

Bucksburn Stoneywood Parish Church of Scotland  
19 Old Meldrum Road Bucksburn ABERDEEN AB21 9AD  
Registered as a charity in Scotland SC017404

## **FIVE YEAR PLAN**

In his book, the Healthy Churches' handbook, Robert Warren identifies 7 common characteristics of healthy churches. We have used this list as a means of mapping our intentions for the next period of our congregation's life

### **1. Energized by faith**

rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive

- worship and sacramental life: moves people to experience God's love
- motivation: energy comes from a desire to serve God and one another
- engaging with Scripture: in creative ways connect with life
- nurtures faith in Christ: helping people to grow in, and share their faith.

Our congregation values the history and traditions of presbyterian worship; appreciates sermons that unfold the message of the Bible; uses familiar hymns and songs in worship. Communion is an important part of church life. We value the best of what technology can give us – eg powerpoint, use of films.

We recognise that our worship may be enriched by exposure to other practices. In the next five years

1. Visit other congregations' services to observe best practice
2. Consider in what ways others can become involved in leading of worship
  1. training in leading of prayers
  2. Sharing of stories
  3. Reading of scriptures
3. Consider how to improve the musical resourcing of worship
  1. repair organ
  2. Consider new hymnbooks eg CH4 or MP extended (1385 songs)
  3. To consult with the congregation about use of PowerPoint for services projection, or to purchase hymn books.

### **2. Outward-looking focus**

with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern

- deeply rooted in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks
- passionate and prophetic about justice and peace, locally and globally
- makes connections between faith and daily living
- responds to human need by loving service

Our parish had a population of 4400 people and 2200 homes in 2011. This could grow to

population 7400 and 3700 homes by 2021, if not before. The bulk of new homes will be built on the former Mugiemoos Mill site and on redundant land at Stonewood Mill. The vast majority of those coming into these houses will have no connection to the local community. Those who do have a church connection within the city will as likely retain it in our mobile society.

Our task in the next five years is to build bridges into the incomers.

1. Publicity intimating our presence as a parish church
2. Seek to engage in community through the network of organisations that we presently host; Tots tunes, playgroup, mother and toddler.
3. Build on present relationships with medical services, MSPs, MPs, schools, community education,
4. Use church and community websites
5. To continuously review the buildings we have, set against our own needs and to explore ways in which we might use our buildings or other premises for our mission needs.
6. To consider employing someone to be an outreach worker to identify and visit those in need within the parish, using funding from the Duncan Watt legacy.

We presently support a number of mission agencies with smaller donations but rarely build an ongoing prayerful relationship with the organisations and personnel. In the next five years we will intentionally review our involvement and consideration of the use of the Mission and Benevolent Fund.

To continue to build links with instant Neighbour; Someone Cares; Aberdeen city council agencies; Living Well Charity in order to respond to needs as they manifest themselves in the community.

### **3. Seeks to find out what God wants**

discerning the Spirit's leading rather than trying to please everyone

- vocation: seeks to explore what God wants it to be and do
- vision: develops and communicates a shared sense of where it is going
- mission priorities: consciously sets both immediate and long-term goals
- able to call for, and make, sacrifices, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.

The congregation as it has grown smaller continues to be aware of the need for sacrificial giving. We shall continue with the Annual gift day in June. We shall consult with Fiona Penny Stewardship Consultant to provide an appropriate stewardship campaign, not only for financial giving but the stewardship of talents.

### **4. Faces the cost of change and growth**

rather than resisting change and avoiding failure

- while embracing the past, it dares to take on new ways of doing things
- takes risks: and admits when things are not working, and learns from experience

- crises: responds creatively to challenges that face the church and community
- positive experiences of change: however small, are affirmed and built on.

We recognise that our church has declined and is declining. We have had one profession of faith in the past five years and over 100 deaths of members. If we simply continue the way that we have done, then in statistical terms we shall fail as a congregation.

We believe that it would be better to start a fresh expression of church to meet the spiritual needs of incomers than to radically alter the pattern of worship that supports the needs and hopes of those who presently attend.

To that end, we would want to work in partnership with those congregations around us who face the same challenges

1. Within our own life to create alternative patterns of meeting. For example to consider a discussion format type of worship service.
2. To explore with Newhills and Dyce Churches of Scotland, St Machar's episcopal church what possibility there is for a shared enterprise of church in the neighbourhood.
3. To consult with Phil Lightbody and others with experience in this field on the feasibility of initiating a fresh expression that could be supported by all the congregations in the area.
4. To consider investing money from the Duncan Watt legacy to support venture.

## **5. Operates as a community**

rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation

- relationships: are nurtured, often in small groups, so people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and service
- leadership: lay and ordained work as a team to develop locally appropriate expressions of all seven marks of a healthy church
- lay ministry: the different gifts, experiences and faith journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church.

We have run small groups for various purposes in the past (Bible Studies, Lent and Advent courses, film night; Les Miserable series), but they have rarely been part of many people's ongoing life in the congregation. A sense of belonging does come out of the Guild, the coffee shop teams, working towards social events, together with the Sunday morning teams.

At present many of the admin tasks of the church are either not filled or are covered by people who feel that they have done their time. These include the posts of treasurer, Property Convener, Gift Aid convener, magazine editor, webmaster. In addition others hold multiple posts eg Session clerk is also presbytery elder and safeguarding officer.

The effect of these is to concentrate the leadership's mind on simply keeping the church "going" rather than "growing".

1. Seek elder training from the Congregational development worker Ann Smith

2. Utilise the elder training from the CofS

## **6. Makes room for all**

being inclusive rather than exclusive.

- welcome: works to include newcomers into the life of the church
- children and young people: are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith
- enquirers are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ
- diversities: different social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities, and ages, are seen as a strength.

We do believe that we are a welcoming church, hospitable and open to newcomers. However at present we do not have the resources to welcome children fully into the life of the congregation eg to staff a Junior Church or equivalent.

1. Increase the number of people who are PVG disclosed and trained in safeguarding best practice
2. For those children that are connected to the congregation, planned activities on a one off basis eg afternoon activity or holiday club.
3. We are glad for the increase in diversification that we see in the ethnic make up of the congregation.
4. With the increase in the population in the parish, it maybe necessary to increase the opportunities for specific welcome events for people who are newcomers – welcome meals, special services, hospitality evening.
5. Continue to make our buildings accessible for people with disabilities as opportunity arises.

## **7. Does a few things and do them well**

focused rather than frenetic

- does the basics well: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration
- occasional offices: make sense of life and communicate faith
- being good news as a church in its attitudes and ways of working
- enjoys what it does and is relaxed about what is not being done

We believe that the priorities in the next few months are:

1. Repair of Organ and appointment of organist;
2. Consult congregation about immediate and necessary change;
3. Attend to any immediate property issues arising from quinquennial property review;
4. Make the most of the Christmas season to contact those recently moved into the parish.

<b>What has as to be done</b>	<b>How has it to be done?</b>	<b>Who has to do it?</b>	<b>By when has it to be done?</b>
<b>REPAIR ORGAN</b>	Consult Mr Alan Morrison and Allen Organs	Board clerk	Two months
<b>Seek appointment of new organist</b>	Advertise through presbytery, local organist society, music school, informal contacts	Sub Committee of Kirk Session	Upon completion of organ repair  Five months
<b>Christmas outreach opportunities</b>	Consider publicity for Christmas events to new parishioners	Cong'l Board	One month
<b>Make good outstanding property issues</b>	Through professional or volunteer work as opportunity or necessity dictates	Cong'l Board	Dependent on scope of work and time of receipt of Quinquennial report.
<b>Continue to make our buildings accessible for people with disabilities as opportunity arises.</b>	Through professional or volunteer work as opportunity or necessity dictates	Cong'l Board	Dependent on scope of work and time of receipt of Quinquennial report.
<b>Review buildings or other premises for our mission needs.</b>	As Congregation interacts with the community and new opportunities arise	Cong'l Board	Ongoing
<b>Consult congregation about one necessary and immediate change</b>	Congregational meeting		January -March 2017
<b>Increase number of</b>	Through presbytery training	Kirk session, safeguarding	As schedule of presbytery trainer

<b>PVG disclosed workers</b>		officer	permits
<b>Planned children's activities on a one off basis</b>	Use SU or other resources to plan an afternoon event for children.	Kirk Session sub group.	Easter 2017 holiday
<b>Consider welcome events for new parishioners</b>	Review in the light of Christmas events response	Kirk Session	January- June 2017
<b>Visit to other congregations</b>	Pairs of elders and others	Kirk Session	Easter – June 2017
<b>Worship leading training</b>	Using materials from CofS and elsewhere	Minister,, Elder trainers	September - December 2016
<b>Renewal of worship resources</b>	Review in the light of visits to other congregations	Kirk Session	Autumn 2017
<b>Seek elder training from the Congregational development worker Ann Smith</b>	Using prepared courses for elders and those involved in congregational leadership.	Minister Kirk Session Cong'l devt worker	Easter -June 2017
<b>Utilise the elder training from the CofS</b>	Purchase of books	Minister, kirk Session	January - March 2017
<b>Welcome pack/ Christmas card</b>	Vistaprint or other printer	Minister	November 2016
<b>Community engagement</b>	Network of personal relationships	All members	Ongoing
<b>Website development</b>	Maximising opportunity of information and networking	Minister	Ongoing
<b>Employment of children/youth /outreach worker</b>	Recruit through advertising in local media and church circles Job description	Kirk Session	Decision to be made in the light of discussion with local churches; Continuing needs of

	salary package after advice from Presbytery and others.		congregation opportunities as they arise
<b>Establishment of fresh expression of church</b>	Meet with Phil Lightbody and others to consider strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats	Kirk Session	Decisions to be made in the light of ongoing discussion of relationships and opportunities with local churches
<b>Creation of a new forms of worship or meeting</b>	Preparation by preaching and teaching, motivating and engaging with people in pastoral relationship	Minister Kirk Session	after elder training late 2017.
<b>Stewardship campaign of all the talents</b>	Campaign to be organised and planned with the advice of local stewardship consultant	Stewardship Consultant, Cong'l Board	Begin planning in autumn 2017
<b>Review of relationships with overseas projects and missions</b>	Exploring which projects to be committed to	Cong'l Board	Late 2017