministry and mission. The congregation there are committed and industrious, and we believe have much to contribute to city centre ministry, if they so desire. At time of publication however, we acknowledge it has been difficult for the congregation to call a minister in the current situation. We see little evidence this will change in the future.

The new West End congregation should (following the work of the City Centre Initiative Strategy Group) adopt the City Centre Initiative, with Presbytery's continuing input. Only following this collaborative discernment process about City Centre Ministry and Mission can a good decision be made about the future of the St Mark's building. As is true in all localities in the Presbytery, the buildings retained must fit the needs of mission and not the other way around. If the St Mark's building is not the best fit for future use and conversion as well as financially good value, then the building should be disposed of, and the congregation united with the uniting West End congregations, and if necessary a different type of building in the City Centre purchased which is more fit for purpose. Following the end of the period of call currently held by St Marks, PDC recommends Union with a west end congregation to facilitate a greater union, with Sunday worship continuing at St Mark's for up to two years until a future Plan for the city centre is discerned.

The Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting is currently in a place of change and some well documented difficulty. Even as it is currently constituted, we see no sustainable future for a congregation at the Mither Kirk, and recommend the congregation unite into a uniting West End charge, with the Mither Kirk to be retained for Civic Services and occasions until a long term future plan for the building can be discerned, with the help of other community partners. While we believe it is time for the LEP to be dissolved, we hope any members of KSNU would feel welcome at a new uniting West End charge, and that a way may be found for the URC to retain some kind of partnership in a new City Centre Initiative if they so desire.

Staffing

The above Plan outlines posts available in the Plan. There are of course already congregations in Presbytery with the ability to fund locally funded posts. In addition, by forming charges which are more financially sustainable we hope that the current 5% Ministry and Mission monies which return to Presbytery may be more properly used to fund Mission by the Presbytery and its congregations rather than constantly being called upon to meet shortfalls or urgent repairs.

The National Backdrop

We acknowledge that this Plan takes place in a backdrop of radical change in the national church, not least Presbytery Reform, a review of the Ministry and Mission Fund, and a recalibration of the functions of the national church offices. Moreover, the legislation to allow multiple minister charges is still in process, although there are Bases of Union operating within other Presbyteries within the Kirk, which have been written to enable this to happen already. As was the case with the Presbytery Plan for Shetland, agreement of our Plan for Aberdeen will mean a new NE Presbytery will inherit ours as a Presbytery which has already done the hard work of Presbytery Planning for the future.

The move to Team Ministry, as mandated by the Presbytery in June of this year, we believe to be of fundamental importance, not only for the success of Mission and Ministry but also for the long term health and welfare of Ministers whose vocation is lived out in a less benign societal setting than for previous generations since the Scottish Reformation.

This change, and the corresponding training and investment in lay people in our Presbytery that must take place going forward, will require considerable planning and resourcing. That part of the task is not for PDC, though we would be glad to contribute to it if so desired. As the focus of the national church moves from the central to the regional as a Presbytery, we must meet the challenge of providing quality training opportunities, and invest in the whole people of God.

The move to united charges over larger parishes need not diminish the importance of local expressions of church. This too requires more thought when it comes to issues of governance and organisation. To that end our friends in Shetland may be able to offer much help and advice. The fact that the Plan is set for implementation over a period of years will also allow time for thinking and organisation of these matters to evolve locally.

In conclusion

In good faith, and with much thought and prayerful reflection, we present this Plan to Presbytery for its consideration. We do not underestimate the challenge it contains nor doubt the opportunity it presents. It is because we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the future of our Church with its distinctive character and calling to the people of Scotland, that we look forward to a time of renewal for our Presbytery and its congregations as we move towards our shared future.

In the name of Presbytery's Planning and Deployment Committee:

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pauline Alexander | Mary Crawford | Rev. Duncan Eddie |
| Bill Falconer | Lorna Glen, Vice Convenor | Eunice McConnach |
| Hazel Hewitt | Rev. Laurene LaFontaine | Rev. Phil Lightbody |
| Richard Little | Rev. Scott Rennie, Convenor | Alan Smith, Secretary |
| Lesley Steel | Rev. Stephen Taylor | John Telfer |

Appendix A

The Report of the Necessary Buildings Group
to the Planning and Deployment Committee
of the Presbytery of Aberdeen

August 2019



The Church of Scotland

The Presbytery of Aberdeen

“Well equipped spaces in the right places”

The Report of the Necessary Buildings Group
to the Planning and Deployment Committee of Presbytery

August 2019

Methodology

In January 2019 Presbytery tasked a joint task group composed of members of both PDC and Property Committee to undertake a necessary buildings survey and assessment in order to inform and shape the Presbytery Plan to be presented in the autumn of this year.

The Necessary Buildings Group (NBG) prepared a survey for all congregations to submit to NBG to inform the group of the sense of the place of their buildings in the mission of the congregation

- a) the sense of the place of their buildings in the mission of the congregation,
- b) the condition of their buildings as well as upkeep and costs, and,
- c) the utilisation of their buildings.

The responses received by the NBG were helpful and informative, and gave us a great deal of helpful data to feed into our conclusions.

Following receipt and study of the surveys, the NBG then went on to visit each and every building currently listed for retention, or where a determination has not been made, in Presbytery.

Critical to the completion of our task was the involvement of Ian Townsend (Vice Chair of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland). He brought to our task not only his skills and experience as a surveyor, but his wider appreciation of the comparable state of the Church of Scotland's wider estate. We would like to put on record our appreciation of the significant time and effort he has given in coming to the city over a sustained period of time to help us with our work.

Following each group of visits, we took time to discuss our impressions and findings, in the context of the survey replies received. We then followed this with further meeting time to prepare our final report and recommendations to PDC and Presbytery.

Apart from Ian Townsend, all of us on the Necessary Buildings Group belong to one congregation or another in Presbytery. In order to be fair and impartial in our decision making we recused ourselves from discussion and debate when discussion was focused on our local area and buildings, and from decision making on our local area. Presbytery can have the comfort of knowing that each and every situation was dealt with fairly, and with complete impartiality. We hope that this practice of declared interest and recusing ourselves from decision making on our own congregation's buildings will give Presbytery confidence in the robust character of our thinking and methodology, and therefore the integrity of the proposals contained in this report.

Criteria

Decisions about buildings in the history of our Church can prove some of the most difficult and disputed, and so the NBG felt it important to agree a set of Criteria by which we would make our judgements on buildings.

Firstly, we direct you to the report of the General Trustees to this year's General Assembly and its emphases on 'well equipped spaces in the right places'. We were fortunate to have

the opportunity to read, study, and reflect on this report in its draft form and before it had been printed in the Blue Book for Commissioners. It very much guided our thinking, and framed the subsequent lens we used when visiting all of Presbytery's buildings.

Our minds were not only on location, but on issues such as condition, accessibility, health and safety features, toilet and kitchen facilities, suitability for a variety of uses and also sustainability. Furthermore, all these factors had to be considered with the changing geography of our city in mind, and to that end, we found the current Local Plan a helpful tool in our deliberations.

We are aware that a number of buildings within the bounds are listed by Historic Environment Scotland as having special or historic architectural merit. On this point we were guided by the General Trustees who stated at the 2019 General Assembly "While the Church values the land and buildings that it has inherited, these have to be suitable to achieve the Church's primary purpose of worship and mission, recognising the tension between buildings as missional assets as well as items of cultural, architectural and historical importance. The Church's charitable purpose is not the conservation of buildings"

Broader themes emerging from our exercise

There are a number of broader themes which arose from our visits, and as well as our determinations for individual buildings. We believe it would be helpful to set the scene for Presbytery with some general remarks which raise common themes arising from our exercise and visits.

A Story of Movement and Translation

On our visits one of the joys was to become acquainted of the particular historical stories of many of our congregations. Very few indeed, apart from St Machar, had not been built in their current form before 1850. As we travelled round Presbytery, we learned the stories of how current congregations and buildings had arisen as plants from mother churches or indeed had arisen through congregations translating (leaving their current buildings to build another in an expanding and growing part of the city).

It seems to us that the Kirk has a tradition of following the prompting of the Spirit when it comes to growth and development, and that in our relatively recent past congregations have uprooted and moved for the sake of mission and growth. We believe that we as Presbytery and as congregations need to embrace the same sense of adventure and mission, with a corresponding light connection to our current crop of buildings.

As the geography of our city continues to change, so must ours - in terms of location and styles of building for mission and ministry. We ask the question: have we developed an unhealthy attachment for our current stock buildings or are we willing to see them for what they are – simply a tool for ministry and mission in our communities? It is our belief that Presbytery, depending on local geography and development, will require a mixed economy of buildings for future mission and ministry. There will of course always be a place for traditional style sanctuaries which offer a degree of flexibility, but we may need other types of spaces too – shops, meeting rooms, alternative spaces for fresh expressions of church. And we need not own all of them ourselves to utilise such helpful spaces.

A Story of Death and Resurrection

One of the dangers inherent in our work and in the purposing of a Presbytery Plan is that it can be viewed simply as the management of decline. To be absolutely clear, this is the very opposite of how we viewed our Necessary Buildings Exercise. Our focus was entirely positive and forward looking in faith.

It is because we have faith in God and in Jesus Christ, that we believe the Holy Spirit will lead us into a new and blessed future as a Presbytery, and we believe the Spirit will guide us into a new understanding of our call to be the presence of the national Church across our city and its communities.

One would think that in the church it would be stating the obvious to say that at the heart of the church's story is a narrative of death and resurrection. Yet, it is our view that we as a body have been singularly unable to recognise when buildings have come to the end of their lifespan, and when the forms of church which they exist to hold and support have come to a natural end.

It is difficult to express to Presbytery the extent to which we felt our exercise has revealed something to us about the state and condition of the Church in our Presbytery. It has been for all of us a challenging and sometimes moving revelation.

There are facilities which we will recommend disposal of, which we should never have had to visit because they were unsuitable, and on one occasion unsafe. Yet these 'facilities' have been allowed to endure in the life of our Presbytery's witness with piecemeal care and attention, for fear of causing offence or asking difficult questions of individuals or congregations. In the future we have to make the culture change of recognising when things have outlived their useful purpose and come to terms with death in the life of the church, as the natural and God given process of reform and renewal, by which energies are then released for doing a new thing.

In addition to recommending some sites and buildings for disposal we also want to propose to Presbytery a plan for development and new birth across the city, and in some communities the death of traditional style church buildings and the exploration of different styles of accommodation for new expressions of church.

However, it is unrealistic in terms of both financial and personnel resources to believe that the latter can take place without the former. We believe Presbytery needs to honestly face the truth that there has to be an end to some things in its life, in order for new things to come to fruition. This reality is at the centre of our Christian Story and we should not fear it, for the risen Lord will accompany us as we journey together into the future He has for us.

A Story of Mixed Expectations and Stewardship

Whilst quite a number of buildings within the Presbytery bounds have clearly benefited from investment, are well maintained and offer a warm and welcoming experience relevant to mission in today's world, on reviewing our visits we came to ask ourselves how it is that so many of Presbytery's buildings are tired, drab, and dreary?

Too often we encountered buildings which had been through lack of ambition, resources or standards, in a deleterious state with reference to decoration, repair and refurbishment?

We have to be honest and say that in some sites and buildings we have been shocked at the condition of buildings, and at the low levels of expectation concerning what the church offers its congregations, and in turn congregations offer their wider local communities.

We believe there is an issue around low expectations when it comes to some buildings and facilities in Presbytery. This is evidenced in different ways, and by lots of small indicators – clutter in sanctuaries, balconies and hall spaces, rather than steps being taken to throw items out in order to keep passageways clear and light, fire safe and clean. Too often we saw a lack of any evidence of a sustained care and maintenance plan in buildings - revealed by anything from worn flooring decades old, to ill-fitting and miscellaneous furnishings across buildings; as well a lack of regular and routine decoration and maintenance.

On their own these kinds of details may seem immaterial or nit picking, but across the suite of buildings in Presbytery's care they reveal a pattern of low expectations in terms of the standard of accommodation we offer to our congregations and communities. There were buildings which quite frankly depressed us, and into which we could never imagine newcomers feeling a sense of anticipation or welcome.

These, we know, are difficult realities for all of us to hear, but they are the reality of much of our stock of accommodation. This needs to be contrasted with the standard of accommodation offered by many other charities or civic bodies who as good stewards understand the need to be good stewards of their property – investing in them and developing them. We should aim in Presbytery to offer the best of resources to our communities which local people desire to come into and make use of. That is why even where we recommend retention in the Plan of necessary buildings, we usually do so with proposals about how those retained should be improved and made better fit for purpose.

We believe Presbytery needs a culture change in how we look at and look after our buildings. No matter which area of the city we live in, local communities deserve high quality spaces. If we have congregations which struggle to maintain buildings to a high standard over a period of time then this indicates a structural problem in terms of stewardship, and sustainability. In which case the answer lies not in having too many buildings which we cannot maintain at a good standard, but in better stewardship of buildings together in Presbytery. We must not allow ourselves over the coming years to allow a pattern of short-term expediency to become a narrative of decay and decline in our building's estate.

In this regard, to support and affirm congregations in their stewardship of buildings, we believe that as Presbytery reform takes shape, any new Presbytery of which we are part needs to look seriously at professional support for congregations in the care and planned maintenance of their buildings, as well as helping Presbytery to maintain a common standard of accommodation across its bounds.

Building Classification under the Presbytery Plan

The Church of Scotland's Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) states that "In respect of every ecclesiastical building in every charge in the Presbytery (except manses and houses occupied by retired ministers and/or their spouses) the Plan shall contain one of the following declarations:

- a) That the building is expected to remain in use beyond the lifetime of the Plan;
- b) That the building is expected to be closed during the lifetime of the current Plan, under an adjustment contained therein or otherwise;
- c) That the building is expected to be disposed of as soon as possible under an adjustment contained in the Plan or otherwise;
- d) That the Presbytery is unable to make a determination in relation to a building; and in cases (b), (c) and (d) the General Trustees shall be empowered, at their discretion and in consultation with the Assembly's Committee, to refuse any application made in respect of that building in terms of Regulations I 1998 regarding Work at Ecclesiastical Buildings (as amended by 2000 Regulations VII)."

Following careful and prayerful consideration of Presbytery's buildings and their capacity in the future as tools for ministry and mission we recommend the classification of each building in Presbytery as follows:

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Bridge of Don Oldmachar | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| Craigiebuckler | Sanctuary | C |
| | Halls | C |
| Ferryhill | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| Garthdee | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Ruthrieston West | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| High Hilton | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| Holburn West | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Mannofield | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Mastrick | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Middlefield | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Midstocket | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Newhills | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Northfield | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Queen's Cross | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| Rubislaw | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| | Centre | A |
| St Columba's Bridge of Don | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| St George's Tillydrone | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| St Machar's Cathedral | Sanctuary | A |
| | Dunbar Hall | C |
| St Mark's | Sanctuary | A (subject to redevelopment) |
| St Mary's | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| | West Church and Drum | |
| St Nicholas Uniting | Ailse | D |
| St Stephen's | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| South Holburn | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| South St Nicholas Kincorth | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Stockethill | N/A | N/A |
| Summerhill | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Torry St Fittick's | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |
| Woodside | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Bucksburn Stoneywood | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Cults | Sanctuary | A |
| | Centre | A |
| Dyce | Sanctuary | C |
| | Halls | C |
| Kingswells | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Peterculter | Sanctuary and Halls | A* |

* with investment required in the short term on this building.

From the date on which the Plan begins only essential and urgent repairs should be undertaken within any buildings categorised as b, c or d; and all proposed works over £1,000 in buildings categorised b, c or d be subject to the agreement of Presbytery's Property Committee.

Recommendations for Building Investment and Disposal by Local Area

Bridge of Don

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Bridge of Don Oldmachar | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Bridge of Don St Columba's | Sanctuary and Halls | A |

Additional Comments

We consider Oldmachar to be necessary and it should be retained with disabled access being made possible on the first, as well as ground floor. We believe the Oldmachar Kirk Session should pursue a feasibility study into the installation of a lift within a year of the commencement of the Plan.

Due to its location the St. Columba's building should be retained, recognising it requires significant investment to take place during the currency of the new Plan.

Whilst we recognise that the landward area of Bridge of Don will be a focus for house building and expansion it is our view that these two buildings should be the focus for the life of the Church of Scotland during the new plan, and any other building needs for outreach to new areas of building should be serviced by the use of other community facilities as they develop.

Brimmond

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Bucksburn Stoneywood | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Dyce | Sanctuary | C |
| | Halls | C |
| Newhills | Sanctuary & Halls | A |
| | The Stables | A |

Additional Comments

It is our view that the Bucksburn Stoneywood building, and both Dyce buildings are no longer fit for purpose for the Church's work, and this community and growing part of the city deserves investment from the Church. Therefore we propose that all buildings be disposed of, and that the congregations of Bucksburn Stoneywood and Dyce be assisted by Presbytery (with the aid of the General Trustees) to find a site in the Bucksburn to Dyce Corridor on which to develop a new community centred multi-use church facility, and return with a firm proposal for Presbytery's consideration within 12 months of the beginning of the Presbytery Plan.

The Group were persuaded by the contents of the Aberdeen City's Local Plan that with the land scheduled for residential development to the East and south of Newhills Church, that the Church and Halls should be retained in this next ten-year plan. However, we recommend retention be subject to investment in the sanctuary (the condition of which gave us cause for concern) as well as a feasibility study into the installation of a lift for disabled access to the first floor of the Halls. We suggest too to that Newhills investigate the moving of their "Disabled" toilet to the same area as the other toilets (perhaps to the room which currently houses their photocopier) rather than have it in isolation from the other facilities. We consider

The Stables to be a real asset to the Brimmond grouping and recommend its retention as a Necessary Building.

Presbytery of Aberdeen

North-West Aberdeen

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Mastrick | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Middlefield | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Northfield | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Summerhill | Sanctuary and Halls | C |

Additional Comments

Presbytery should dispose of all four buildings in this area, none of which offer the standard of accommodation the community around them deserve, and some of which offer real challenges when it comes to questions of disabled accessibility. We believe Presbytery should invest in this part of Aberdeen as a matter of priority and urgency.

Presbytery should assist the congregations to plan for a future in one new community centred multi-use church facility, and through discussion, investigation and community consultation, instruct the congregations within 12 months of the beginning of this Plan return to Presbytery with the necessary costed proposals for approval. It is our view that such a facility should be built on either an entirely new site chosen by the congregations or following the demolition of the current inadequate Mastrick building, on the vacant site there. Funding of the new facility should be in part from the likely proceeds of sale of most of the sites for development.

Aberdeen West

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Cults | Sanctuary | A |
| | Halls | A |
| Craigiebuckler | Sanctuary | C |
| | Halls | C |
| Kingswells | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Mannofield | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Peterculter | Sanctuary and Halls | A |

Additional Comments

In some sense this part of the Plan presents the greatest challenge and opportunity when it comes to buildings. Given the forthcoming development of Countesswells (which is already underway) it is our view that in the pattern of previous generations Presbytery needs to invest in an area of future growth (an argument that has often been made at Presbytery already).

Having surveyed all the sites in the surrounding group, it is the strong and unanimous view of the Group that rather than investing more valuable resources in the current site at Craigiebuckler through refurbishment, given the current condition of the Halls and the limited value of the current Sanctuary the site at Craigiebuckler should be disposed of, and the congregation translated to Countesswells in order to develop a new community centred multi-use church facility there. Proceeds of the disposal of the Craigiebuckler site could be reinvested at the congregation's new location.

We believe the Craigiebuckler congregation has both the people and financial resources within it to facilitate such a translation, along with the backing of a well-resourced and collaborative partner congregations in their group and we encourage Presbytery to help facilitate such a bold and pioneering move.

Related to Countesswells, we see little value in continued investment in the current Kingswells building, and would encourage the congregation there to see their future as part of a tie up with Craigiebuckler on the Countesswells site, with the continued possibility of other forms of ministry and mission to the Kingswells community through use of the school, community centre or other buildings in the longer term.

While we recommend the Peterculter is retained as a necessary building given the distinct identity of that community, it is our view this should be subject to immediate investment to the refurbishment of the sanctuary there with lighter paint and décor and improved lighting. In addition, an architect should be engaged to oversee investment in the site that would result in a much better flow around the facility as a whole.

At Cults although the buildings are in excellent condition there are definite areas for improvement in the Church Sanctuary complex. There is a need for improved lighting, projection facilities, and improved disabled access. There should also be an investigation into the feasibility of toilets, and upgrading of the Hall facilities at the rear to the same standard of Cults other buildings.

The Cults Centre building as well as that at Mannofield in this grouping are the standard which should be used as a guide in all future development.

Aberdeen South

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| South St Nicholas Kincorth | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Torry St Fittick's | Sanctuary and Halls | A |

Additional Comments

The Kincorth building has reached the end of its useful life and the site should be disposed of, with the possibility of a sale for development on the site.

The Torry St Fittick's Sanctuary is in excellent condition, however the buildings there should be retained subject to investment in the Halls with need a reordering and upgrade to an acceptable and modern standard, with an architect appointed to investigate and the congregation/grouping to report to Presbytery within one year of commencement of the Plan.

As in the case of Countesswells it is the view of the Group that along with the disposal of the Kincorth site, a new site as close as possible to Lochside Academy and the Cove conurbation be found on which to develop a new community centred multi-use church facility. We recommend this process be undertaken without delay, with the support of Presbytery, the General Trustees and any requisite professionals. Again, Presbytery should receive a report not less than one year following the beginning of the Plan, following congregational, community and professional consultations.

Riverside

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Ferryhill | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Ruthrieston West | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| South Holburn | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Garthdee | | |

Additional Comments

Both Ferryhill and South Holburn buildings should be retained as Necessary Buildings, but both require investment in the near term.

The current entrance to Ferryhill's Halls is not welcoming and needs reconfiguration, as well as some thought given to the rear of the Halls.

At South Holburn the congregation should remove the coloured glass windows in the Sanctuary to let in more natural light and consider renovation of the Sanctuary to make it more modern and flexible for the future.

In addition, significant investment is required to create a welcoming area to the older suite of Halls as well as to upgrade their extremely dated aesthetic. The look and utility of the Jubilee Halls in the South Holburn Suite is the standard the congregation should set as their benchmark for future work. Again, within one year of the Plan, Presbytery should be in receipt of an investment and business plan to consider from both congregations, a task which they could consider undertaking together in recognition of their shared future.

The building at Ruthrieston West is already listed as having a uncertain future. We are agreed and certain that with its very dated sanctuary and halls, which would require a very great deal of upgrading, as well as its location, the building is unnecessary for the future mission and ministry of the Church of Scotland in Aberdeen.

Pending the result of their appeal, any proceeds from the disposal of the current Garthdee site should be utilised in this grouping, with its commitment to continued ministry and mission in the Garthdee area.

West End

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Holburn West | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Midstocket | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Queen's Cross | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| Rubislaw | Sanctuary and Hall | C |
| | Centre | A |

Additional Comments

In this area, three out of the five buildings should be retained. Queen's Cross Church and its Halls and the Rubislaw Centre offer great potential for a hub for the grouping, along with the excellent but underutilised accommodation on the Midstocket site.

At Midstocket, we recognise there are always going to be issues about metered parking due to proximity to the Foresterhill hospital site. Nevertheless, whatever the shape on ministry and mission for this area in the new Plan there is a challenge to increase utilisation of the Midstocket building by church and community groups in the West End cluster, if Midstocket has a future beyond the life of the new plan.

Although the Sanctuary at Holburn West is a good space, the adjoining Halls require significant refurbishment and upgrading and as a whole we believe this building should be made redundant. The Rubislaw Centre is of great value and potential for the future of the church of Scotland in the West End and should therefore be retained. The Rubislaw Sanctuary is very much of its time and style and simply does not offer the flexibility and versatility required in a future worship space, and therefore again we recommend Rubislaw Church along with the adjoining hall is no longer required for the future.

Along with the disposal of both Holburn West and Rubislaw Church and Halls, we recommend investment in the Sanctuary at Queen's Cross, namely decoration and work to the rear of the Sanctuary and Vestibule to visibly open up the Sanctuary to the community through the use of glass. These improvements would build on what is already an excellent, lively and busy facility. Presbytery should be in receipt of proposals for the above works within one year of the beginning of the Presbytery Plan.

City Centre

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting | West Church and Drum Aisle | D |
| St Mark's | Sanctuary and Halls | A |

Additional Comments

We recommend that the status of the Kirk of St Nicholas should be as yet to be determined. There needs to be significant investigation as to how the Church of Scotland could dispose sympathetically of the West church and Central Aisle given the importance of the site and building to the City of Aberdeen. We of course acknowledge that the building has special status in the civic life of the city, and recognise that a reflective space is required in the city centre, not least for the Oil Industry Chapel. Nevertheless, we do not consider the West church a fit home for modern worship, and we are not in the business of preserving ancient buildings for their own sake. Therefore, it is our recommendation that negotiations should begin with the OpenSpace Trust, the City of Aberdeen, and the General Trustees to take this matter forward with some urgency.

There is the possibility of great future potential at the St Mark's building, but only with complete redevelopment and reordering of the space, and likely shared ownership between the current congregation and the Presbytery. It is on this basis alone that we recommend St Mark's be categorised as a Necessary Building.

Following some definition by Presbytery on the shape of future city centre mission and ministry, if it proves impossible to plan and conceive and fund a realistic plan for the future of the building within two years of the implementation of the Plan, the status should be amended to C in our view, as the building has little future as it currently is.

Donside and University

| Charge | Building | Designation in new Plan |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| High Hilton | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| St George's Tillydrone | Sanctuary and Halls | A |
| St Machar's | Cathedral Church and Gatehouses | A |
| | Dunbar Hall | D |
| St Mary's | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| St Stephen's | Sanctuary and Halls | C |
| Woodside | Sanctuary and Halls | C |

Additional Comments

High Hilton should be retained as necessary, with some work to help the flow within the building between different rooms as well as to create a more obvious Monday to Saturday entrance to the building for the wider community. This piece of work should start as soon as possible, and proposal be with Presbytery for approval within one year of the commencement of the ten-year Plan.

Woodside Church and Halls would require major investment to bring it in any sense up to an acceptable standard for modern accommodation, and even were the resources available the congregation would retain a building with significant and unaffordable retention costs in the future. We believe it should be disposed of and placed on the market as soon as is possible under the Plan. It may be that it is important for the Woodside congregation or its successor to retain a worship space in the Woodside Community, in which case we recommend the letting of space in one of the modern community facilities in the Woodside area, and the use of St George's Tillydrone for ancillary activities and church life.

At St George's Tillydrone we recommend some work be done to create a more obvious way into the building directly across from the entrance of the new Community Hub, with whom St George's already have a collaborative arrangement.

We recommend that the Building at St George's also becomes a resource and ancillary accommodation for the congregation at St Machar, and that the Dunbar Hall site be disposed of.

The Cathedral, together with others within the Church of Scotland, has a special place in ecclesiastical, cultural and historical terms, and presents a unique opportunity for Christian witness to the many visitors throughout the week. In conjunction with HES (Historic Environment Scotland) and relevant grant awarding bodies, urgent investigation on the installation of toilets (probably in the area of the shop at the rear of the sanctuary) is required. Further development / upgrading of the Gatehouses is worthy of investigation but linked to the future of Dunbar Hall. We recommend it should be considered for disposal dependent on the final solution on ancillary accommodation for the Cathedral, after negotiation with St George's.

We consider that neither St Mary's nor St Stephen's buildings have a long-term future, and they should therefore be disposed of. We recommend that both Kirk Sessions be assisted in a community audit and consultation, which might help them to identify a new location for a united charge somewhere between their two present locations.

The St Mary's site is potentially a very valuable development site which could greatly help in generating the funds for a new community centred multi-use church facility.

Some research might also be undertaken as to whether with its proximity to the University it may be worthwhile for the Church of Scotland to maintain a foothold presence in a new development on the St Mary's site for student outreach work. This of course has to be balanced with the possible effect of this decision on the receipt of monies for the site, which would otherwise be used to develop a brand-new facility for the united charge.

We believe there is a need to provide facilities close to the areas that both churches are currently failing to engage with. While this is the important across the city, it is essential in some of the poorer areas where access to transport is not always available (and public transport can be expensive on short journeys, especially for young families). There is a real need for research work to be done here – perhaps a community audit – to help discern the future shape of building needs in this community.

As in other cases, we suggest this research work, with the assistance of other parties, be completed within one year of the Plan, in order for Presbytery to consider a proposal.

In Conclusion

Having completed our thorough analysis of the Presbytery's estate, we hope and pray our work and its conclusions will provide Presbytery with a basis for honing its buildings as a resource for mission and ministry in all parts of our city. We believe Presbytery would be best served by the decisions we recommend in our report. We present them with unanimous agreement after much deliberation and prayerful consideration. As a group there is no dissent whatsoever as to our final decision and recommendations.

We wish to formally thank congregations for the welcome and hospitality they showed to us on our visits.

Rev Scott M Rennie, Joint Convenor, Minister at Queen's Cross

Ronnie Johnstone, Joint Convenor, Elder at South Holburn

Pauline Alexander, Elder at Woodside

Rev Keith Blackwood, Minister at Mannofield

Donald Brown, Elder at Cults

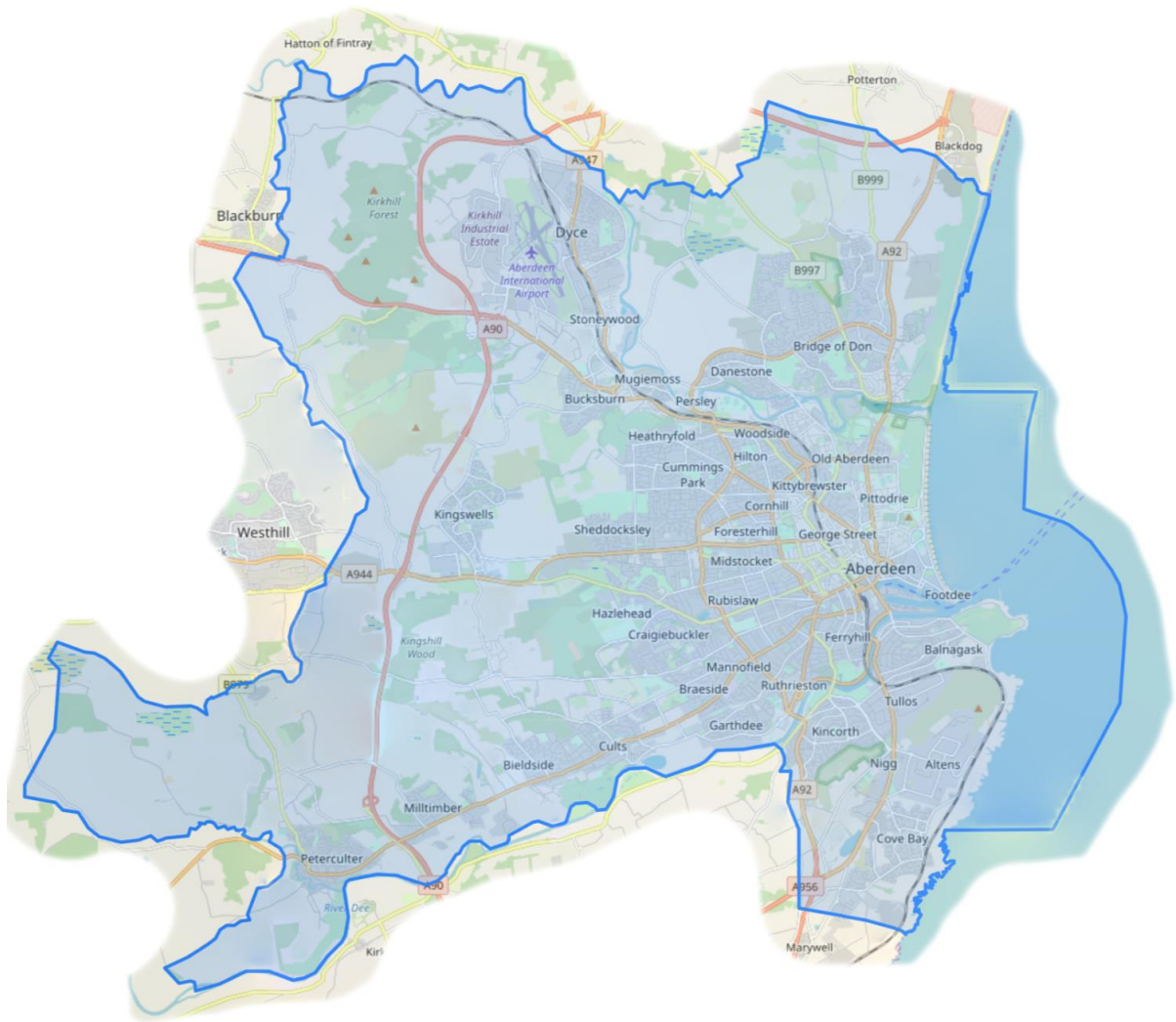
Rev Phil Lightbody, MDS for Presbytery Planning

Bill Falconer, Elder at Cults

Bill Mitchell, Elder and MDS at St George's Tillydrone

Ian Townsend, Vice Chair of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland

Rev Maggie Whyte, Minister at St Stephen's





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