

Parish Voice

Summer 2021

Our Mission Statement: To be a place of Christian worship and outreach and a hub for the community enabling people to connect with Jesus and one another.

FROM THE MANSE

I write this letter as the sun is shining and the birds are singing. The air is fresh, and the signs of spring and summer are becoming visible for all to see. This is truly wonderful to experience after the dark and cold of winter. I think we appreciate days like this more after the sort of winter we have had. Perhaps that is true in other areas of life too. Earlier, whilst out in my car enjoying this day, I tuned into BBC Radio Scotland and listened to an interesting interview with author Gwendoline Riley about her new book, *My Phantoms*. I listened to how Riley has been writing for 20 years and throughout that period she has known many highs and lows. Although her work is well regarded in literary circles and she has been shortlisted for many awards, she too has experienced disappointments. One such low moment was when her third book sold a total of 67 copies. She described the moment when she received an uncomfortable letter from her publisher. We can only begin to imagine how she felt that day, but she chose not to give up. Riley kept on writing.

*just
keep
going*

A similar story was shared by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland when he addressed our Elders and Office Bearers recently. Due to the pressures the Church of Scotland is facing, the structures of the Church will need to change in the coming years. The Presbytery of Perth is to merge with the Presbyteries of Stirling, Dunkeld and Meigle, Dundee and Angus to form a new presbytery. At the forthcoming General Assembly, it is likely that it will become mandatory that presbyteries will need to reduce the number of ministers by approximately 30%. The number of church buildings will also need to be reduced. All of us know the reasons why. Congregations are declining and aging, income is dropping. None of this should be a surprise to anyone and, sadly, COVID-19 has exacerbated this.

Is this a time for us to discern afresh what the church is really for?

So, what is our response to all of this? One response is to shake our heads and give up. We could also retreat and become defensive moving into "survival mode" ready to fight our corner. I do not think either of these responses is the right way forward. Perhaps, we could see all of this differently. What might God be telling us at such

a time of change and development? Is this a time for us to discern afresh what the church is really for? How could we work in partnership with other congregations? For those of us who have been part of the Church of Scotland all our lives there will, undoubtedly, be many feelings and emotions stirred within us. In a way that generations before us in the Kirk have never experienced, we might have fresh insight to how the early Christians felt when they locked themselves away in an upstairs room. But, as we know, they did not remain locked away. Fear was not the end of their story and neither should it be ours too. Like them, we are to see the opportunities available to us and not give up.

There is no doubt that the past year has been filled with many highs and lows for us too. If COVID-19 has taught us anything it is that we thrive in being in the presence of another. When we are deprived of that we feel diminished. As a congregation we have missed the fellowship with one another at Sunday worship and the involvement in the community. Since the start of the pandemic we have missed two Easter services. Easter is my favourite time of the Christian year. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are rich and meaningful when we hear the heights and depth of God's love for us. But soon Easter Day arrives. At Dunbarney and Forgandenny Church we would normally celebrate this with an early morning garden service followed by breakfast together that would include a scrumptious bacon roll. Oh, how I miss these bacon rolls! I am sure we all miss the fun and



laughter sitting around a table at various soup and sweet events (although, amazingly, my waistline has somehow increased even without attending these events!)

Easter services might have been cancelled but Easter has never been cancelled. Jesus is risen. Jesus is alive! As followers of Jesus, we live in faith and hope. We can work towards building a better future in the knowledge that God is present with us as we journey together. Resurrection was not a one-off historical event 2000 years ago. God is still in the business of new beginnings bringing hope out of despair, light of darkness, etc. That's good news for us today.



It is this that we must hold on to. Throughout this past year, it is important to remember that while the church buildings have been closed, the Church has remained open and at work. It has been incredible what has been accomplished in Christ's name over this last year and I am immensely proud of the love and care that people have offered to others. Every effort has been made to help people in our congregation to feel connected. I am most grateful to all the pastoral callers who have made regular phone calls to those who completed the 'pink slips' which were distributed at the beginning of Lockdown. The elders and committees have continued working and have met regularly ensuring that buildings adhere to COVID regulations. The Trustees' Report is included in this edition of *Parish Voice* and makes for interesting reading. For six weeks over Lent, sixteen people gathered to reflect on a book entitled *Living His Story*. Together we read and reflected on how God is still at work in our communities, which we found to be such an encouragement. Furthermore, as we look to the future needs of the church and community, there is now growing excitement about possible refurbishment work in Dunbarney Church that would make it a "well equipped space in the right place."

I believe that this is an exciting time for the Kirk and our congregation. The message of the Bible remains the same. God cares and loves ordinary people: a love that is extravagant and unceasing in its persistence and devotion. There is nothing more precious we can give away to others than this good news. If we do not feel an intense desire to do so whether as a church or as individuals, now is the right time to pray insistently that God will once more touch our hearts. This is why becoming involved in the "Thy Kingdom Come" prayer initiative is so important. You can read more about this initiative later.

God cares and loves ordinary people: a love that is extravagant and unceasing in its persistence and devotion.

Returning to author Gwendoline Riley, I am reminded that it is when we find ourselves in the challenging moments of our lives that we ask the most important questions. As a congregation, we are no different and it is right that we should ask the big questions about our Christian faith and why the church is so important. It is essential, however, that as we do so we continue to do all we can to care for and love one another. As we do so, let us never forget that we are all in God's hands. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

So, every blessing be with you, until we meet again.
Your minister and friend
Allan

CHURCH REGISTER: DEATHS - *Left this world, but not forgotten*

27/12/20 - Henry William Douglas Anderson, aged: 68 years
15/01/21- Ronald (Ronnie) Edward Caves, aged: 91 years
27/01/21 - Wilhelmina (Wilma) Reekie Pullar Scott, aged: 76 years
03/02/21 - John Smart, aged: 82 years
12/03/21 - Robert (Rab) Charles Welsh, aged: 78 years
18/03/21 - Isobel Graham Armour, aged: 86 years
21/03/21 - Alan Laird Young Bruce, aged: 71 years
22/03/21 - Kathleen Stewart, aged: 92 years
29/04/21 - Gladys Agnew, aged 84

PHONE BROADCAST SERVICE

To listen to a recording of a Sunday Service, please dial **01738 239392**.



FROM THE SESSION CLERK: A Report given at the Stated Annual Meeting

I would like to say thanks to the many folk who have met over Zoom and worked hard for you, and for our church over the last 52 weeks.

First, a huge thank you to the Kirk Session, there are 27 elders and we have met as a group, always including Alison Jolliffe our treasurer, every two months and sometimes more often. Looking at everything from finance, property and pastoral issues to the new church presence up at Bertha Park...and there's much more besides that may affect us a church locally and as a church in Scotland. In the past we tried to keep you informed with our Session Snippets and we will try to continue to do this once we are allowed to hand out newsletters again.

Supporting the Kirk Session there is the Ministry Group. This group is made up from Allan, 8 elders and our treasurer and we meet a week or so before a Kirk Session meeting. We look at the upcoming agenda and then come to the session meeting with ideas and suggestions for them to discuss. Again things we look at range from how things might change when we open up again to how we can work together with other churches in the Lower Earn Group. Their time and contribution is invaluable to focus and shorten the Kirk Session agenda! Thank you everyone in the Ministry Group.

A COVID working group was set up last summer as we looked towards reopening our buildings. We had to complete checklists and a very detailed Risk Assessment for both Sanctuaries and the hall, both needed to be approved by the Church of Scotland. A huge thank you to the 6 members of this group made up from elders and the congregation. We met once a week on Zoom, followed this up with emails and after a tremendous amount of work from practical changes in our buildings, writing policies for cleaners, volunteers and emergency procedures we were able to open at the tail end of 2020. This wee group continually evaluate the current policies and advice and keep abreast of all the changing Church of Scotland and Scottish Government advice. We met again recently and opened both Dunbarney and Forgandenny churches on Easter Sunday, 4th April.

Dunbarney church will continue to be open for restricted numbers at 10.30am every Sunday morning until Wi-Fi is installed in Forgandenny church. At that point services will be held week about in both Sanctuaries. The Facebook online and the telephone broadcast services will continue to be available for the foreseeable future.

Another group that has been very busy during lockdown are the Pastoral Care group. They were originally co-ordinated by Gillian Munro and now by Christian Macdonald. Their role has changed during COVID times and they have been keeping in touch with a lot of you, sometimes just for a blether, at other times sorting out shopping and other support. They also keep Helen Jackson and our flower ministry and Kirsty Jackson and the Dandelion Group aware if anyone should receive flowers or a prayer shawl.



These are just a few of the many people who have given of their time and talents in the background to support our church family and the communities here in Dunbarney and Forgandenny.

Thank you everyone for embracing change and this new way of keeping in contact, keeping the church alive and accessible locally and supporting Allan our minister.

Anne Larg

TRUSTEES' REPORT - by Margaret Bell, Depute Session Clerk

Achievements and Performance.

2020 was an unprecedented year in recent church history with Coronavirus dominating much of our thought and activity throughout. In the first quarter, Church services in both church buildings and all planned activities on the church calendar which included a LECT study group, World Day of Prayer and the hosting of Community Engagement events, continued until mid-March when the Kirk Session agreed to postpone conventional services and outreach events prior to the announcement of the National Lockdown on 24th March 2020.

Our Mission statement "To be a place of Christian Worship and outreach and a hub for community enabling people to connect with Jesus and one another" required us to work outwith our usual comfort zone and the need for us to develop new competencies.

We were extremely fortunate in our Minister's interest and desire to examine new ways of delivering regular church services and forging new ways of keeping in touch with the church community and wider communities in which we live. The purchase of equipment to stream services enabled Live Church Services to be held every week on the Facebook platform. These averaged 70 families viewing the live service and several more accessing the service later in the week. The reach of these being much wider than our usual geographical area.

For those without internet services, the Telephone Broadcast System was implemented, giving 20 to 30 people the opportunity to listen to services later at home. This can be accessed by dialling **01738 239392**. Call charges at local rates. Recorded services continued to be delivered to the housebound and to Moncreiffe Care Home.

Virtually we celebrated Easter, three Communion services, Harvest Thanksgiving, an act of Remembrance and Christmas services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Messy Church continued with two face-to-face sessions in January and March and three virtual sessions held via Zoom.



The Pastoral Care Group was enlarged and offered to members of the community. Telephone support was established to any person who expressed an interest.

A working group was formed to consider the requirements to reopen our church buildings conforming to COVID regulations. This we were safely able to do for the last quarter of the year using a hybrid model of online and physical congregation. Rev. Allan Wilson officiated at 21 funerals. He participated in a service of Ordination and Induction for our former Probationer Minister Craig Dobney on 18th November 2020 at Comrie Parish Church and preached at Craig's first Sunday Service on 22nd November. These services were streamed live online.

All committees and Kirk Session meetings were held regularly on Zoom.

Community Engagement

The Church led a COVID response in the village, arranging for volunteers to collect prescriptions and shopping and where need was identified, responded to food poverty. Throughout the summer school holiday period food parcels were delivered to vulnerable families providing weekly shopping to enable daily meals. These were made possible through generous donations from the community. Ongoing liaison with PKC and input to the Building Better Communities Forum continued throughout the year.

Regular online School assemblies were initiated and partnership in Harvest Thanksgiving, the Remembrance event, the Blythswood Shoebox appeal and Advent events fostered. The church led a windows Advent Calendar event in the village that culminated in the Church garden on Christmas Eve. Parish Christmas Cards were printed and delivered to all houses in the village.



A weekly Tuesday Coffee and Chat Zoom meeting was established and open to church members and the wider community.

A revised church website was published and regular newsletters sent to all members and adherents. Despite the church buildings being closed for half of 2020, our Parish Church was very much open, working hard to uphold the precepts of our Mission Statement to maintain our connectivity to Jesus and to each other while serving our communities during these challenging times.

Lower Earn Churches Together

The Ministers and Session Clerks of the Lower Earn Churches have met twice recently online to explore ideas on how our churches can work together and prepare for the future. Undoubtedly over the next few years the way our churches are serviced and how worship is provided will change. These are being influenced by the Church of Scotland reform programme agreed at recent General Assemblies to ensure the Church operates more efficiently and effectively in the future.

Presbytery reform and new ways of being church are being rolled out and these are likely to pick up pace over the next few years. Our own Presbytery of Perth will join with 4 other current Presbyteries to form one

large Presbytery possibly as early as Summer 2022. The new Presbytery will oversee the changes needed to bring about the new look Church of Scotland fit for the future.

We know that future changes are likely to bring about a reduction in the numbers of stipendiary ministers and perhaps the closure of some buildings. Much as we may not wish to see this happen it is a likely consequence of a high number of church vacancies, fewer candidates coming forward for the ministry and an older worshipping congregation.

From our Lower Earn Churches meetings we grew in understanding that our communities are not the same and it is important to us to retain our separate identities. Our priorities for the churches however are similar, with a focus on Ministry and the preaching of the Word, Pastoral needs, Spiritual Growth and caring for those within the church and our communities. This was a good starting point for us to begin considering some possible models of delivery.



There is much further discussion required to find a model that best works for us all. In addition to the ordained ministry, we may need to make use of worship leaders and technology to provide opportunities for regular worship. We need to consider ways of sharing resources and using our skills and talents. The aim is to have a clear vision for the future and agree a change model that is Christ centred and hopeful.

TREASURER'S REPORT

[Please note a copy of the Accounts is available on our website at <https://www.dfpchurch.org.uk/announcements>]



As we all know only too well, 2020 was a challenging year for everyone, in lots of ways. However, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the way you responded so quickly to our plea to consider new ways of making your offerings. This made the work of the Finance Committee much easier than it might have been, and allowed the vital work of the Church to continue despite the fact that we were unable to meet and worship in the usual way for so much of the year.

As lockdown restrictions begin to be lifted and the vaccination programme continues, it feels as if we now have lots to look forward to. At long last, we are able to worship in the Church buildings again, and I wondered whether now might be a nice time for us to consider all that we have to be thankful for, and to think about the offerings we make in God's name. Just a small increase of perhaps 10% on our regular donations would allow us to explore new ways of supporting the community and would help to make up for income which continues to be lost due to ongoing COVID restrictions.

Another way of maximising our income is through the government Gift Aid scheme. If you are a UK taxpayer and have not yet signed up for the scheme, please get in touch - we can claim 25p for every £1.00 you donate, so we would really like to ensure we're not missing out on any eligible donations.

Thank you again for continuing to give so generously and prayerfully in response to God's abundant love.

Alison Jolliffe
Treasurer
Tel: 07809 293045

THY KINGDOM COME – A PRAYER INITIATIVE (13-23 May 2021)

You may remember the world wide prayer initiative called 'Thy Kingdom Come', held each year from Ascension to Pentecost. A couple of years ago, we used prayer batons every Sunday to remind us to pray for all the church groups within our congregation. We did not mark this event last year, however this year we have several ideas intended to help us pray for others who do not yet know Christ, for our community and for the church. To this end, the congregation will:



- be offered a copy of the Thy Kingdom Come prayer journal which guides us through the ten days and helps us pray for five others (there is an App people can use if they prefer);
- be invited to join a discussion group on Thursday May 13th and 20th via Zoom (as for the Lent study group);
- be encouraged to do a prayer walk round the villages praying for our community;
- to visit the church garden where there will be prayers to pray around the labyrinth, etc.

At a time when there are so many decisions to be made about the life of the church, it would be wonderful for as many members of our congregation to become fully involved in this initiative. All of this is done privately. If you would like a copy of the prayer journal, please contact Kirsty Jackson (through the Church Office - 01738 812463).

In addition, we have special activity packs to give to our Messy Church family for the children to engage with during the ten-day period. It is hoped that some contributions from these children can be included in a special service on Pentecost Sunday - May 23rd.

HOW DO I RESERVE A SEAT FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP?

We would not like you to be disappointed and be turned away so please phone Anne Rodgie (01738 812463) on the Friday immediately preceding the service to reserve a seat. At the time of writing, the guidance remains that a physical distance of 2m must be maintained within the church.

COMMUNION: Sunday 6th June and Sunday 5th September

You are invited to Sunday Worship that will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Subject to Coronavirus restrictions a service will take place on Sunday's 6th June and 5th September. In June, the time of the services will be:

**10.30am at Dunbarney
2.00pm in Forgandenny**



Due to COVID guidance, those attending should bring their own grape juice/wine and piece of bread which will be used during the service. This avoids the need for bread and wine to be handed out by others. Plastic communion cups will be set at each place several days before this service and can be taken away at the end of the service. It would be great to see you there.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

For the last year, Sunday services have continued to take place every week using Facebook Live. For those who do not have Facebook, there is an opportunity to listen to the Sunday service using a telephone. The number to use is 01738 239392. The recorded service is uploaded to the telephone broadcast service by 1.00pm on a Sunday and is available to listen to during the week. This is also a really helpful way to hear weekly church notices.

What have invited a few people to tell us what they think of it.



"I use the telephone (much better than the memory stick I used to use) and I make sure I am in the mood and completely and utterly relaxed, often a Monday or Tuesday. I am getting so much more out of these services at a deeper level and often in ways I had not thought of before, Allan really makes me stop and think. This is regardless of how many times I have heard and read the stories in the bible! Allan makes them current and I can listen to them again, which I sometimes do." *Anonymous.*

"I enjoy watching the service, I feel it gives me some contact with the outside world. I do appreciate all the work Allan puts into the services." *Isobel*

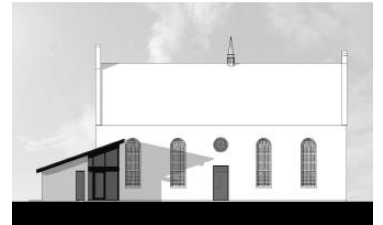
"During Lockdown Billy and I have been blessed with being able to use Skype, What's App and Zoom to engage with family, friends both home and abroad and coffee and chat on a Tuesday morning with Allan and Church members It is wonderful to see everyone whom you have not been able to mix with over the past year and share thoughts. Hopefully, we will be able to get back to meeting up soon over a coffee."

Billy and Margaret

If you would like to send your comments about watching or listening to the service online or by telephone, please contact Anne Larg (e.anne.larg@gmail.com) or Margaret Bell (deputysessionclerk@outlook.com). It would be great to hear how these have been helpful to you over these past few months.

REFURBISHMENT PROJECT - DUNBARNEY CHURCH

The project working group first met back on February 9th, 2019 to discuss and review the possible refurbishment of Dunbarney Church. From that point the criteria, the needs, the purpose and the Christian values for a building that would serve the local community for the next hundred years were established and a design brief was produced. The design brief was sent to 6 architect firms and after a careful selection process, the initial study and design contract was awarded to James F Stephen Architects. Based on extensive consultation with the working group and a detailed survey of the Church, a conceptual design has now been produced and presented to the Kirk Session.



This design was very well received by the working group and from that point a review of how this design met our values, needs and criteria was undertaken.

The ideas include amongst many other changes to the sanctuary space. It is proposed that the sanctuary will benefit from the removal of the current glazed timber wall to the rear of the room to be replaced with a folding glass wall to allow a flexible space that will provide a highly welcoming view into the Sanctuary from the lobby and provide centre entrance doors into the space. The removal of the current pews to be replaced by individual seating will allow a highly flexible range of seating formats which will be enhanced by the re-positioning of the current support pillar/s for the First Floor Gallery to allow a centre aisle for formal events and a seating format to suit these events. Details of the Sanctuary décor, seating, heating and furnishings are yet to be specified. Other ideas are being discussed too such as the development of a new entrance and a "Hall of Friendship." It is hoped to bring you more information in our net edition of *Parish Voice*.

Forgandenny Church will also benefit soon from having a WIFI connection. When this takes place, Sunday worship will alternate between Dunbarney and Forgandenny Churches and this will also enable an online congregation to be maintained.

DEVELOPING YOUTH WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY



At a recent meeting of the Kirk Session, elders agreed to enter discussions with a Youth Work group called KYTHE to do some youth work in our parish. KYTHE stands for Kinross-shire Youth Enterprise and aims to serve young people by helping to meet their physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs through Innovative and Dynamic Christian Youth Work. KYTHE is recognised as a trusted youth work provider by Perth and Kinross Council.

If you have a heart for children and young people and you would like to see such youth work being developed in our parish, please contact Allan (AWilson@churchofscotland.org.uk, 01738 812463) for more information on how you could become involved. This could be very exciting for our neighbourhood.

PRESBYTERY MISSION INITIATIVES

(i) Bertha Park

The Bertha Park Presbytery Mission Initiative is an exciting project taking place in our presbytery, led by its Community Minister, Rev Anne Stott. Bertha Park housing development behind Inveralmond, Perth currently has 240 homes but will eventually comprise 3,000 homes. How do new houses erected on a green-field site become a community when there is no shared history, and currently no shops or established meeting places?



This is where Perth Presbytery's bold vision comes into play: the seeding of a community church. "Church" is likely to mean – and be – something completely different to the long-established traditions with which we are familiar. Of course, worship, fellowship, discipleship and pastoral care will be at the core, but how these are approached will depend on what Anne hears in her conversations with residents. "My role is to listen, develop relationships, support and earn the right to speak about faith." Anne is Chaplain at the recently-opened Bertha Park High School and volunteers there – she is building relationships.

Practical support is one way to live the message. In the first Covid Lockdown, the bus service was suspended, meaning residents faced a 40-minute round walk to the nearest shops. Anne also recognised that budgets are tight for those whose employment has taken a downturn, so a Food Share was set up and a garden box with staples, from which folk could help themselves for free or indeed add donations. Once the posters went up, word got round and the Food Share supported those who needed it, so they felt they were not alone. People are still giving and taking from the Garden Box regularly...

The church's physical presence will be refreshingly non-traditional: a corner-shop space. Anne's hope is that this will serve as a hub – people popping into this church community space, residents offering various activities for all ages and council services and charities using it to serve the local community too. Anne is considering offering Bible study groups or perhaps an Alpha course eventually, but in ways that meet people where they are at. Hopefully, the community space will be open soon!

If you would like to find out more, please use this link to find a short video about the initiative on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/y0MLbQ9XOYk> How can we get involved? In practical terms, there is a shop space that needs to be fitted out with furniture and essentials, so help with these goods or funding would be appreciated. Likewise, volunteers giving of their time will increase what can be offered. Importantly, Anne welcomes your prayers of support. For more information please email **AStott@churchofscotland.org.uk**

(ii) Intogether

'Intogether' is a Perth Presbytery Mission Initiative which aims to share Jesus' love with families who have children with additional support needs (ASN) through listening, learning and being together.



Latest government statistics in 2020 suggest that a third of pupils in every mainstream school have additional support needs. Our church membership and attendance does not reflect this. Indeed, the Baptist press reports that 90% of all families with children with ASN are not in our churches. Why is this? And how can we bridge the gap to offer God's love, care and support?

Listening Together

We are currently piloting an independent listening service to parents of children with ASN in partnership with a local primary school. Life is so much more challenging when your child has additional support needs. It can be a struggle to have needs recognised and met, and sadly, society is often quick to judge when it sees a parent struggle with their children's behaviour. Parents and children with ASN are excluded or find it too difficult to join in a wide range of social activities because of the changes that would be needed to include and welcome them. Capability Scotland in 2011 told us 53% of families claim having a child with ASN causes major relationship difficulties or even break ups. We want to offer our listening service as an expression of God's interest and love, when and if required.

Learning Together

Intogether wants to start conversations and raise awareness and understanding of the various additional support needs in our parishes. We also can offer training for churches and Christian faith groups to help them build inclusive communities where children with (ASN) and their families can belong. We are happy to meet and support churches and leaders individually in their own contexts as they seek to find a way to love and welcome their families.

Being Together

The ideal may be to support families to worship where they are, but we recognise that at times, families may need an alternative, temporarily or for the long term. We are also aware that 90% of families with Children with ASN would never consider attending church as we know it because it is simply too challenging. So we hope to establish a monthly gathering, a missional expression of church designed with children with ASN and their families, where alternative spaces are offered so that families can explore the theme and access worship in a way that might work for them.

How can you get involved?

We hope many will pray regularly for us. Some may also offer skills such as admin, or become part of the team at our worship gatherings, or consider becoming a volunteer with our listening service as it expands. If you are interested in praying or knowing more, please get in touch! Email: **intogether20@gmail.com**

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS		
Parish Minister	Rev. Allan J. Wilson	812463
Session Clerk	Anne Larg	812805
Dep Session Clerk	Margaret Bell	815910
Secretary	Anne Rodgie	812463
Pastoral Group	Christian Macdonald	07739 311630
Safeguarding	Steve Fulton	813516
Treasurer	Alison Jolliffe	07809 293045

