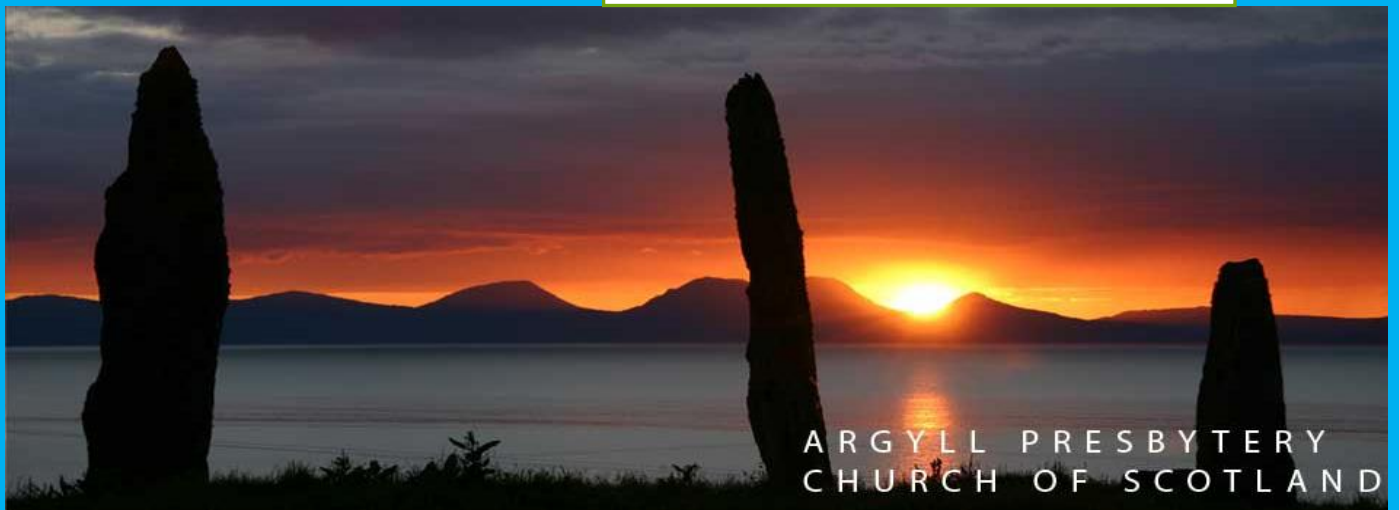


The Church of Scotland
PRESBYTERY OF Argyll

Glassary, Kilmartin and Ford Iw
North Knapdale

LOCAL
CHURCH
REVIEW

OUR
CHURCH
TODAY



Contents

Introduction	2
1. The story of your church.....	3
1.1 Suggested content:	3
1.2 Your Church's Story:	3
2. Life of the congregation	4
3. Congregation and Wider Church	8
4. Resources – people, buildings, money	9
5. Communication	13

Introduction

The Local Church Review (LCR) report that follows is your report; a report on your congregation and parish written by you – office bearers, members and minister. Some things have already been completed; for instance, much of the statistical information has been completed from Presbytery records. But what we want to see most are your opinions, thoughts, concerns, hopes and aspirations.

Every parish church is unique; every story is different; you know your own story better than anyone else. That is why you are asked to write your story, tell us of church life in your parish, tell us of your worship, evangelism, service, discipleship, fellowship and so much more. Your story is vital in understanding the life of your congregation.

Before visiting your congregation the team from Presbytery will have read your report with great care and will use it as a basis for their meetings with you and for the questions they ask. The written word conveys only part of a picture and visits and dialogue add so much more. These visits are a sign that we are in partnership – local church and Presbytery and we hope that all that follows reflects togetherness. Whilst some of what is asked is factual, such as numbers and compliance with legal requirements, the overall context is mission.

We hope that the questions asked are clear and that the processes to be followed are understood. However, the leader of the visiting team and/or the Convener of Superintendence is happy to be contacted for discussion or clarification.

The leader of the visiting team is Rev Hilda Smith, Tel: 01546 602238. Rev John Paton, the Convenor of Superintendence's contact details are; Tel 01680300001; email – JPaton@churchofscotland.org.uk. The Presbytery Clerk, Mr Stewart Shaw, is also available to you; Tel 07711944807; email – Argyllh@cofscotland.org.uk.

The pack has been produced using MS Word and you are asked to complete and respond electronically. Do not feel constrained by the size of the response boxes. As you type the boxes will expand to accommodate your text. Responses do not need to be wordy as the visiting team for the Superintendence Committee will discuss responses with you and will ask for more information if required.

LCR is now new – under ACT 1 of the General Assembly of 2012 LCR replaces the former Quinquennial Superintendence system. We look forward to receiving this completed report by 30 September 2018

J Paton
Convener of Superintendence

1. The story of your church

1.1 Suggested content:

Please tell us something of your church's history. Think back over the last ten years. Share the recent story of your congregation – the celebrations, the struggles, the dreams. Where have you seen God at work? How did you get where you are in church life? Where do you think you are?

The report that follows asks many questions and the answers given will tell much. Therefore, your story below need not be more than a very few paragraphs.

1.2 Your Church's Story:

The Parish was vacant from December 2008 to May 2010 when the current minister was inducted. In May 2011 three elders resigned, including the Session Clerk, making the transition for the new minister more difficult. Three new elders and new Session Clerk appointed to re-establish the Session. The Session Clerk proved to be an excellent appointment.

Messy church started in both our linked parishes with a team made up of volunteers from both parishes.

The congregation supported the minister through difficult times in marriage and health.

Membership is declining mainly through deaths. High proportion over 70 yrs. Some new members and adherents moving into the parish.

Inverlussa Church building refurbishment proposal was refused by Presbytery and eventually we were told to vacate and sell building. Considerable sadness in congregation over this and ill feeling over the handling of the process by Presbytery.

The lack of church connection to Achnamara area of Parish prompted, in early 2016, Cafe Connect to be begun as way of serving and engaging with community. Now a regular and popular weekly event on Saturday mornings. Attended by people from all parts of Parish and their friends.

Alpha courses were begun in Achnamara Hall and Tayvallich home in 2017. "Alpha next" (home group) started thereafter from those having attended Alpha.

Session Clerk since 2011, and his wife, the organist of long standing, (42 years), (both elders) resigned due to care provision in July this year. New session clerk appointed. Currently 6 elders.

Minister now awaiting visa to leave Parish for new post in New York State with Presbyterian Church of USA.

Been a member for four years having transferred from Glasgow, but have had home in Tayvallich all of life. We are an aging congregation who are very supportive of the church and have some new members moving in to area. 50+ members. I got where I am through doctrine of minister in previous church, St David's.

Sadly, with an aging congregation it is inevitable that numbers will decrease. It is hoped with Messy Church a seed may be sown in some young whose families have no church interest. (we were one of, if not the first to start)
Involvement every week with Cafe Connect in the community is proving popular with numbers on the increase. (28 and one child this week)

2. Life of the congregation

Tell us about congregational life and its worship, fellowship, service, discipleship and evangelism. Please type responses in relevant box and it will expand to fit your text.

2.1 **Worship – *The shared experience of meeting God; we gather to express our need for God and to express our gratitude for all that God has done for us.***

- **Style(s) of worship – describe a typical service format;**
- **Number of weekly services; patterns of worship;**
- **Musical range; praise band; organ; soloists; etc;**
- **Use of audio visual equipment;**
- **Congregational member involvement in leading worship;**
- **Anything else you would like to tell us?**

Typical format is formal – hymn sandwich

Weekly Sunday services rotation – Tayvallich, Bellanoch, Tayvallich, Inverlussa.

Annual change of Service time with linked Parish; 10.00 am and 11.30 am.

Some Sunday evening services over summer months in previous two years. Easter services Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday services. Early service at Keills or Kilmory Chapel on Easter morning. Remembrance service at Barnluasgan war memorial.

Christmas eve afternoon Carol service and evening Watchnight service at Tayvallich.

Traditional Electric Organ music.

Very occasional recorded music for specific special services.

Members of congregation take the bible readings and welcome guests at the door. Minister has very recently started a weekly group to help plan services.

There is always the opportunity for anyone at a service to “jump up and share”

One weekly service

Organ music

Minister sermon

Parishioner bible reading.

Some would describe this a Hymn/sandwich but as a congregation is more elderly than some that is the preferred format. Changes recently have caused upset and threat of leaving in more than one case. Members on door duties/readings and prayers.

Usually 1 Sunday service, usually hymn sandwich type, mostly accompanied by organ, sometimes precentor led. Audio visual stuff has been used at least once, that I'm aware of. Slightly alternative evening services have happened in the summer months at times. Holy Week evening services. Scripture is read by various members. The Minister is currently running Worship Workshops.

2.2 **Evangelism** - *The calling of every Christian to be a witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is all the ways in which we share our Good News and bring others to the point of beginning their own journey of faith.*

- **How do you help people begin their journey of faith?**
- **Communication;**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Alpha group.

Messy Church.

Attending services.

Communication through weekly Service sheet with notices. Minister gives verbal notices at start of service.

Session agenda and minutes on notice board and website.

News, notices, occasional sermons put on website.

List of services and times on each Church notice board and village notice boards.

Talk and answer questions

Door duty is excellent way of communicating with those attending worship – answering questions on faith, Christianity and on bible study etc.

Alpha courses. Cafe Connect, Messy Church

Service notices in local paper, weekly order of service with notices (maybe spare ones could be put in village shop for people to pick up – this happened somewhere I lived), church notice boards, banners outside church

2.3 Service - *The living out of our faith in practical ways. Jesus called us to be servants of all and this is shown to others as we care for our neighbours.*

- **What systems of Pastoral Care (elder districts, etc.) do you have?**
- **How do you respond to the needs of others in the parish and beyond?**
- **How are you involved with school or other chaplaincies?**
- **In what ways are you involved with social issues?**
- **In what ways do you work in partnership with community groups or agencies and/or mission partnerships at home or abroad?**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Elders each have a group of members and others.

Cafe Connect.

Flowers to ill or newly moved in to parish.

Minister visits primary school monthly.

Retiring offerings at Christmas and Easter for local charities or aid agencies. Other retiring offerings for emergency situations, e.g. Malawi food shortage.

Messy church connects with primary school pupils

Member of Malawi Twinning Group.

Support MOMA.(Moving On Mid Argyll)

Visit elderly, housebound, sick and bereaved plus those on elders list.

Also new people to village deliver church flowers, Tayvallich only.

Cafe Connect on Saturday mornings, communicate and make friendships, take home baking. Personal level, Malawi and Raven trust

Collection for Christian Aid is an excellent way of communicating with Parish – generous in giving.

Visiting those who are ill/elderly/lonely or in need in any way. Especially the bereaved.

Elders districts, minister visits schools, café connect, Malawi twinning group, Eco-congregation, MOMA, special collections, different members involved in different organisations, so highlight different issues for prayer, e.g. Dochas centre, Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal, Ardfenaig Aged People Home, Harvest offering.

2.4 Discipleship - *The act of following Christ. It is about learning what it means to be a Christian as we experience life and question what we believe. The church should equip its members with "practical guidance for expressing their faith in the world during the week."*

- **How do you help people of all ages grow in their faith?**

Children, Young People, new members and adults

- **In what ways do you promote personal devotions, private prayer and opportunities to reflect on life experiences?**
- **Which resources do you use?**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Alpha groups, - use "Jesus the Game Changer" DVD

Messy Church. – use Messy Church DVD for training the team.

Minister encourages use of Sanctuary first website and C of S Pray Now annual prayer book and other devotional material.

Did have a weekly prayer group – supported by only 3 people at most. Members have been asking me various aspects of Christian Life. Calling in on houses and visa versa.

Alpha course, Messy church, bible reading notes, book group tried at one time

If there is a demand for bible study then this could be developed by others who are interested with support from the minister – e.g. Christianity Explored

2.5 Fellowship - *The opportunity of experiencing God's grace and love in and through God's people; this is about people really getting to know each other.*

- **How do you build relationships within the church?**
- **How do you encourage people to meet outwith worship?**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Cafe Connect.

Tea/coffee after services.

Messy Church planning group. – preceded by lunch together

Elders groups historically.

Alpha.

Talking, showing that you care. Listening is important. Meet in houses or for coffee.

Coffee after service, Alpha meal, café connect, share hospitality, stitch-up

Easter breakfast, shared lunches on special occasions, (this may develop into regular post service shared lunches when the service is at 11.30am.)

Shared lunch prior to Worship group at manse. Other shared meals as opportunity arises.

3. Congregation and Wider Church

3.1 Wider church – *Your relationships and involvement with Presbytery, central church structures and other denominations.*

- **How would you describe your involvement with Presbytery?**
- **Tell us about any relationships with Councils (and/or their committees) of the General Assembly.**
- **Tell us about any ecumenical relationships.**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**
- **Tell us about any partnerships you have with the World Church**

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- **Tell us about your involvement with organisations like Christian Aid.**

Responses:

Connect through Presbytery elder giving report to Session. Minister attends.

Communications to Session Clerk passed to congregation and session.

Linked to Kasamba Church in Malawi through MTG.

Annual collection throughout parish for Christian Aid week well supported.

Until recently ladies from both parishes organised the world day of prayer service in Bellanoch church. Once these ladies retired from this occupation we were encouraged to join in with other events in Lochgilphead.

Presbytery elder is on the Presbytery Mission Committee.
Christian Aid – rep for North Knapdale involves 3 churches. Door to door and church collections. Generous in giving.

Presbytery elder reports to session as does minister, minister attends assembly on rota basis, emails / correspondence shared by session clerk, participation in World Day of Prayer service, Christian Aid Advent service, Week of Prayer for Christian unity referred to, World Mission magazine, (and e-mails) Christian Aid rep in congregation, Eco-congregation.

Minister is on the Presbytery Mission Committee and the Vacancy Procedures Committee.

4. Resources – people, buildings, money

4.1 Human Resources – *People helping to make your mission statement a reality.*

- **Who are your ministry team members?**
- **What support is there for your minister/ministry team including admin support?**
- **How is training and development (in-service training, study leave, staff appraisals, etc.) supported?**
- **With your present staffing and volunteers are you resourced to achieve the developments highlighted in this report?**

- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

We don't have a mission statement.

We don't have a designated ministry team but the Session members carry out this role. Every member should be a member of this team.

The elders support the minister, minister has personal mentor

There is no admin support for the minister apart from the session clerk, two people who set out and print the Weekly Service sheet and notices, and one person who manages the Newspaper advertisements.

There is an ample budget to cover training but so far very little has been used.

It is difficult to persuade elders to attend training, one reason being the long distances involved. All elders have been given Learn eldership to read and are encouraged to use the "Learn" series. Training courses from 121 are always offered and encouragement given to attend. Year of Young People training in Tarbert was attended by two elders, 6 messy church volunteers attended training by Lynn Alexander in youth. 3 people went to training in Stirling with Lucy Moore.

Elders also attended training on Messy church by Paul Buteman, Bereavement with Tom Gordon and Safeguarding with Doreen Henderson.

The minister has attended training in Managing Change with Graham Duffin, in working with those with dementia, in the Centre for Art and Technology and in Transition Ministry.

Two Elders attended all three annual "Going for Growth" summer schools on Fresh Expressions" (2015,2016,2017) at their own expense. The minister attended one year as study leave.

On retiring from paid employment two elders were led by God to attend the Forge Pioneer training course, at their own expense. This was a one year course run by Forge International on Church Planting and church growth. Forge Scotland is led by Rev Alan McWilliam of Whiteinch Church of Scotland.

Although open to going anywhere following the training, during the year of the course God encouraged them to reach out to the people of the Parish, particularly the Achnamara peninsula, and so they remained in North Knapdale Church using their newly acquired skills and knowledge in their home church, developing Alpha and supporting Cafe connect And Messy Church.

As with a lot of organisations, a few people do most of the work. We only just have sufficient volunteers and under the encouragement of the new session clerk, everyone in church is being asked to get involved.

Minister, session clerk, members, property committee, finance

committee, people help where needed. Training opportunities highlighted & budget available to cover costs so anyone can go, minister gets statutory study leave, trainers brought in when required e.g. safeguarding.

The minister and Presbytery elder also attend training provided at Presbytery Conferences.

4.2 Buildings – Sanctuary, halls, manse, church officer's house, etc.

- **Describe how your church buildings are used,**
- **What is their state of repair?**
- **Describe their suitability for purpose?**
- **Do you have a five year Property maintenance plan?**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Tayvallich -fortnightly services, funerals, weddings, Session meetings, formerly occasional evening services.

Bellanoch – monthly services, popular for weddings, formerly world day of prayer

Inverlussa – monthly services.

Tayvallich – acceptable, some maintenance outstanding, disabled toilet, kitchen sink and cupboards. Sound system. Level access through side door.

Bellanoch – good, no running water, dehumidifier in use, access path difficult for infirm, level access ramp in place.

Inverlussa – deteriorating, no running water, for sale.

Tayvallich has part replaced pews with movable seating, giving potentially variable layout which is used mainly for Session meetings.

Severe shortage of storage space results in back pews in Tayvallich being used for storage of Messy Church equipment. Vestry is also overcrowded with equipment.

Buildings are OK for current traditional Sunday morning services, but very inflexible and unsuitable for any other forms of meetings, services or less formal events.

Each church building has an electric organ, all of which are now elderly, one has partly failed in range but is useable.

1 building fit for purpose, used twice a month, 1 not – no toilet or proper disabled access, used once a month, another not fit for purpose but currently up for sale & used once a month. Maintenance plan in place & provided we can get local contractors, minor repairs carried out when necessary.

4.3 Money, Time and Talents.

- **Comment on your ability to finance all you are currently doing.**
- **How is the work of your church financed – is it mainly from givings or is it dependent on income from hall lettings, legacy interest, etc?**
- **Are you over-dependent on givings from any particular age group or individuals?**
- **When did you last address stewardship, what stewardship programme are you using and when will stewardship next be addressed?**
- **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

We have sufficient reserve finance to fund what we currently do.

Our income from giving is reducing as numbers fall. We have reserves with General Trustees from sale of buildings and previous surpluses.

Congregation is generous in giving – particularly elderly and housebound – stewardship, Christian Aid and World Mission stamps. Financial Stewardship campaign not appropriate at this time, but it may be time to address use of talents and time.

Finance from Sunday collections, mostly retired folk, occasional donations from elsewhere, no lettings income, income from when Tayvallich manse sold, stewardship campaign ran in last few years on Time, Talents and Money.

Two annual coffee mornings in Tayvallich and craft fair in Achnamara together raise approximately £2,000 annually.

5.

Communication

5.1 Communication Strategy – *Tell us about your communication strategy/plan including website use:*

- **How do you promote your vision and mission?**
- **How do you keep in touch with members?**
- **How do you encourage members to keep in touch with one another?**
- **How do you advertise your church and its activities?**
- **Anything else you would like to tell say?**

Response.

Service leaflet, notices and website.

Notice board and website and notice in Argyll Advertiser.

One elder puts information up as personal Facebook posts.

Visiting and phone calls

Advertise in weekly paper.

Some of this already said, local paper, banners outside church, weekly service sheet, staying behind for coffee, attend village gatherings

The minister is enthusiastic to develop a greater “on-line” presence for the church but this is limited by lack of available and capable people to take this on.