

## Action Plan 2017-22

This action plan identifies specific areas of action with lead person(s)/group and a timescale to be confirmed in the meeting of the Kirk Session on 20 March 2018.

This took into account a congregational gathering on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017 and reports from each of the congregation's Ministry Teams.

### VISION STATEMENT

Queen's Cross Church strives to be an open, inclusive, and progressive community of faith, embracing all in the name of Jesus Christ, and offering friendship and hospitality. We offer a space for spiritual search and the nurturing of faith, as we seek opportunities to share the love of God in our community and beyond.

#### *Who are we?*

We are a liberal/progressive community of faith, situated in the heart of the City of Aberdeen, and we offer hospitality and a welcome to all who wish to join us on a journey of discovery about faith and life.

The "Queen's Cross" story has been one of pushing out bravely and boldly at the intersection between sacred and secular, faith and doubt, modernity and tradition, ever since the congregation's founding. We welcome all in the name of Christ regardless of colour, culture, gender, race, sexual orientation or any other distinction that is used to divide people.

#### *What do we offer?*

We offer a community that:

- is open and welcoming to all
- encourages progressive Christian *thinking*
- allows all to *explore* their unique path to a deeper understanding of the Christian faith
- allows all to *grow* in faith in their own way and in their own time in which questions can be asked and answered
- allows all to *connect* with each other in a community of support.

#### *What are we doing?*

With the completion of a £1.5m refurbishment and extension of our Church we now focus on the objective of providing a place of welcome that is based on God's love for the world and how we envision it in our community. We continue to support our charity/social partners: Christian Aid, Instant Neighbour, Cyrenians, Corrymeela, Cairns Counselling Centre and others.

We have now challenged ourselves to a deep review of all aspects of our congregational and community life. In our congregational gathering, a willingness and desire to create effective and

meaningful change was expressed and this action plan seeks to put that into action.

We have recently joined the **HeartEdge Network** of churches and this will help us in shaping our Local Church Review action plan for the next five years. HeartEdge is a network of churches initiated by St Martin in the Fields, London. The network is for churches working at the heart of culture, community and commerce, as well as with those at the margins and on the edge. The network seeks to build association, learning, and development between the churches involved as well as creating and sharing resources for ministry and mission.

We have based our Action Plan on four key themes

1. **Congregation:** the promotion of inclusive approaches to liturgy, worship and day-to-day communal life at Queen’s Cross: we seek to explore what this means for forms of worship and practice in our congregational life.

2. **Commerce:** the development of commercial activities that generate finance, creatively extending and enhancing mission and ministry through social enterprise: we will in addition to the Nursery and Coffee House determine whether other commercial opportunities exist.

3. **Culture:** the exploration of art, music and ideas to re-imagine the Christian narrative for the present moment: we need to re-imagine and reshape art, music, speech to engage a wider demographic in our city than at present.

4. **Community and Compassion:** the utilisation of models of outreach serving local need and addressing social justice: we will reflect on the ways we serve people in our community reviewing where they need to change and determining what new opportunities exist.

**Queen’s Cross Church of Scotland**

**Think | Explore | Grow | Connect**

**Specific actions relevant to key themes**

Specific target			
Theme 1: Congregation	Actions required	Lead person/group	Timescale
Reaffirm vision statement for congregation	Bring to ASM of Congregation	Minister/ Session Clerks	March 25 2018
Engage congregation and groups/teams to reflect on enacting vision statement	Constant interaction between groups and congregation to encourage new actions	Team Leaders, Life Groups, Minister via Sunday service	On going
Our Shared Future – Consolidate collaborative work with neighbouring	Joint Worship, Youth Work and new areas of collaboration	Minister and Kirk Session	Ongoing

congregations			
Maximise use of Sanctuary, possibly available each day of the week.	Lunchtime Rota to enable people to spend some time in the Sanctuary through the week.		Ongoing
Additional opportunities for worship to be considered, with particular emphasis on young people and families	Monthly evening Café Style service to be commenced with Rubislaw	Minister	September 2018 onwards
Evening services to be considered and planned when and if possible	Evening Service at March and Oct Communion	Minister and Session Clerks	March 11 and Oct 14 2018
Informal worship opportunities through the week to be considered and planned when and if possible	TBC	Arts and Worship Team	TBC
Prayer Group/Ministry to be formed so that Prayer can be a more central part of Congregational Life.	Establish Prayer Group/Ministry	Pastoral Team	
Engage effectively with our local schools. Music is a vehicle for access to younger people – choir initiatives, either involving schools or independently to be examined	Director of Music to reach out to young people through School and Community contacts	Worship Team	
Appointment of 4-Church Youth Worker is to be supported, and financed in part, and taken as an opportunity for collaborative work	Appoint Youth Worker	West End Youth Project Core Group	Autumn 2018
Encourage variety in music as part of the worship	Formulate Plan for greater participation in worship with quarterly reviews as to progress.	Worship Team	Ongoing
Engage with Heartedge to develop innovative ways to create sustainable growth and community service	Minister and Session Clerks to attend the planned meetings of Heartedge and take back to QX those elements thought applicable to our ministry	Minister and Session Clerks	6 March 2018 and on-going

<b>Theme 2: Commerce</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Marketing of the new facilities needs to be approached professionally	Production of a lettings and facilities strategy.	Lettings Team with outside input.	Ongoing
QX branding is important and must be in keeping with our ethos, be clear and not deny who we are	Improve website on LGBT and other justice issues and partnerships.	Justice and Peace Team	
Regular survey of footfall in redeveloped facilities is essential to ensure we understand demand and can react as required to changes	Quarterly review of usage types and proportions through Booking Software.	Lettings Team	Review due 30 September 2018
Letting rates for facilities must be established in a competitive market	Lettings Board to conduct annual review of pricing and comparison	Lettings Team	Approved letting rates agreed at Kirk Session Feb 2018
Work to be undertaken to identify the various possible revenue streams for the facilities	Assemble Specialised Team of required skills to augment Lettings Team in reacher wider market	Lettings Team	Ongoing
Staffing duties and numbers must be reviewed to ensure professional delivery of services	Annual appraisal of employed staff feeding back to Finance Team and KS.	Finance Team/Session Clerks	
<b>Theme 3: Culture</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Cultural promotion will inevitably be linked with commercial activities so co-ordination between Congregational life and commercial activities is essential	Review of cultural activitiesd and building of framework for outreach and new activity	Lettings Team, Outreach Team	Late 2018
Determine the need for additional equipment for users e.g. IT, AV, Music	Property team to review in concert with office staff advice	Property Team with input from Lettings Team.	Ongoing
Create "list" of events to be held such as (i) Music events aimed at young people, (ii) Art and photographic exhibitions/competitions, (iii) Theatre and dance companies – particularly		Outreach/Justice and Peace Team	

the young adults			
Engage with schools to set up events to enable themed discussion/debates on challenging topics of interest to the young adults			
Run events with high profile speakers to explore faith/politics/socio-economics/environmental interface	Organise bespoke events as desired	Justice and Peace, Eco, and Outreach Teams	Ongoing
Develop an enabling role in charitable work, incl. continued support for our existing charity partners	Individual Teams to determine supportive actions and events and promote	Justice and Peace Team Pastoral Team Corrymeela Group	Ongoing
<b>Theme 4: Community and Compassion</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Establish "Living Well Café"	Investigate best sustainable model for Dementia Café at QX	Pastoral Team	
Engage with local GP's to seek to provide support for Dementia sufferers, those with special needs, those who are lonely etc.	Make contact with local surgeries and health care providers	Pastoral Team	Late 2018
Make QX a charitable donation "Hub" not just on Sundays	Review physical facilities when in full occupation	Letting Team	Late 2018
Establish a "Lively Minds" group that would offer a variety of interests to all ages within the wider community	Plan a program with speakers and arrange for lunches at £5 per head.	Outreach Team	Programme for first six months prepared. First speaker scheduled for June 5 2018
Continue support to Nursery and seek to expand its attraction to other groups	Assist Nursery in promotion and provision through Nursery Board and Kirk Session	Nursery Board	Ongoing

**Background papers:**

1. Consultation with Congregation, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017
2. Appendix 1: Slide presentation delivered on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017
3. Appendix 2: Summary of responses collected on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017
4. Kirk Session meeting to be held on 20 March 2018



## **Congregation Description**

We are a city centre parish with a demographic of more than 50% young (16-44yrs), the majority having undergone higher education and in employment; 80%+ live in self owned or rented accommodation; many live alone (50%); many are couples with no children (20%), less with young families (13%).

On Sundays we are a gathered congregation with a worshipping congregation of around 100+ at a 10:30am service, from a Roll of 394<sup>1</sup>. Regular worshippers are mostly over 40 years of age, which reflects the demographic of our roll.

We are investing in an imaginative redevelopment project. This will be complete in April 2018.

## **The Life and Work of the Congregation**

### **Leadership – Minister**

The Rev Scott Rennie has been Minister of Queen's Cross Church since July 2009, and follows in a line of creative thinking and challenging Ministers. He has brought a firm focus on what it means to be Christian in today's world to our congregation. The Minister has three part-time office staff to support him, as well as a highly committed and active congregation.

In addition to Scott's role within the life of the Congregation he also plays a committed role in the life of the Presbytery, on the Planning and Deployment Committee (serving as Convenor from June 2018). In concert with the theme of his ministry and his commitment to mission he is engaged in the wider community through serving on the Board of Instant Neighbour, and the North East of Scotland LGBT Community Group. He is well known in the local community and has positive profile for the church in the local area.

### **Leadership – Office Bearers**

The congregation moved to the Unitary Constitution in 2017. This involved change in the way church affairs was managed by creating teams to organize and develop various crucial areas of our work. There are currently ten teams which feed reports to a Co-ordinating Group that then sets the agenda for Kirk Session meetings: Eco, Finance, Outreach, Pastoral, Peace and Justice, Property, Lettings, Worship (incl. Church Choir), Youth and Children, and Nursery. It should be noted that the Nursery team is a liaison between the Nursery Limited Company and the Kirk Session.

There are 40 elders, of whom 21 are female and 19 male. Several elders are active members of Presbytery committees and one has served on the General Assembly Committees. A number of our elders have over 30 years' service. There are two Session Clerks who share the work associated with the administration of the Unitary Constitution and the co-ordination of the varied but essential components of church life.

## **Worship**

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<sup>1</sup> As at 18 January 2018

Worship takes place on a Sunday morning at 10:30am, within a traditional framework and with congregational involvement. The use of the organ, piano, and congregational choir, led by a Director of Music adds a significant quality to the act of worship. On the third Sunday of each month there is an “all-age” worship that extends the boundaries of musical and active participation beyond the traditional. On the same Sunday there is an earlier, and more traditional, service for those who wish it. Holy Communion is celebrated 10 times a year, on the second Sunday, excepting July and August.

The Sanctuary offers three-screen projection of words, and on occasions is used for video presentations, which supports the sermon or delivers other matters of congregational interest.

The long established audio recording of services is continuing and Queen’s Cross makes significant use of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to promote the Christian faith and the work of our Church. There is an informative Website that is regularly updated on times of worship, special services as well as the wider work of our Church.

Prayer cards for the Prayer tree are encouraged as well as other resources such as a “Visit Request Book”.

Significant challenges face our congregation in terms of re-imagining what worship looks like for a new generation. One proposed innovation in the next year is a ‘café’ style worship service with food in an evening, in collaboration with Rubislaw, targeting in particular families with young people who otherwise are engaged on a Sunday morning. We are aware that there are no easy answers in attracting a younger demographic to worship, but are convinced we have to try different ways to appeal to different people. It makes sense to do this in collaboration with our close Presbytery neighbours.

### **Children and Young People**

Crèche facilities and Sunday Club are available each Sunday but we do not have large numbers of young persons attending these. Where such numbers warrant it, then we combine the Sunday Club with the neighbouring Rubislaw Parish Church. This area of church life presents us with a real challenge. How do we remain attractive to young families on a Sunday morning without a sense of critical mass, and yet again, looking forward it makes sense to work together with our friends at Rubislaw.

### **Congregational Learning**

The minister uses a variety of resources to provide Christian education. For example “Spill the Beans” has and is being used and in 2017 the Minister established two “Life Groups” focusing on themes drawn from “Tomorrow’s Christian” to stimulate discussion. These Life Groups meet in each of three elders’ homes and have between eight and ten persons attending their monthly meetings. Current and proposed elders have used the Church of Scotland’s ‘Learn Eldership’ material as a focus for discussion. Members of the congregation are active in the Progressive Christian Network. The minister holds regular book groups in Dizzys’, Carden Place, on theological texts as well as fiction.

### **Mission and Outreach**

At the heart of our plan for Mission and Outreach was the commitment of the Congregation to redevelop Queen’s Cross to make it an excellent community asset, a building more hospitable and welcoming to those outside the congregation and a base for activities befitting the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Started in February 2017<sup>2</sup>, a programme of renovation and extension will result in the formation of a new foyer and atrium, providing an attractive and welcoming space at the Albyn Place entrance to the church buildings. It is intended that the reception desk within the foyer will be manned throughout the day to provide information on our church buildings, such as history and activities, but also to guide any interested person through the Sanctuary and other accessible areas including a renovated Hall and other letting areas.

A Garden Room/Lounge will be created that will offer a safe, welcoming place for adults with learning difficulties, those who suffer from loneliness, mobility issues or dementia or are in any way excluded from mainstream community life. In connection with the under mentioned Coffee House it is intended to offer those using the Garden Room/Lounge a chance to re-integrate with a wider community life at their own pace. It is expected that over the coming months a garden will be established alongside the Lounge such that beneficial activities can be extended outside. It is intended to create a “Living Well” café  
In the Garden Room/Lounge.

The Coffee House, operated by a socially committed partner, will be used to create a lunch club for those groups mentioned above as well as providing an attractive meeting place for the wider community. In partnership with the charity “The Foyer” and the Coffee House operator, we will offer work placements for young adults distanced from the workplace.

Arrangements are well underway to provide a community based “Lively Minds” group that would meet bi-weekly during the year. This group would be open to all, not just congregational members, and to all ages. The programme of talks, debates on social justice themes etc. are being created.

The Guild and others<sup>3</sup> use the premises frequently and a Lettings Board has been created to set competitive letting rates and to seek to maximise the letting to other outside bodies. Queen’s Cross is a Fair Trade congregation and adheres to Eco principles. Queen’s Cross church has received three Eco awards.

Pastoral care is provided by the Pastoral Team, consisting of a number of elders, which allows for a flexible pattern of visiting and care. Their elder visits each congregational household in March and October with an invitation to a card Holy Communion. Further pastoral visits are made as appropriate.

A ministry of flowers, with weekly delivery of flowers following worship, helps to support those unable to attend or who are unwell. Notice boards within the church are well used to publicise events. QX Connect, a quarterly publication, is delivered not only to members but also to every home and business in the whole parish.

### **Wider Church and Community**

In keeping with our involvement with the wider community which started in 1967 with the establishment of Church House, and in 1971 with the establishment of a Nursery, our £1.5m redevelopment sees, amongst other changes, a new purpose-built Nursery. It is compliant with the National Care Standards and creates a secure and welcoming environment for the children, and especially those in the Me2 Initiative. We seek to offer affordable nursery places in the heart of the community as part of our outreach that works towards creating a vibrant centre for all. Born of its own theological ethos the congregation has an ongoing commitment to Justice and Peace and Environmental concerns. We actively support and raise significant funds for the work of Christian

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<sup>2</sup> commenced February 2017 and practical completion expected March 2018

<sup>3</sup> see “List of Groups” attached

Aid. We send food on a weekly basis to Instant Neighbour's food bank. Every Christmas we provide food for the Cyrenians Christmas Dinners as well as clothing for their homeless clients. The congregation has a long-standing commitment to the work of the ecumenical Corrymeela Community in Northern Island.

### **Buildings and Accommodation**

The A-listed church building was originally completed in 1881, with additions made over subsequent decades, including a hall, lounge and vestry. In 1981 the pulpit was removed to allow space for activities at the front of the Sanctuary, and following the formation of the new Queen's Cross Church in 1989 by the union of Queen's Cross and Melville-Carden Place congregations, major changes were made in the sanctuary, including the removal of the pews creating a significant performance space. More recently a £1.5mm redevelopment has taken place that will provide a new entrance on Albyn Place, renovated Hall, a new Coffee House with a commercial kitchen, a Church kitchen, a Garden Room/Lounge with tea preparation facilities, a new, purpose-built Nursery and excellent access for those with mobility issues. An induction-loop system is installed in the Sanctuary, a mobile T-Loop is available also and a large print Church Hymnary is available on Sundays.

The manse repairs and refurbishment were tackled in 2017 but currently there are some outstanding issues relating to both Church and Manse property.

### **Finance and Stewardship**

The manse refurbishment (shower room and general redecoration) and necessary church fabric repairs (steeple and staircases) will put pressure on finances considering that we have a £400,000 General Trustees Loan to repay over 7 years. But the Property Team has looked to create a five-year plan that will see a consistent, soundly based financial plan to address these issues. The Stewardship Team led a review of Time and Talents in 2017.

### **Presbytery issues/Legal issues**

We believe we are compliant with the requirements of the Church of Scotland with regard to the sacrament of baptism; the maintenance of our records; that our office-bearers are representative of the congregation as a whole; that there are suitable arrangements for the management of the three part-time staff; that the law and regulations relating to safeguarding are properly followed by the Safeguarding coordinators and the Kirk Session has a standard agenda item for this matter at each meeting; that stewardship is being actively addressed (note recent significant fund raising for new refurbishment and extension redevelopment) and that the manse and church are properly maintained. In light of the recent refurbishment of a significant part of the church building we should see a diminished need for care and maintenance in the immediate five years of the hall and Nursery. We believe we also comply fully with the requirements of OSCR. Our Kirk Session is engaging with Presbytery's instruction to progress engagement with other Kirk Sessions in relation to future mission.

### **The Next Five Years**

The next five-year planning has begun with intense consultation with our congregation and the wider parish community. The Action Plan, set out clearly in themes, and drawing on the HeartEdge movement, creates an exciting and focused action plan. It is challenging but we believe realistic and the Kirk Session is aware that it is a living document and by necessity will be subject to further discussion and changes.

**Rev Scott Rennie (Minister)**  
**Mike Leys (Joint Session Clerk)**  
**Mark Hamilton (Joint Session Clerk)**  
**March 2018**

## List of Groups using or associated with Queen's Cross Church

### CHURCH GROUPS

Friendship Group	Men's Breakfast	Craft Group
Books on Tap	Guild	Monday Club
Clients and Carers	Healing Group (RAPHA)	Sunday Club

### COMMUNITY GROUPS

Aberdeen Chamber Recorder Orchestra	Brownies	Moira Donald Yoga
The McGill School of Speech and Drama, Ltd	Aberdeen Choral Society	Cubs
Mother and Toddler Group	Weight Watchers UK	Aberdeen County Floral Group
Families Need Fathers	My Voice	Yoga for Pregnancy
Aberdeen Hindu Association	Fiskis and Svettis	NE Scotland Classical Guitar Society
The Society of Recorder Players	Aberdeen and North East Coeliac Group	NCT Workshops
Scouts	Aberdeen Youth Music Theatre, Ltd	Girls' Guides
NCT Breastfeeding Tutoring	Joe Burn Yoga	Alanon
Grampian Autistic Society	NCT Bumps and Babies	Brain Injury Grampian
Beavers	Humanist Society of Scotland	Progressive Christianity Network
Bonding with Baby	Iain Taylor Fit Club	Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen