



Presbytery of Stirling.

Presbytery Mission Plan 2022.
(Draft Plan)

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee, June 2022.

The Ad Hoc Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee comprised the following Presbyters;

Rev Dan Harper (Bridge of Allan), Convener

Rev Allan Miller (Church of the Holy Rude I/w Stirling: Viewfield Erskine) Presbytery Clerk

Ed Morton, Depute Clerk

Rev Colin Renwick (Dunblane: The Cathedral) Moderator of Presbytery (Depute Convener)

Rev Gary Caldwell (Dunblane: St Blane's I/w Lecropt)

Rev Sang Cha (Alloa: St Mungo's) Strategy Committee

Daniel Gunn (Dunblane: St Blane's I/w Lecropt) Convener Oversight Committee

Ian McVean (Balfron I/w Fintry) Convener Stewardship Committee

John Millar Church of the Holy Rude I/w Stirling: Viewfield Erskine) Strategy Committee

Peter Murdoch (Stirling: Park) Strategy Committee

Graham Nash (Cambusbarron: The Bruce Memorial) Strategy Committee

Rev Elizabeth Robertson (Bannockburn: Ladywell)

Valerie Rose (Alloa: Ludgate) Business Convener

David Russell (Stirling: St Marks) Strategy Committee

Rev Stuart Sharp (Killearn) Strategy Committee

Introduction.

At the 2021 General Assembly, the Faith Nurture Forum asked the Assembly to instruct Presbyteries to begin working on new Presbytery Mission Plans (PMP) with a reduced number of ministries and to report **no later than 31st December 2022**. Each Presbytery was issued with a revised allocation of full-time equivalent (FTE) posts, a share of the revised national total of 600. For Stirling this meant an adjusted allocation of 21.5 FTE from the previous allocation of 35.2 FTE a reduction of 40%.

Presbyteries have been undertaking Presbytery Planning in various forms since 2003, indeed Stirling Presbytery was still in the midst of conversations relating to the adjustments necessary to accommodate an unspecified reduction of FTE Ministerial posts when these new allocation numbers were announced. However, the Faith Nurture Forum report marked a monumental change in approach with substantially reduced ministry figures and a limited time for Presbyteries to engage with the process outlined in the report and the accompanying Act. In Stirling Presbytery, the Presbytery Plan was remitted to the Ad Hoc Committee comprising the convenors of the standing committees of Presbytery, Clerk and Moderator and members of the Strategy Committee.

The following narrative to the Presbytery Mission Plan (PMP) seeks to explain the rationale behind the Plan presented for Presbytery's approval.

Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act 8 2021)

The Act of Assembly details how the process is to be engaged with and the factors to be consider in the process of development. Section 2.1.1 outlines the key factors that the PMPs are to include;

- i ensure that the life of the Church of Scotland is shaped around Mission and adequately reflects the outcomes of Local Church Review and ideas for local mission;*
- ii sustain the commitment to a territorial ministry as described in the Third of the Articles Declaratory appended to the Church of Scotland Act 1921 and affirmed in Declaratory Act V 2010 including its commitment to ecumenical working;*
- iii make appropriate use of such ministry posts as may be permitted by the General Assembly so that the number of post holders in each Presbytery conforms to the numbers and time-scales set by the General Assembly;*
- iv ensure that new ways of being Church, other than stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacrament or traditional MDS appointments, are reflected in the Mission Plan;*

The clear thrust of the Act emphasizes the need and role of mission in the life and expression of the local churches, and also the Church of Scotland's understanding of itself as a national church and the commitment to serve the whole of the nation's island, rural and urban contexts. It also addressed the issue of the infrastructure that the church presently owns and the need to shape that to best match the changing shape of the church. To accomplish this

an assessment of the buildings of the church was to be included in the plan and a clear indication to be given of their necessity and otherwise they were to be released;

2.1.2 In doing so the Presbytery will categorise each ecclesiastical building as either:-

(a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date at which the Mission Plan is approved or annually reviewed, or

(b) to be sold, let or otherwise disposed of by a specified date which is within five years from the date at which the ecclesiastical building is first categorised as (b).

2.1.3 In order to arrive at these categorisations the Presbytery shall use, and reference, resources and advice provided by the General Trustees, including the Land and Buildings Toolkit (or any successor guidance issued by the General Trustees).

It was the view of the committee that the issues of the provision of ministry and the assessment of Church Buildings were two separate though related issues. The issue of the distribution of ministry should not be hampered by the current placement or condition of the buildings and consequently it separated these two elements. A decision was taken to focus in on the fair and equitable distribution of ministry as the leading process and then overlay that 'map' with the assessment of the current buildings and to thereafter consider where and what action needs to be taken to adjust the buildings we have to meet the shape of the church emerging from the plan.

The plan we were instructed to write had to be shaped by the Five Marks of Mission adopted by the national church and part of the Local Church Review process, with mission at the heart of the life and expression of the local church. We were also acutely aware that the Presbytery is comprised of a range of contexts and settings in which churches operate and we sought to understand the impact of these variations on the life and witness of the church. We recognised that this may mean that the approach in one context will be different to another, and we will seek to explain these variations within this narrative.

Five Marks of Mission

The five Marks of Mission defined within the Act are as follows;

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Whilst these 'Marks' at first glance, may seem quite straightforward and non-contentious, how they are realised and made manifest in different areas and contexts is not as straightforward as first may be thought.

1. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom – The natural assumption may be that this is the role or function of the ordained clergy. However, it is the activity and responsibility of the whole church in faithful obedience to the commission of Christ (Mat 28:18ff). It also assumes, or presumes, a presence in all the communities of the nation to proclaim to (given our territorial presumption), and to reach beyond itself to the community it sits within. With reductions in the FTE ministries deployed in communities, a greater emphasis will be placed on the contribution and work of the individual congregation's membership and affiliates to fulfil this in both word and acts of gracious service.

2. Baptise and nurture new believers - The role of discipleship is critical for the future longevity the church. If the drawing in of new disciples is restricted, then the likely movement through to future whole-time ministry will be directly impacted upon, as well as Eldership, office bearers and the general health of the congregation. The church local has a dual function, proclamation (kerygma) and instruction (paraenesis) in terms of discipleship. The matured believers' role is to fulfil the great commission as they are gifted by the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:11) thus contributing to the undertaking of Mark 1 above.

3. Respond to need by loving service – To respond in acts of service would require the church to be present among those it sought to serve at the micro level, whilst also participating in the greater and wider work of the body of Christ in supporting Christian service in other places and contexts at a macro level. Again, this emphasises the critical role that active congregations have, and that the church can no longer be someplace to retreat from the world, but to be training camps for the equipping of each individual for outward engagement in the community in which they are placed.

4. Transform unjust structures – This seems like a broader aspect than any single congregation can fulfil, however, each congregation acts as a light in the world shining in its dark places and brokenness and though it may be unable to change the whole world individually, it can contribute to societal change through campaign and challenge to the systems of power for the betterment of humanity and to set and live an example of the same in the communities in which they reside. Moreover, the church is called to be a vibrant presence in those communities disadvantaged by the present systems and to bring change to the lives of those living there.

5. Safeguard creation – The growing awareness of the environmental challenge before us can put the church in a pivotal place to communicate a different vision and godly purpose behind the concept of the stewardship of creation rather the traditional industrialisation of nature and treating it as a disposable commodity. In a local setting the church can actively be involved in the renewal of the 'earth' in practical ways that are context appropriate. It can also mean a practical response to the issue of buildings where inefficient and poorly equipped building are either released or improved to reduce the carbon footprint of the congregations.

These 'Marks' are to be critical and key measures and guides to the reshaping of the church locally, but even at the most basic level they are redolent with concepts of relationship and locality. This then immediately creates a tension in the demand to fulfil this and yet also reduce paid staffing and the number of potential places of worship within which this work is done. Hard choices must be made, but they should be informed and considered choices and the most appropriate starting point is to form a vision for the church moving forward that seeks to honour the demands of the planning process and also the missional focus of the church. This highlights the need for the resourcing of local people to 'be' the church in their communities, and to work together where this can be more effective.

The General Assembly also instructed Presbytery to give a priority to engagement with the under 40's and to the poor, this too, will or should challenge our thinking about the deployment and placement of ministries. This may be something that can more imaginatively be achieved in the urban context which may more readily allow differentiated ministries to overlap. In the rural context the likelihood is that the demand to maintain the local, to sustain points of community contact will reduce the options of creating such complementary ministries and other alternatives need to be considered.

Vision

Proverbs 29:18 reminds us that where there is no vision the people perish. Without a sense of vision or the big picture work of God in His church, there is always a danger that the planning process becomes a management process rather than a prophetic work of the Spirit within the body of Christ leading to new life and growth. If we are to fulfil the remit of the Mission Plan Act with reduced resources then we need to develop a plan that is creative, (using new and innovative models of ministry) flexible, (that can maintain a minimum of core resource that can be increased or flexed upwards as needed) contextual, (that uses models and pattern that are specific to the needs of the differing contexts and communities within Presbytery) and consistent, (having set the terms and defined the parameters, it is consistently applied).

A missionally focused plan is one that will seek to establish or sustain kerygmatic (proclaiming) and paraenial (discipling) communities, rooted and grounded in local definable communities.

Where such communities are of sufficient size to warrant whole-time ministry, these can be allocated, but it also must ensure that all worshipping communities can call on ordained ministry as needed, sustaining as local a context as possible. Failure to do so undermines the reality of the intention of the Acts Declaratory. To simply loop a parish boundary around an area does not in itself provide a territorial ministry; it merely spreads scarce resources thinner and so a more sophisticated approach is needed. It would also run contrary to the intention of the General Assembly who expressed the view that increased linkages are not the desired solution. Increasing the size of parishes through linkage would simply increase the managerial commitments of the minister through increased oversight of Kirk Sessions etc.

We should therefore seek to alter parishes in such a way that the oversight is not burdensome and thereby allow more time and energy to sustain pastoral ministry and develop the 'equipping of the saints' Ephesians 4:12f 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that

the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'

In summary;

Stirling Presbytery seeks to deploy available ministry sympathetically to the needs of the different contexts within the bounds, whilst developing and deploying the gifts of the body of Christ and freeing them to work in the building of the Kingdom where they are. We recognise the need to maintain a minimum critical level of ordained ministry across our Presbytery. This brings us to consideration of the three main contexts present within the Presbytery. The three key contexts in Presbytery are Rural, Urban, and Post-industrial Semi-rural and turn to the specific factors and issues within each of these communities that has shaped the thinking of the committee.

Rural Context

The context of our rural communities operates in a very different way from more urbanised areas. It has different pressures and demands on congregations and ministry.

In this paper a rural community is one that has a historic root in a rural setting, generally with a farming background. While much farming still takes place, it has to be acknowledged that these businesses have had to radically diversify over the years to maximise their income and tourism related functions now represent a larger element within their portfolio. Over the past forty years or so there has been a second clearance from the land. With greater industrialisation farms which would have supported a number of families are now managed by one family often contracting specialist services as needed. This has resulted in farming becoming a 7 day a week operation with little time for recreation and leave.

It seems likely that the church has not fully responded to these changes. Within these agrarian sweeps a number of historic villages formed to service the needs of the farming community with labourer specialist skills. This can be traced back to the restructuring of the rural economy at the end of the 18th century. These villages have a sense of self definition and a deep understanding of who they are. Over the years of industrial expansion, these villages also expanded but with the improvements in transport links and the democratisation of personal travel, many also have an element of population that travel to the urban centres for work, shopping and recreation. Whether that orientation is to the larger urban centres of Glasgow, Edinburgh or Stirling is almost irrelevant, it is the reality.

Though people may travel for work and other needs, they still retain a sense of a particular connection to a local community, and even if they move away often that connection is sustained, and with the pandemic response of congregations to put services on-line has even been strengthened for some. Rural communities have a clear connection to the agrarian hinterland in which they sit and are often more integrated into the lives of those working the land, but many now have a wider range of residents who will live in the countryside and yet work in other places. It has to be noted that the rise in reliance on private transport and the

privatisation of public transport service have resulted in the reduction of public transport links and some communities have no direct public transport connection with neighbouring ones, which is a factor when it comes to mobility and rural poverty.

Rural Considerations in relation to the principles within the Missional Plan Act and the views of General Assembly are therefore:

- Community identity. With each community possessing a distinct identity, potential forced closures in readjustment will, most likely, result in people not travelling to a nearby centre of worship. That is unless it is something the communities agree on together as a natural response, imposed restructuring will accelerate decline. To sustain worship centres will require the inclusion of additional resources (OLM and or recognised worship leaders) operating under a supervising minister. This will bump into the issues of reducing church buildings as being a priority, but the priority is also 'well equipped spaces, in the right places'. Though many travel daily, there is also a significant level of older age groups in the villages who are less likely to be able to or willing to travel. We must also be honest as to the reluctance, indeed almost hostility held by some towards neighbouring churches which makes travel from one to another even less likely.
- Rural spread. In contradistinction to urban centres where pastoral demands occur in a more compact area, rural ministry can demand significant travel and as such the population numbers is not a good indicator of demands. It may be an equitable objective to make ministry areas of similar size. The reality is that the demands for pastoral support in dispersed rural contexts creates a time impact and demand that does not exist in the urban setting. This is why the original weighting system was formed to allow rural ministries a bit more capacity to deal with the demands. For our rural areas that weighting, of 1.5, would mean that a rural population base of 6.6K would be equated to a 10K urban setting. While not exact it does make an allowance for the significantly dispersed nature of the rural context.
- Natural hubs (particularly the <40 age group). While noting the individuality of the villages, they do share natural hubs, particularly for the <40 age group. Many in this age group will have children and so schools, primary but more especially, secondary schools, act as a natural hub which transcends the local community but still connects people into a wider community around a shared purpose. To connect the local community and the church to the high school serving that community potentially creates natural points of connection.
- Rural poverty. The increase in foodbanks in urban settings is well known but the issue of rural poverty is just as acute even if for a smaller group. Rural poverty impacts upon the ability to travel and the use of limited disposable income. A danger in moving the church away from these more local settings is that the people we are meant to have a 'ministry of loving service' to are actually at a greater distance and thereby increase the issues of social isolation. The current rise in fuel costs may disproportionately impact rural areas where the quality and condition of the housing stock has been recorded as historically and consistently poorer than other settings, thereby increasing this elements impact on the lives of people.
- Developing the body of Christ (Paraenesis). While we have to recognise and face the reduction of whole-time ministers in the church, this does not mean an equivalent reduction

in ministry to the people. We have OLMs as a non-stipendiary form of ministry and with a more cohesive training of local people and allowing them to work under the supervision of a minister would allow more local worship centres to remain functional, sustaining the regular meeting for worship while concentrating other ministry functions under the Ministerial function. This is not to say that all current venues will or should remain open; there needs to be a viability threshold determined, or that such venues have a less frequent diet of worship. The use of digital platforms can also help sustain existing venues, though this would need the investment in the technology and most particularly the broadband feed.

- Witness (Kerygma). Relational witness is regarded as one of the most effective means of bringing others to faith. The least effective is the shipping in of a witness team who rush in, do stuff, and quickly move on. To have an effective witness in the rural communities, it has to be founded in and flow from the community. This demands an investment in the discipleship of the present body of Christ to equip and release them into the ministry in their community. The highland revival of the 1790's was not minister led, but rather Elder led. The witness of those living in the community was the springboard for that movement (an old example, but still relevant in its principle). So, to fulfil the missional proposition of the Act this actually means that we have to invest more effort in the development of the local, not to simply withdraw from it, and to start to recognise that the ministry of the non-stipendiary and laity are critical in the witness of the church.
- Environmental rootedness. Rural communities have always been environmentally connected, and this is something the urbanites of the country are catching up with. However, Brexit and the changing of farming funding will put pressure on this and likely create a higher pastoral demand for those involved within the industry.

Urban conurbations.

Though urban settings may be simply defined as villages which have grown to a certain size, the impact of size is significant. Size brings with it a range of services and support services which may not otherwise exist. Increased commercial presence provides more diverse work opportunities. The relatively compact nature facilitates ease of movement and so residents are often more discriminating in their choices and allegiances. Public transport is generally more frequent and easier to access. The larger population base will tend to mean the presence of other denominations and independent Christian churches, as well as other faiths. With such a complex and diverse population, it is clear that only a proportion of that total would think to approach the local Church of Scotland for the offices of religion as they have other choices. Urban centres contain a higher mix of social-economically active people covering a broader range of skills, educational attainment, and experience. Changes in work opportunities can more readily be absorbed. This wider range of skills and abilities, when part of the church community also resources the church to be able to manage its affairs effectively.

At the same time, the urban setting also is more likely to hold areas of relative deprivation. Areas or schemes of housing established to hold workers for main employers historically

generated working-class estates, often with higher socio-economic needs, issues of deprivation, substance misuse, lower educational levels and reduced attainment aspirations. Such areas provide a great challenge for the church to connect with and seek to serve.

This has a clear demand on resources. Many areas within urban setting will have a distinctive sense of their own identity, usually formed around a sense of 'class' distinction, wealth, and opportunity. In the largest urban settings such community identity manifests itself in a lack of mobility between communities, areas that are 'no go' or to be avoided. We, fortunately, do not have the extreme issues of scale such as this in our urban clusters, indeed we only have one recognised area of multiple deprivation of this nature in our Presbytery, being Raploch, but we are also aware that parts of Alloa have, to some extent, these issues present within them.

Urban considerations in relation to the principles within the Missional Plan Act and the views of General Assembly are therefore:

- Community identity. This theme is more fluid in urban settings, where identity can be linked to the larger conurbation that a particular suburb or section of it. The exception to this can be seen in places that have historically experienced extreme deprivation and those living there see their life experiences as being very different from their neighbouring communities. But there are generally few of these within our Presbytery. Consequently, people tend to be willing to travel to churches that they have a connection with, be it family or theological, often passing the door of a number of others to get to that church.
- Social deprivation tends to be concentrated in 'pockets' of the urban community as outlined above and usually face issues of poorer housing and a feeling of disconnection from the wider community.
- Natural Hubs. Urban areas create a wider range of hubs. They do exist around the High Schools as previously outlined, but we also have suburbs which presently contain a number of churches that can be regarded as a natural geographic and socio-demographic hub which is not as prevalent in the rural and semi-rural contexts
- Developing the body of Christ (Paraenesis). While, in general terms, this theme is constant across all sectors as outlined previously, urban areas have the benefit of having a larger population base to draw on, and within that a wider range of skills and abilities to maintain the organisation of the church.
- Witness (Kerygma). This is a consistent theme as outlined previously.
- Environmental rootedness. Urban areas face challenges in this area which are different from other settings. The ability to make active choices in this context for churches are more limited. For example, rural areas could consider renewables as a viable choice for heating, ground source, geothermic etc, Urban areas tend not to have areas of 'green' space in which to locate these. Moreover, these centres can hold many of the oldest buildings with the impact that brings in terms of listing and imposed restrictions. This can mean we have buildings that are not well equipped or even having the potential for adjustment, nor are they in the right places given the shift in the location of populations and housing in the intervening years.

The natural development of Urban areas can generally be defined as ring or radial, depending on the geography. The largest amount of church building was in the post-disruption period when the Presbyterian church competed with one another and so many of these buildings are located in those parts of the Urban areas built at that time. With the increased population and demand for housing of acceptable standards emerged in the post-war period ('Homes for Heroes') new developments and schemes of houses were built and people vacated the cramped centres to move to the suburbs. The churches, in terms of buildings, were left behind and only a few peripheral churches were built. The net result is that we have too many churches in the old centres of the urban areas away from the residential areas. Though these churches may have strong historical roots they were established around smaller populations and with the Act of Union of 1929 the parish system was reworked to include these buildings forming small parishes and buildings in close proximity. It has long been argued by some that a reluctance to deal with the buildings issue at that time has greatly hampered the church since. Given the issue of proximity it is most likely that such areas will be more impacted by the rationalisation of buildings as the PMP is implemented.

Post-industrial semi-rural context.

In addition to the rural communities, there exists within this Presbytery what might be classed as post-industrial semi-rural communities. Such communities, typified by the communities in the Hillfoots area of Presbytery, were not naturally established from an agrarian background. Though the villages may have, at its core, an original village, they were greatly expanded artificially to provide a workforce supply to sustain the industrial complex in that area, such examples include mining and mill working. With the decline or cessation of these industries in these areas, there has been a significant social impact. These communities tend to have a majority population from one demographic, a housing stock that is of a similar age and often of poorer quality, a population more dependent on national support services and benefits due to the lack of diversity and opportunity in these communities. Consequently, such communities have a strong sense of individual identity and have perceptions about neighbouring communities, due to the physical distancing between them and the separation by green spaces, the sense of particular identity may be strong. This may be particularly so where some communities are identified as the 'worker' community and others the 'supervisor' or management 'class'. Whilst such communities are semi-rural, there is often little actual connection with the rural hinterland due to the nature of their formation, and the clear industrial nature of their work supply and reward.

Post-industrial semi-rural considerations in relation to the principles within the Mission Plan Act and the views of General Assembly are therefore:

- Many of the issues for these communities will have much in common with the rural settings considered earlier, though with a degree of nuance.
- Community identity. With each community possessing a distinct identity, the likelihood of potential forced closures in readjustment will, most likely, result in people not

travelling to a nearby centre of worship just as in more rural settings. However due to historic lower levels of income, the church buildings in these areas tend to be in poorer condition and generate a greater demand to draw on the income of the local congregations to keep them open. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in an equal and comprehensive way.

- Rural location. Though these communities are rurally set, they tend to be closer to one another and more compact in nature. Even so with the traditional application of the parish system as the means of governance and the provision of the offices of religion, there is a hinterland surrounding these communities which will change the demand on the call on ministry services. However, such communities may well not have a clear and significant connection with that rural hinterland.
- Social deprivation. Post-industrial communities relied heavily on the presence of a main industry providing the main source of paid work and then a range of lesser service sector businesses providing specialist services to support that industry and the needs of the local population. Such services sector may well continue in some form, even after post-industrial restructuring. It is likely though that such employers will not absorb the available workforce. Consequently, unemployment levels are likely to be higher, attainment level to resemble more urban contexts of what might be seen as having lower aspirational levels. More families and individuals are likely to rely on the support of the third sector providers such as foodbanks. With lower disposable incomes, they are less likely to be mobile and more likely depend on public transport.
- Natural hubs (particularly the <40 age group). This is the same issue and factor as the rural context above.
- Developing the body of Christ (Paraenesis). While, in general terms, this theme is constant across all sectors as outlined above, the particular issue within these communities is that of having a low starting point. With fewer professionals living in the area, the skill base to draw on is weaker and more input will be needed to equip and unlock the potential of those in these communities.
- Witness (Kerygma). This is a constant theme as outlined above
- Environmental rootedness. Though located in more rural settings these communities tend to have a history in the industrial complex and the known impact this had had on the environment. Moreover, being communities who tend to rely more rely on support from the state and third sector, this has over the generations encouraged a dependency culture which manifests itself in peoples thinking that such matters are other people's problems to sort out. This links to the issue of releasing the potential of others in congregations and creating a focus within the worshipping communities of being places of transformation.

In Summary, therefore, having outlined some of the factors at play in each of the communities of Presbytery, it is clear that no one solution will suit all of the settings and so we need to create a range of options to suit the different typologies fairly.

General comments.

Much is made on the impact on ministry of any proposed reductions in provision, however, we have to be open about changes in demand that have emerged in recent years. Comment is often made about the impact of funerals on workloads. In the last 20 years the demand for a funeral to be led by a Church of Scotland minister has declined significantly. The increasing number of Humanist and Civil Celebrants has seen many people select that option. The usual reason is either that people don't have a faith and therefore do not want a religious service, or they do not have and have never had a live church connection and do not feel that they can ask the local minister to undertake the service. This issue is often directly affected by issues of deprivation where the 'free' option of a minister is the only affordable one for a family than the fees charged by others. This demonstrates the ghettoization of churches in communities. They seem closed off to others and if you are not a part of them you have no right to access them. This disconnect is most profound in the urbanized areas where alternatives are more available, less so in rural settings where there still is a remnant of a sense that the local church is where life events are marked, but these communities are smaller and therefore generate a lower routine demand.

Similarly, the connection to schools is not as clear as it has been in the past. There may still be a degree of contact, but fewer ministers are being invited to be involved in the life of the local school on a weekly basis. Though some would contest this in their location, a change in ministry or head teacher can dramatically impact on the relationship between church and school. In a post-pandemic environment, it is still not clear whether the levels of contact of the past will fully or ever return.

We have to be aware that enlarging Parishes may well distance ordained ministry from the population and community. Also, the closure of buildings in discreet communities will effectively mean that we, as a church, fail to meet our self-declared aim of bringing the offices of religion to the whole of Scotland. Simply looping the boundary around a community does not establish a connection. Therefore, as we have to manage a process of change, we have to do so with sensitivity and awareness, while not shirking the responsibility.

Possibilities and options.

These points have not been laid out in any sense of order but reflect the range of options thought about by the committee in its parts while developing the plan.

- Use the High School or Community Centre as a hub around which to shape local ministry, i.e., all feeder communities are held as part of the one group. This may be best suited for rural contexts and a more enlarged geographic community base for Urban areas.
- To create one 'parish' across rural settings with a small team ministry supplemented with OLM and developing local worship leaders could allow the sustaining of places of worship that are linked to middle sized and growing communities.
- Review constitutional arrangements. The reality of multiple charges with multiple Kirk Sessions etc creates an administrative burden on both the smaller congregations and the

allocated ministries. A more flexible model of oversight is necessary, sharing skills and resources that can help sustain smaller congregations. More flexible boundaries can be helpful at the next stage with the merge of the Presbyteries to 'flex' parishes.

- Not to be restricted by existing linkages in our thinking. The fulcrum of a linkage is the ministry that is shared and so in many ways it is irrelevant as to whom that is shared with and the option to reconnect existing congregations may provide a better resolution.
- Developing a network of OLM type local worship leaders. This may need a specific appointment with a remit across presbytery.
- Use of financial viability (not membership) to help assess the sustainability of a congregation/group. In this sense it is not simply about Ministries & Mission, but also costs of sustaining buildings. Where fabric demands consume an overwhelming share of their income, serious consideration has to be given to viability. This is the approach reflected in the revised Giving to Grow scheme to replace the current Ministries and Mission allocation where one component is the full cost of a minister and as such charges whether individual or composite, have a direct correlation to the cost of the provision of ministry.
- A system in which the ministry allocation takes account of the specific demands of rural spread. Moreover, to tie into the existing rural ministry supported by the national church to gain an understanding of what training and skills need to be developed in both paid for and voluntary ministries.
- Active support of innovation in expressions of church and the establishment of alternate ecclesial communities. This may be more pertinent for larger Urban settings where there may exist the population base to support them.
- Rural congregations, though relatively small, are often vibrant expressions of Christ and are often community focused and though traditional in expression, are often outward looking.
- Where a population base that has more limited resources at their disposal than others, and where the people capital is not able or best suited to the complex running of a church under the current ecclesiological and civil regulations, these communities may well be a fertile environment to launch a fresh expression of the church through a Local Mission Church as provided for within the Act. This would allow the local congregation to be disinvested from the regulatory requirements and focus on re-establishing in a new context a worshipping community under the supervision of a more established congregation. Such an initiative would allow the maximum impact and input to be given over to mission until sufficient momentum is gained and individuals are equipped to assume the formal management of the congregational life.

This would also free the existing community from the requirement to maintain old and often expensive buildings to run. Selling off these low-quality assets but which hold potentially higher value land with redevelopment consent from local Planners would maximise the potential income and create a capital sum which could be used to start the process for finding and forming a new centre that is both well-appointed and in the right place. Such work could

be deferred until there is enough critical mass within the congregation to justify it, in terms of numbers of income. It would also allow small congregations to 'down-size' buildings into more flexible and manageable assets suits to their needs.

- Urban community could adopt a 'hub and spoke' form of ministry which would be the same as above except with the retention of buildings. Alternately to take the radical step of reducing the stock in the historic centres and invest in the improvement of the peripheral congregations.
- A constitutional challenge exists in that the merger of a number of established town centre churches into one would generate a significant financial reserve to be generated, which other settings do not and could not enjoy. If we truly support a Presbyterian system of governance, this process must have a way of equitably dispersing proceeds of sale to the essential congregation of the Presbytery. One possibility could be developing an agreement with the General Trustees of dissolving congregations to allow the Presbytery to hold the asset and then disbursing that more evenly. It may be necessary to hold conversations with the General Trustees about how that can be achieved so that congregations can be assured of our intention before commencing with the reduction of buildings. If we do not do this, we are in danger of leaving peripheral and rural congregations to deal with poorer buildings, while forming congregations with significant reserves, creating disproportionate ability to maintain or develop the necessary buildings.
- In establishing allocation principles, we have considered which issues are most influential. Though the easiest base is a numerical one, other factors have been considered. In rural contexts the local church is more likely to be the only church or part of a limited range of churches of different denominations. In Urban settings there is greater diversity and so any population-based system should seek to make an appropriate adjustment for this. Moreover, we have been aware that spreading ministry too thin will make it dysfunctional.
- When considering the deployment of MDS type posts we face the demand and pressure to maximise Ministry of Word and Sacrament posts and thereby retain congregational autonomy. We need, therefore, an approach which will create the core allocation and a clear and distinct job description of any additional posts. Where these are across presbytery, these should be clear with regard to who they will report/relate to, who and how decisions will be made on the allocation of time in the different areas of Presbytery. Otherwise, we will face the challenge of a self-generated workload that will favour a selected few congregation.
- We have been repeatedly told that this restructuring is to 'prune for growth'. This being so, the Presbytery Mission Plan needs to be flexible enough to allow further allocation of resource when growth comes to the fore.

Allocation factors.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the process of allocation of scarce resources has been complex and challenging. The committee has attempted, at all times, to balance the needs of the different communities within the bounds of Presbytery, knowing that whatever is presented will fail to meet the expectation of some congregations. The committee recognises that a slightly higher level of disruption will be incurred by the urban centres of the Presbytery, but also that no area, or congregation, will be unaffected by the plan and its implementation.

The committee has sought to make allowances for congregations in a rural context, those with high levels of recognised deprivation, the geographic spread, and the general sense of associated communities within our current bounds.

We undertook two consultations with each congregational grouping, which is what we believed was all that could be included and still meet the deadline placed upon us. These consultations were frank and honest, perhaps at times heated, but were an opportunity for the committee to hear the concerns and factors impacting local congregations. It has to be stated that these were not deliberative consultations undertaken to come to a determination of the plan, but information gathering opportunities to ensure that the committee was as fully informed as it could be to undertake the work of developing the plan as fairly and as equitably as it could.

Approaches to adjustment

The Act and the accompanying guidance to it, encourages Presbytery not to rely on the use of linkages as a way of achieving the reduction in Ministry numbers as the constitutional arrangements of the individual component congregations would still have to be maintained and result in more of the time of the clergy being consumed by administrative function rather than ministry. The Act identifies and specifies a range of options;

7.0 The Mission Plan may specify any of the following forms of Adjustment and other arrangements:—

(1) UNION

Two or more congregations may be united to form one congregation under the Unitary Constitution, and such union shall involve the union of charges, parishes, Kirk Sessions, Financial Boards, property and funds and, except in special circumstances where provision is made to the contrary in the Basis of Union, all congregational agencies and organisations.

(2) LINKING

Two or more charges may be linked to form one charge in terms of a Basis of Linking, so that the congregations are served by one ministry, the constitutions of the said congregations being in no other way affected.

(3) DEFERRED UNION OR DEFERRED LINKING

(a) When for any reason it is not possible to unite a vacant congregation with another congregation under the minister of the other congregation, the Presbytery may decide to unite them on the understanding that the implementation of such decision shall be deferred to take place as soon as practicable after that minister's interest has terminated.

(b) The Basis of Deferred Union shall provide

(i) that the congregations to be united shall elect a minister who shall be inducted in the first instance as minister of the vacant congregation, and

(ii) that on the termination of the other minister's interest the Union shall immediately be effective under the minister so elected and inducted.

(c) If another vacancy occurs in the originally-vacant congregation before the termination of the other minister's interest, the Basis of Deferred Union shall remain in force and the congregations shall elect another minister as in (b) above; subject to the proviso that the Presbytery may decide to recall the Basis of Deferred Union with a view to making another Adjustment decision.

(d) A linking may be deferred in the same manner as a union in terms of subsections (a) to (c) above.

(4) LOCAL MISSION CHURCH

The Presbytery may determine in its Mission Plan that a Local Mission Church shall be created, either

(a) following a union or dissolution effected in terms of this Act, or

(b) as a new venture. Such a Local Mission Church shall be established in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations and shall be governed by a Basis of Local Mission Church. The process to create a Local Mission Church shall be as specified in the Guidance.

(5) GUARDIANSHIP

A charge may continue without the right to call a minister under the Guardianship of the Presbytery. There shall be a Basis of Guardianship which shall include the timing and scope of the how the guardianship shall be reviewed. In such a case, the Presbytery will appoint an Interim Moderator who will ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to enable the ongoing ministry and Mission of the congregation(s). For the avoidance of doubt, a Guardianship shall count as 0.25 towards the total ministry allocation for a Presbytery. A Guardianship shall be subject to a separate five yearly review process at the instigation of Presbytery, alongside the normal annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.

(6) NEW CHARGE DEVELOPMENT

Those new charges which have been established prior to the passing of this Act in terms of Act XIII 2000 may be included in the relevant Mission Plans, but no new charges under Act XIII 2000 may be specified in a Mission Plan after the passing of this Act.

(7) TRANSPORTATION

(a) The Presbytery may move a congregation from one place of worship to another, and, where that involves a change of parish, it shall be designated "transportation".

(b) Where transportation is effected, the Presbytery shall take such steps of Adjustment as may be necessary to ensure that the parishes involved are allocated to defined charges.

(8) PARISH GROUPINGS

The Presbytery may declare that two or more charges shall have responsibility for a single area. The Basis of such an Adjustment shall determine the extent to which the charges shall operate as a Parish Grouping, for instance in the sharing of worship, personnel, education resources, mission initiatives, congregational organisations etc.

(9) DISSOLUTION

A charge may be dissolved by the Presbytery of the bounds. The Basis of Dissolution shall provide for:-

(a) The issuing of certificates of transference to all members of the congregation;

(b) The allocation of the parish to another charge or charges;

(c) The transfer to the General Trustees, prior to dissolution, of any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation title to which is not yet vested in the General Trustees;

(d) The transfer, prior to dissolution, of funds to enable the General Trustees to discharge their obligations (including maintenance, security and insurance) in relation to any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation which is designated as a Historic Property; provided that such funds shall include (i) all restricted funds (including organ funds) held for fabric purposes and (ii) such proportion of all unrestricted funds as may be reasonably required for such purposes by the General Trustees; and

(e) The destination of all other property and funds of the charge(s)

(10) TEAM MINISTRY

- (a) The Presbytery may determine, in respect of any charge, the amount of ministerial time required by the charge, and the number and nature of posts necessary, provided that (except in the case of job-sharing) the Presbytery shall identify one of the inducted ministers as moderator of the Kirk Session.
- (b) Presbyteries are encouraged in designing a Team Ministry to consider the significance of the role which might be played by those other than Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministries Development Staff.
- (c) The terms under which a Team Ministry will operate shall be set out in a Basis of Team Ministry agreed by the Presbytery and all members of the Team prior to any such Team Ministry being established; the Basis shall include a dispute resolution mechanism.
- (d) A Team Ministry may be created in one or other of the following two ways:
- (I) a Presbytery may create a Team Ministry with an inducted parish minister (who shall be the moderator of the Kirk Session) and which may include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions, or
- (II) alternatively, the Presbytery may create within the charge a Team Ministry consisting of two or more Team Ministry Charges, to each of which a parish minister shall be inducted, provided always that one of the Team Ministry Charges shall be identified in the Basis as the one providing the moderator of the Kirk Session. The Team may also include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions.
- (e) Where there are Team Ministry Charges created in terms of paragraph (d)(II) above, the following shall apply:
- (A) The Team Ministry Charges shall share the same congregation and Kirk Session and be part of the same Church life.
- (B) The ministers inducted to a Team Ministry Charge shall each occupy the manse provided for their use.
- (C) The ministers of the Team Ministry Charges shall be appointed in one or other of the following two ways:
- (i) the ministers may be called, with appropriate changes, through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003, or
- (ii) where a new charge is being created by a union of charges and where there are at the time of the proposed union minister(s) inducted to one or more of those charges with unrestricted tenure, it shall be competent for the Presbytery to create Team Ministry Charges within the new charge and to include such minister(s) within the new charge subject to their agreement to the Basis of Team Ministry.
- (D) The Team Ministry Charges, save for any exception at (e)(C)(ii) above, shall be Reviewable Charges in the terms set out in section 9(1) of this Act and may be part-time.
- (E) For the avoidance of doubt, the minister(s) who are not inducted to the Team Ministry Charge providing the moderator of the Kirk Session will not automatically succeed to that Team Ministry Charge on the occurrence of a vacancy but would be entitled to apply for that Team Ministry Charge through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003.

(11) NEW FORMS OF CHURCH LIFE

After consultation with the Forum, the Presbytery may devise a new form of Adjustment or ministry, ensuring that such form is consistent with the Acts and deliverances of the General Assembly. This may include the provision of online Church, where the Presbytery seeks to coordinate and resource the provision of online worship and Mission by identifying congregations, partnerships or agencies which will be given lead responsibility for such provision; this may include the allocation of a Mission Plan post or posts. The Mission Plan should demonstrate how the Presbytery will relate to those whose belonging is primarily through networks or the virtual world.

(12) PRESBYTERY MISSION INITIATIVE

The Presbytery may set up a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015).

The plan presented by the committee should be seen as the first step on a transformational journey, bringing congregations together into area groupings with the view to see them move from individual component parts into a more integrated whole. This would see congregations move from linkages to union over time as relationships are build and the issue of buildings engaged with. It is the view of the committee that this evolutionary process is best located at the local level than imposed from a regional or national body. However, if insufficient progress is made in this area, then Presbytery may have to revisit the issue at its annual review of the plan, which is required by the Act.

The key benefit of such a coming together is the releasing of people in all congregations to the work of mission and witness rather than administration and function. For example, where there are multiple congregations at present each must have a range of office bearers to comply with the requirements of the institution including a Clerk, treasurer, safeguarding officer, property convenor, etc. As these congregations come together these diverse compliance activities can be consolidate and though the revised form may have small teams dealing with the work, thereby sharing the load, ensuring continuity and even succession planning, more will be released to sustain witness, worship and the mission of the church in their community.

Having considered the range of factors placed upon the committee through the Act as well as the analysis and consideration of the local issues we turn to the process of grouping and allocation contained within the plan.

Presbytery Sub-division into area groups and ministry allocation.

Prior to moving to consideration of the allocation of ministries it is necessary to outline some of the committee's thinking around its use of concepts such as groups and team ministry. All the six areas of the Presbytery are encouraged within their groupings to work more loosely in sharing resources and undertaking joint initiatives and collaborative working. This might be considered as parish grouping 'light', a simple encouragement towards closer cooperation and working. This is different from a formal Parish Grouping where there is a written agreement laying out what areas of collaboration and what areas of shared resource and initiatives will be undertaken. This is an agreement that will be reviewed and assessed as part of the work of Presbytery on a regular basis.

The formal parish groupings identified in the plan are seen by the committee as an essential tool of collaboration. They can be seen as levers of change, encouraging the transformation from discrete individual congregations – often duplicating effort with close neighbours - to close working partnerships where mission and resource priorities can be shaped as trust and co-operation grows. The parish groupings will have an added significance as support for these missional areas will be the focus of Presbytery Mission support in the new Presbytery of Perth.

Mention of Team Ministry is also made in the Plan. This is defined by the committee as being where there are more than one ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament, one is identified as being the chair of the courts of the congregations, but the other may also chair the meeting with the agreement of the identified minister. This all sounds very formal, and to put it simply,

team ministry is just that, it is about colleagues working together and to their strengths as partners, not in a hierarchical way but in a more collegiate way. The formation of ministers has highlighted this for the last twenty years, but it is still to become a more normative operational experience. It is anticipated with the radical nature of the changes that we are having to engage with, team ministry will become more frequently the best response to the needs an area and the most effective deployment of ministry.

The implementation of the following allocation plan will be pursued as adjustment allows but with a priority for those congregations which are currently vacancy.

A. Rural area Carse / Callander – allocation 3 FTE

Congregations in this area;

Aberfoyle linked with Port of Menteith

Balquhidder linked with Killin and Ardeonaig

Callander (including the Trossachs Church)

Buchlyvie linked with Gartmore

Gargunnoch (linkage with Kincardine in Menteith and Kilmadock)

Kippen linked with Norrieston

All charges and congregations in this area shall be part of a formal 'Parish Grouping', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate rural poverty and isolation; supporting families and young people; activities relating to the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment, much of which is in a national park and/or national scenic area; and engaging with visitors and tourists, including opportunities to foster and participate in pilgrimage.

The grouping has common missional opportunities centring around supporting the farming community and tourist industry. Although large in geographical area there are main transport routes and, for a large part of the grouping the commonality of a secondary school. The Missional Objectives of the grouping should be reviewed annually to ensure suitability and to encourage mutual support and co-operation.

It is hoped that entering into a formal Parish Grouping at the start of this process would engender the building of relationships, closer cooperation and the identification of common Missional areas including the possibility of Fresh Expressions of Church amongst the many tourists visiting the area throughout the year.

It is recognised that both Callander and Balquhidder have key roles to play in Mission not only to the local community but also the many visitors to the area and therefore it is anticipated that uniting these congregations will allow this to developed in a cohesive way.

The linkage between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith be severed, with Aberfoyle uniting with Callander and Balquhidder to consolidate common Missional objectives. In Aberfoyle the emerging partnership with St Mary's Episcopal Church is encouraged.

The 1 FTE for this area can be augmented with an OLM, should one become available, or a locally funded post, and the union is encouraged to look for further funding for pioneer ministry in tourism.

The Linkage of Killin and Ardeonaig with Balquhidder will be severed with the congregation of Killin and Ardeonaig to form part of a wider 'Breadalbane' grouping in the new Presbytery of Perth. Should this not be realised then it is anticipated that the congregation of Killian and Ardeonaig will be linked with Callander.

The proximity of the Port of Menteith and Gargunnock to the charge of Kippen linked with Norrieston allows for the formation of a thriving rural group where Mission to the farming community is one of the key Missional objectives as well as mission to visitors. The historic sites of Gargunnock and Port of Menteith linking with others across the Carse and beyond in the development of Pilgrimage and associated mission. The allocation of a 0.5 FTE MDS post to this area is a first step to a longer-term view that within 3 years a team ministry be formed of 2 FTE.

The close and effective cooperation that has been built between Buchlyvie and Gartmore is recognised and provides a basis of confidence for moving into union, with a 0.5 FTE allocated to this charge on the understanding that, within 3 years a team Ministry be developed as described above.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. Callander to be united with Balquhidder. **1 FTE**
3. The linkage between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith be severed with Aberfoyle also joining in union with Callander.
4. Killin and Ardeonaig to form part of a wider 'Breadalbane' grouping in the new Presbytery of Perth,
5. Buchlyvie and Gartmore: Congregations to unite with allocation of **0.5 FTE**
6. Gargunnock, Kippen, Norrieston, Port of Menteith: new united served by **1 FTE**
7. The Ministry of 5 and 6 to be supported by a shared **0.5 FTE** MDS post, line managed by the minister of the Gargunnock/Kippen/Norrieston/Port of Menteith charge 5 and 6 to become a Team Ministry of 2 FTE within 3 years.

The potential for a single Team Ministry for the whole of the Carse/Callander Parish Grouping should be considered in the longer term.

Reduction from 5.33 FTE to 3 FTE

B. Rural area Strathendrick – allocation 2 FTE + 1 OLM

Congregations in this area;

Balfron linked with Fintry

Buchanan linked with Drymen

Killearn

Strathblane

Both charges and all congregations in this area shall be part of a formal ‘Parish Grouping’, as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate rural poverty and isolation; supporting families and young people; activities relating to the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment; engaging with visitors and tourists; and exploring new ways of connecting with those who commute to cities.

It is recognised that although rural in location the proximity to the greater conurbation of Glasgow offers these westerly communities a commonality of being centres of city commuting as well as farming and tourism.

It is envisaged that although the longer-term vision for this area could be a team ministry of 2 FTE covering the whole area, there are steps to be taken within 5 years.

The congregations of Balfron and Fintry and Buchanan and Drymen have expressed a preference to link as a single charge and this seen as 1st the first stage in the process. The linked congregations of Buchanan and Drymen should unite and the linked congregations of Balfron and Fintry should also unite.

The congregations of Killearn and Strathblane to join in linkage.

The newly linked congregations should actively consider union following adjustment.

To support the congregations as they transition to Team Ministry, the support role of an OLM has been identified as valuable, if available.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. Balfron and Fintry to unite
3. Buchanan and Drymen to unite
4. Balfron, Buchanan, Drymen and Fintry to form a linked charge. **1 FT**

5. Killearn and Strathblane to form a linked charge. **1 FTE**
6. A team Ministry for the grouping be considered within 5 years.
7. Both of the newly linked congregations to consider union as soon as adjustment allows.

Additionally, **1 OLM** to work across the group to support multiple centres of worship across the group

Reduction of 4 FTE posts to 2FTE plus OLM

C. Semi Rural area Hillfoots – allocation 2 FTE

Congregations in this area;

Alva in deferred linkage with Menstrie

Menstrie in deferred linkage with Alva

Tillicoultry

Dollar linked with Glendevon linked with Muckhart

Both charges and all congregations this area shall be part of a formal 'Parish Grouping', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate poverty and isolation; supporting families and young people; activities relating to the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment; engaging with visitors and tourists. The committee noted the strong preference expressed by the group for two distinct charges but encourages them to work together wherever possible to share support and resources.

The congregations in this area share a commonality of history and location, running along the Hillfoots of Clackmannanshire.

The formation of a formal Parish grouping, although allowing for two distinct geographical areas encourages further development of common missional plans.

Menstrie and Alva are already in deferred linkage and when adjustment allows this will become one linked charge.

The congregation of Glendevon has already indicated that this congregation should be dissolved, and this should proceed without unnecessary delay.

Tillicoultry and Dollar linked with Muchart should be linked. As with the northern congregations of Carse/Callander, the congregation of Muckhart may more readily in the future be adjusted into partnership with other congregations in the new Presbytery of Perth.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. Alva linked with Menstrie: **1 FTE**
3. Tillicoultry, Dollar and Muckhart to be linked: **1 FTE**
4. The possibility of adjustment of Muckart to be considered within the new Presbytery of Perth.
5. 5. The congregation of Glendevon be dissolved.
6. 5. A team Ministry for the grouping be considered within 5 years.
7. Both of the newly linked charges to consider union as soon as adjustment allows.

Reduction from 4 FTE posts to 2 FTE posts.

D. Urban Greater Stirling - allocation 8.5 FTE

Congregations in this area;

Bannockburn Allan Parish Church
Bridge of Allan Parish Church
Bannockburn Ladywell
Stirling Park Church
Stirling North Parish Church
Stirling St Mark's Parish Church
Stirling Church of the Holy Rude
Stirling St Ninian's Old Parish Church
Stirling Viewfield Erskine Church
The Bruce Memorial Cambusbarron Parish Church
Plean Church
Fallin Parish Church
Logie Kirk

All charges and congregations in this area shall be part of one of two formal 'Parish Groupings', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. The first shall comprise the charges and congregations which are currently covered by Bannockburn Allan, Bannockburn Ladywell, Cowie and Plean, and Fallin. The second shall comprise all of the other charges and congregations (Bridge of Allan, Logie, St Mark's, Holy Rude, Viewfield Erskine, Park, Cambusbarron, St. Ninian's Old, and Stirling North).

Each charge and congregation will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, in the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into, they will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in each of these wider areas.

In the first parish grouping, these may include seeking to engage with incoming households in areas of population growth, including the Durieshill new village; alleviating isolation; and supporting families and young people.

The new linkage of the two Churches at Bannockburn, while sharing a common sense of identity will create a focus for local mission. The new linkage of Fallin, Cowie and Plean also have a common identity and will be able to have a similar focus local mission in the former mining villages on the Eastern side of Greater Stirling.

In the second parish grouping, missional objectives may include supporting those in relative poverty, but not just in the parish of St Mark's; engaging with students and university life, but not just within the university campus; in the case of The Holy Rude providing a significant missional outreach to tourists at the top of the town and engaging with the commercial life of the city centre.

The new linkage of Bridge of Allan with Logie together with an OLM provides the linked charge with a solid foundation to support the students and staff of the University of Stirling and the community of the surrounding area.

It is recognised that the city centre charges of Viewfield Erskine, Holy Rude, Park Church together with St Ninian's Old have developed ongoing partnerships in mission which should be developed further as a new team ministry. This is seen as particularly important in supporting the commercial area and scope for engaging with tourism in new and creative ways.

Cambusbarron and Stirling North have a common ecclesiology and missional perspective within largely residential areas. It is hoped that the new linkage will develop into a future team ministry, at the earliest opportunity.

Summary

1. Two formal Parish groupings be formed, the first: Bannockburn Allan, Bannockburn Ladywell, Cowie and Plean, and Fallin. The second: Bridge of Allan, Logie, St Mark's, Holy Rude, Viewfield Erskine, Park, Cambusbarron, St. Ninian's Old, and Stirling North
2. St Mark's congregation as a Priority Area focus with **1 FTE** and a 2nd post being an MDS supporting other areas across the area.
3. The linkage between Bannockburn Allan and Cowie and Plean to be broken and a new linkage of Bannockburn Allan and Bannockburn Ladywell to be created with **1 FTE**
4. Fallin and Cowie and Plean to form a new linkage: **1 FTE**
5. Bridge of Allan, University and Logie to form a new linkage. **1 FTE + OLM** for University
6. Viewfield Erskine, Holy Rude, Park Church, St Ninians Old to form a new team ministry: **2 FTE**
7. Cambusbarron and Stirling North to form a new linkage: **1.5 FTE**

8. Both formal Parish Groupings be encouraged to develop team Ministry.
9. All of the newly linked charges to consider union as soon as adjustment allows.

Reduction from 11 FTE to 8.5 FTE

E. Rural Area Dunblane - allocation 2 FTE + OLM

Congregations in this area;

Dunblane Cathedral

Dunblane St Blane's Church

Lecropt Kirk

Kilmadock Parish Church linked with Kincardine-in-Menteith Parish Church

Kincardine-in-Menteith Parish Church linked with Kilmadock Parish Church

Both charges and all congregations in this area shall be part of a formal 'Parish Grouping', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate rural poverty and isolation; supporting families and young people; activities relating to the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment; engaging with visitors and tourists; and exploring new ways of connecting with those who commute to cities.

This area centred around the town of Dunblane forms a natural grouping including the historically significant Dunblane Cathedral as well as the surrounding rural areas.

The formation of a formal Parish grouping will allow closer missional links to form particularly in the area of Mission to families and young people. As adjustment allows the development of a Team Ministry in this area may be encouraged so that within 5 years there could be a single charge of 2 FTE.

As a first stage the congregations of Kilmadock and Kincardine in Menteith will join the Cathedral either as Missional Churches or in linkage. It is recognised that already parties are in discussion over the possible relationship and exploring areas of mutually inclusive growth. It is recognised that there is a good relationship developing between St Madoc's Episcopal Church in Doune and Kilmadock. New ways of mutually supporting each other in common mission to the village of Doune are encouraged.

It is recognised that the Cathedral has significant outreach to the tourist and local community and therefore and with the reductions of one FTE at the Cathedral it is appropriate that there is a further OLM post added to this charge which, if available, would form part of the longer-

term team Ministry. There is also the possibility of a locally funded post for young people and families.

It is recognised that there is a commonality in missional objectives to the farming community between Lecropt and Kincardine in Menteith and it is felt that this could be mutually supportive in the eventual development of Team Ministry across the area.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. Dunblane Cathedral, to either link with Kilmadock and Kincardine-in-Menteith or form relationships with both congregations as Missional Churches: **1 FTE + 1 OLM**
3. St Blane's and Lecropt: **1 FTE**
4. The formal Parish Grouping to develop into a team ministry within 5 years.

Reduction from 3.67.5 FTE to 2FTE plus 1 OLM

F. Urban Greater Alloa – allocation 4 FTE

Congregations in this area:

Alloa Ludgate

Alloa St Mungo's

Tullibody St Serfs

Sauchie and Coalsnaughton

Clackmannan

Given the pastoral workload, and significant areas of deprivation and exclusion in the area of this grouping, the committee envisaged four charges,

All the congregations in this group to form a parish grouping. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate poverty and isolation; supporting the needs of older people; supporting families and young people; serving the needs of the town centre and industrial areas. The congregations have the commonality of a shared post-industrial heritage with significant amounts of social housing and areas of both the parishes of St Mungo's and Ludgate fall into the second tier of Priority Area categorisation of the national church.

It is recognised that churches within this group have significant Missional Initiatives to disadvantaged communities in their area and further collaboration on joint initiatives is encouraged.

The congregations of Alloa Ludgate and St Mungo's to unite, and as adjustment allows, and within 5 years, the congregations of St Mungo's, Ludgate and Tullibody to form a Team Ministry with 2 FTE and with an MDS post to serve the Greater Alloa area, with a priority to the poor.

The congregations of Sauchie and Coalsnaughton and Clackmannan have voiced a preference for a linkage to form a new charge. These congregations form a natural grouping within the urban area of Clackmannanshire and have a common historical background. The formation of a linked charge will have an allocation of 1 FTE but will also share in the MDS post across the greater Alloa area.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. The congregations of Sauchie and Coalsnaughton and Clackmannan to link in a new charge. 1 FTE
3. The congregations of Alloa Ludgate and Alloa St Mungo's will be united and with Tullibody shall work towards a Team Ministry within 3 years. An initial allocation of 3 FTE ministry posts be translated to 2 Ministry posts and an MDS post to serve the whole area as adjustment and Mission objectives are clarified and developed.

Reduction from 5 FTE to 4 FTE

General comment

It is the long-term view of the committee that each area should be supplemented by the allocation of Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) posts as they come available. The initial allocation of these posts has been so done to highlight that, in the view of the committee, the pending adjustment requires these positions to make the adjustment effective from their commencement.

Review of Church buildings.

The assessment of the church's buildings in the Presbytery was undertaken by the Stewardship Committee who undertook a visual inspection of each property and completed a categorisation process guided by the General Trustee Toolkit developed for the purpose. This information was forwarded to the General Trustees for assessment and the result of this returned for Presbytery's guidance and deliberation as to the future of the buildings in its bounds. The assessment covered a large range of issues including condition, amenity, accessibility, and location. Where a church had an attached hall, these were viewed as one complex and assessed as such. Where there was a hall on the same site as the church but a separate building there was an assessment for each separately, similarly with churches with

halls on separate sites. These individual scores were accumulated to give each property a score and a percentage of the total possible score.

The General Trustees is their analysis colour coded the results to aid Presbyteries understanding of the numbers presented,

Red below 60% of possible

Yellow Between 61-74%

Green above 75%

As we face the prospect of building closures, we are aware that there are a broad range of issues that come into play, where the plan sees an ongoing role for a building in an area, even if it is below 60% of the possible score, it may mean that significant investment is needed. Similarly, a building with a 75% and over score may still not have a future where there are too many buildings in a location. (The analysis of the buildings by area is appended hereto.)

Part of the process of PMP requires Presbytery to categorise the buildings within its bounds as to the likelihood as to their continuation. We recognise that this will cause great distress to many congregants as their much-loved building may be seen as under threat. We recognise that the buildings we have, have a history not simply in stone and timber but in the personal lives of generation upon generation of family members who have given much to support and retain that building in their community. However, we have to face the hard reality of declining numbers, declining income to sustain buildings and populations which have moved away from where the buildings are, or a building that no longer meets the needs of those who use them. They may be inaccessible to some, difficult and costly to heat, expensive to maintain, all of which critically impacts on the congregations' ability to sustain them. This leads to more time and resources devoted to the maintenance of buildings and not to the primary purpose of the church which is mission. Historically the church has found this the most challenging of issues and has often avoided addressing it. This can no longer be allowed to be the case and face it we must.

The buildings we have, at one point were new and built for the purpose of best fitting the needs of the church in that area. The buildings we have now accomplish the same, to meet the needs of the church, i.e., its mission, rather than the mission of the church being limited or shaped by the buildings we have. It is acknowledged that this is not going to be easy, but we should also consider that new members and adherents coming into the church are not constrained by the history of the past, indeed that memory of the church is changed as each generation succeeds to the next and as such is a transient, changing thing, and not as fixed as may be made out.

Beyond the cost of ministry, the next most significant cost for any congregation is that of the maintenance of its buildings. For some this has grown to such an extent that it is stifling the missional work of the church, creating an emphasis on fundraising for buildings rather than engaging and serving its community. Though it is a difficult position to come to, it is hoped that congregations being asked to relinquish buildings would be able to see that it is not a judgement of them and their work or that of their predecessors, but rather a way of freeing them to rediscover their missionary calling to the communities they seek to serve.

Under the Presbytery Plan Act buildings are to be allocated one of two categories;

- (a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date at which the Mission Plan is approved or annually reviewed, or
- (b) to be sold, let, or otherwise disposed of by a specified date which is within five years from the date at which the ecclesiastical building is first categorised as (b).

As a matter of clarification, the date of disposal should be within 5 years of the approval of the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Buildings Categorization by Area Groupings.

Area A - Rural Area Carse / Callander – allocation 3 FTE

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

Aberfoyle Church and Church House are not regarded as having a viable future in supporting the needs of the congregation in that community to usefully engage in mission. It is suggested that conversation be had with the Episcopal Church over the possibility of a property share or sessional hire of space in the local Primary School or Community Hall facility.

Trossachs Church (owned by Callander Kirk) only has monthly services and no amenities to allow it to serve as a suitable place for regular worship and should be disposed of.

At the point of union in this group all congregations are urged to review the suitability and use of their buildings.

Area B - Rural Area Strathendrick – allocation 2 FTE + 1 OLM

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

Fintry and Buchannan churches are no longer seen as being fit for purpose or meeting the needs of the congregation. These buildings should be disposed of and services for the area be located into the community facilities or Fintry Primary School as best suits the community and the missional objectives of the church.

Area C - Semi Rural Area Hillfoots – allocation 2 FTE

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

Glendevon building should be disposed of at the dissolution of the congregation.

Area D - Urban Greater Stirling - allocation 8.5 FTE

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

Logie Kirk, being located outside the community it seeks to serve and reach should locate its regular worship within its Halls and dispose of the church building. At the same time with the work of the OLM in the university it should be consider whether a regular worshipping community could be located within the University complex.

Stirling Viewfield Erskine church and hall complex is not located in the community which it seeks to serve and there are significant fabric issues with the current complex which it is unlikely that the small and faithful congregation would be able to meet. The congregation should find another location more central to their area of mission and outreach and relocate there, whether in a building share or sessional hire of a community or educational facility. The disposal of the current site with planning consent for a change of use would provide a capital sum to sustain this transition.

Comment has to be made here about the Church of the Holy Rude. It is a significant building in terms of history and architecture and conversations are ongoing about possible partnerships to enhance its prominence beside the castle, to increase footfall and tourism as a potential income stream and also place of witness. It is already the second most visited location after the castle and provides a unique opportunity for mission in a different way than other churches. This distinction is being respected and the progress with partnership encouraged and monitored, with the hope that, at some point in the future, it will be removed from the church's estate.

Fallin church is located on the edge of the community it seeks to serve and minister to whilst it has a halls complex in the heart of the village that is well used and suitably appointed. Worship should be located into the hall complex as a matter of routine and the current church building disposed of.

As ministry adjustments becomes embedded, it is anticipated that there will be a further, necessary review of the church estate.

Area E - Rural Area Dunblane - allocation 2 FTE + OLM

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

Lecropt Church, though 'A' listed by Historic Environment Scotland is not fit for purpose to serve the needs of a modern congregation and is unlikely to be able to be suitably adjusted and therefore should be disposed of with worship being located in the modern halls building which can be adapted for this purpose.

Kilmadock are encouraged to explore a potential partnership with St Madoc's to share buildings to the benefit of both parties.

Kincardine-in-Menteith church is no longer seen as suitable for use as a place of worship or centre for mission and should be disposed of with other local amenities used as needed for the worshipping community, whether this is a building share or a hire of a community or educational facility.

Area F - Urban Greater Alloa – allocation 4 FTE

All buildings in this area, with the following exceptions are regarded as category A, although all congregations are being asked to critically review the suitability and sustainability of their buildings.

At the union of Alloa: Ludgate and Alloa: St Mungo's the St Mungo's building should be disposed of with the united congregation basing itself in the current Ludgate building which is regarded as being better equipped, and appointed building to continue as the place of worship for the new congregation.

Clackmannan church and adjacent hall are deemed to be unsuitable for the needs of the congregation and should be disposed of. The existing Hall located in the village should be upgraded to act as the centre of the church's activities both for worship and mission.

The Gate, though owned by the church, is on a long-term lease to a charitable third party and a determination is therefore not required.

| Area | Allocation | Essential to plan | Status under review | Not essential to plan |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Carse/Callander | 3 | | | |
| 1 FTE | Callander Kirk | A | | |
| | Callander Kirk Halls | A | | |
| | Trossachs Church | | | B |
| | Aberfoyle Parish Church | | | B |
| | Aberfoyle Parish Church House | | | B |
| | Balquhidder Kirk | A | | |
| | Killin & Ardeonaig Parish Church | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 0.5 FTE | Buchlyvie Parish Church | A | | |
| | Gartmore Parish Church | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 1 FTE | Gargunnoch Parish Church | A | | |
| | Gargunnoch Ross Anderson Rooms | A | | |
| | Kippen | A | | |
| | Norrieston Parish Church | A | | |
| | Norrieston Church Hall | A | | |
| | Port of Menteith Church | A | | |
| 0.5 MDS shared | | | | |
| Strathendrick | 2 + OLM (across group) | | | |
| 1 FTE | Killearn Kirk | A | | |
| | Strathblane Parish Church | A | | |
| | Strathblane Kirk Rooms | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 1 FTE | Balfron Church | A | | |
| | Balfron Church Hall | A | | |
| | Buchanan Parish Church | | | B* |
| | Drymen Church | A | | |
| | Fintry Kirk | | | B* |
| Hillfoots | 2 | | | |
| 1 FTE | Alva Parish Church | A | | |

Items marked with * please refer to narrative for further detail.

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|-------------------------|--|----|--|----|
| | Menstrie Parish Church | A | | |
| 1 FTE | Tillicoultry Parish Church | A | | |
| | Tillicoultry Parish Church Hall | A | | |
| | Muckhart Parish Church | A | | |
| | Dollar Parish Church | A | | |
| | Dollar East Burnside Hall | A | | |
| | Glendevon Church | | | B |
| Greater Stirling | 8.5 | | | |
| 1 FTE | Bannockburn Allan Parish Church | A | | |
| | Bannockburn Ladywell | A | | |
| 2 FTE | Stirling - Viewfield Erskine Church | | | B* |
| | Stirling-Viewfield Erskine Hall | | | B* |
| | Stirling Church of the Holy Rude | A* | | |
| | Stirling St Ninian's Old Parish Church | A | | |
| | Stirling St Ninians Old Parish Hall | A | | |
| | Stirling Park Church | A | | |
| | Stirling Park Church Hall | A | | |
| 1 FTE + OLM | Bridge of Allan Parish Church | A | | |
| | Logie Kirk | | | B* |
| | Logie Kirk Community Hall | A | | |
| 2 FTE (1 MDS) | Stirling St Mark's Parish Church | A | | |
| | Stirling St Mark's Hall | A | | |
| 1.5 FTE | Stirling North Parish Church | A | | |
| | Stirling North Parish Church Halls | A | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--|----|
| | The Bruce Memorial Cambusbarron Parish Church | A | | |
| | Cambusbarron Church Hall | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 1 FTE | Plean Church | A | | |
| | Fallin Parish Church | | | B* |
| | Fallin Parish Church Hall | A | | |
| Dunblane | 2 + OLM | | | |
| 1 FTE | Dunblane St Blane's Church | A | | |
| | Dunblane St Blane's Church Hall | A | | |
| | Lecropt Kirk | | | B* |
| | Lecropt Kirk Hall | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 1 FTE | Kilmadock Parish Church | A | | |
| | Kincardine-in-Menteith Parish Church | | | B* |
| | Dunblane Cathedral Hall | A | | |
| Greater Alloa | 4 | | | |
| Grouping 3FTE | Alloa Ludgate Church | A | | |
| | Alloa St Mungo's | | | B* |
| | The Gate, Alloa | N/A* | | |
| | Tullibody St Serf's Parish Church | A | | |
| | Tullibody St Serf's Church Hall | A | | |
| | | | | |
| 1 FTE | Clackmannan Parish Church | | | B* |
| | Clackmannan Church Hall | | | B* |
| | Clackmannan Bruce Memorial Hall | A | | |
| | Sauchie & Coalsnaughton Parish Church | A | | |
| | Sauchie & Coalsnaughton Parish Church Hall | A | | |

