

The Church of Scotland
PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH

Davidson's Mains Parish Church

LOCAL
CHURCH
REVIEW

**OUR
CHURCH
TODAY**

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

The leader of the visiting team is Rev James Aitken; Tel - 0131 346 1970; email james.aitken2@btinternet.com. My own contact details are; Tel 0131 336 2036; email - rev.r.barr@blueyonder.co.uk. The Presbytery Clerk, Rev George Whyte is also available to you; Tel 0131 225 9137; email - edinburgh@cofscotland.org.uk.

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

LCR is now new – under ACT 1 of the General Assembly of 2012 LCR replaces the former Quinquennial Superintendence system. What we are doing in Edinburgh builds on the previous Superintendence scheme, the Unless the Lord..... visits and reports, and links in with the Plan for Presbytery.

We look forward to receiving this completed report by 6 October 2015.

Russell Barr
Convener of Superintendence

1. The story of your church

1.1 Suggested content:

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

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

1.2 Your Church's Story:

We aim to be 'centred on Jesus, building community, sharing good news, shaped by the Bible, people-friendly, and demonstrating servant leadership' and in 2013 set out our purpose as 'proclaiming Jesus, fostering wholeness, serving others'.

During the last ten years we have tried to restructure some key aspects of our life to help us become a congregation which is more able to fulfil our vision in today's society.

We have therefore moved to a smaller kirk session (reducing from 70 to 18) with six Ministry Areas (Nurture, Evangelism, Worship, Discipleship, Administration and Youth). The reduction of the Kirk Session numbers was to release elders to carry out pastoral work and leadership roles, and to make the Kirk Session more efficient and agile. We have reorganised our Pastoral Care system, placing a greater emphasis on small groups which are now the primary means of pastoral care and discipleship for many of our members. Where appropriate, other members continue to be pastored by an elder or other visitor.

As we looked at pastoral care we also addressed the very real challenge presented by the significant number of apparently nominal members on our roll. In 2013 we ran a programme of events known as Stepping Stones to provide opportunities to engage with these people, culminating in a Service of Recommitment in January 2014. This was a significant day for many within our congregation and, with hindsight, was part of the Lord's preparing us for a time of change ahead. Some of the events initiated as part of the Stepping Stones programme, e.g. a Bereavement Service, are now part of our annual calendar.

The growth of small groups has encouraged more people into a regular pattern of Bible Study and prayer. In 2011 we followed the E100 programme as a congregation on Sunday mornings and through all the small groups. We also continue to offer the Alpha Course and Parenting Courses. Each year we hold an Easter holiday club, reaching many children who have no other church connection, and this has continued to be a time when we have seen God at work among both the children and the team. Our annual youth weekend has provided an opportunity for growth and fellowship for our young people.

We are keen to make ever better use of our premises to engage with our community. Some significant milestones in this area have included the appointment of the Development Ministries Leader, the launch of TGIF (a monthly event offering families a mixture of food, fun, crafts and short message (comparable to Messy Church)) and the launch of Holiday at Home (an annual 'holiday club' for over 55s). Our Sycamore Tree café is vital in connecting with the community, and we are currently seeking to discern God's next steps for this ministry.

2. Life of the congregation

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

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

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

Responses:

Praise is the heart-beat of our life and is focused each week in acts of shared worship, with two services every Sunday, and one on a Wednesday lunchtime. We believe that in calling us to meet like this, the Lord means to speak with us so our shared experiences of reading and learning from Scripture are central to our worship.

Sunday morning is our busiest service with around 250 folk regularly attending. The format of a typical morning service would be traditional in the main with opening and closing praise, a brief talk to the children, prayers including intercessions, further sung worship and a sermon. The service usually lasts for about 70 minutes. The service is extensively supported by audio visuals with all the words of praise items and the Bible readings projected and talks to children and sermons illustrated by power point presentations. The service is live-streamed over the internet, with all the ppt slides and visuals available, and it can also be downloaded later. For those who prefer or who are visually impaired, a printed A4 'large print' sheet is available containing the hymns and readings.

All ages share together during the first part of the service, before those up to S3

leave for their own groups. We see the fellowship afterwards over coffee as being very much an extension of our worship. The music style is a blend of traditional and contemporary. During school term time we usually have a small orchestral band occasionally supported by a younger 'wee band'. Our organist plays voluntaries before and after the service and for the more traditional praise items and also organises a singing group who contribute to the worship on special occasions throughout the year. Children in the congregation who are learning to play a musical instrument are encouraged to join the wee band when they are able. This diverse band of musicians participates in leading the worship for some part of a church service (usually a family service) once or twice a term. The ethos of the group is very clearly directed to worship, with practices punctuated with bible study and prayer. Currently around 40 congregation members are involved in leading worship through reading the Bible passage and/or in leading intercessory prayers or in talking to the children. A few of our members are able through prior experience/training to lead a full service and preach.

In the past 18 months we have aimed to make our Sunday evening service more accessible and interactive. Building on an earlier period of experimentation, we committed to holding the service, which lasts about an hour, in one of our halls. Seating is arranged around tables to encourage a more informal atmosphere and a relational style of worship. Around 50-60 attend, including some from other congregations (and denominations) where there is no evening service. Tea, coffee and biscuits are served before the service and are available throughout. The format includes sung worship, prayers and a talk exploring the bible passage. The latter may be in parts and involve periods of discussion round the tables and some interaction with the speaker. Worship music may be played through the sound system, and include more contemporary praise, and a piano is used for accompaniment, sometimes supplemented with an informal praise band which usually includes some of the teenagers on guitars and drums. On occasion a visiting speaker attends providing testimony about their life and work. This service is also supported by audio visuals and power point presentations. For those that prefer or are visually impaired a printed A4 'large print' sheet is available containing the hymns and readings. The aim of this service is to provide a context which is more easily understood by today's society and the move to the hall allows a greater sense of informality and gives the opportunity to interact and build relationships in a way that is hindered by the physical layout of our church building.

Exploring the Bible is a key part of each morning and evening service and we usually work sequentially through sections of the Bible, or a key theme, over a period of weeks (currently Acts 'Issues facing a growing church' in the mornings and Ephesians in the evenings).

The Wednesday lunchtime service is a 30 minute service in the church building much appreciated by the older generation. Around 18 to 24 attend throughout the year. While some also attend on a Sunday, others would struggle to make it to or through the earlier and longer Sunday morning service. Through term time we rent the services of a community bus to collect up to 15 elderly

parishioners to help them attend. Most will stay for lunch and fellowship at the Sycamore Tree café afterwards. In recent years, this has been kept going through the summer and has been hailed as a lifeline for those who would be otherwise isolated.

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

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

Responses:

In recent years we have had increasingly a heart to 'go make disciples'. At Kirk Session, led by the Evangelism Ministry Area Leader, we explored over a short period building relationships, building respect, building relevance, all towards encouraging a response. In developing the pattern of usage of our halls, the Development Ministries Leader has used this 4-fold 'journey' as a reference point. The aim of the long established café, now called the Sycamore Tree, is to provide a bridge between our church and the community, demonstrating God's love to all. It attracts, among others, many who use the halls for their activities such as couples attending ante-natal classes, parents from mums and tots, and women from the badminton club. Staffed by volunteers, the aim is to get alongside people where appropriate – so for example some of the café regulars (volunteers and customers) came along to our Holiday at Home week which has Christian content as well as crafts, activity and fellowship. We hope soon to appoint a Café Manager to give the café a robust Christian platform from which to build relationships and respect. Open during term-time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 1:30pm, and on Wednesdays through the school holidays, this is a ministry we are keen to develop in three ways: expanding the opening times, making more space available and enhancing the Christian experience.

We also see a need for discipleship courses for example to encourage our members and ministry volunteers, such as in the café, to share their faith. Our previous minister wrote 'Coming Alive' - a means of bringing people of varied ages to faith over many years here - 'Staying Alive' and 'Forever Alive' and these remain available for individuals and groups to work through. In the past we have done courses such as 'Being a contagious Christian' in our small groups.

Baseline (our younger teenagers) have used 'Christianity Explored Youth'. The annual youth weekend away (usually now to SU's Lendrick Muir) is a powerful opportunity for sharing, and the strong bonds of youngsters across the school age ranges are further strengthened in the annual Easter Holiday Club week by

the significant involvement as assistant leaders of those youngsters now too old to be attendees, some of whom have little contact otherwise with the church.

The Holiday Club is a significant opportunity: around 100 primary school age children attend, with a family games night one evening. TGIF, monthly on a Friday afternoon, is another – some of those who attend plan to come to our first 'Parenting Teenagers' Course this autumn.

Our website sets out the basics of the Christian faith, with suggestions as to how to explore things further.

Alpha will this year be run jointly with the local episcopal church, in one of the local pubs. Up till now it's been run in our halls, with a meal provided from our café kitchen.

The Kirk Session in 2012 agreed a plan for the development of evangelism at DMPC which remains relevant.

In our Parish Profile we note that we envisage the congregation being more ready to share the gospel by 'going out' to where people are as well as 'reaching out' to bring people in; and that there is a need for a contemporary cutting edge that speaks meaningfully to our generation.

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

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

Responses:

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is overseen by the Nurture Ministry Area (led by 2 church leaders). The aim of the nurture group is to be aware of and responsive to the pastoral needs of the congregation and the wider community. The formal system of pastoral care is provided by Pastoral Care Groups. There are 18 groups within this structure each led by 2 people (elders and others by invitation of the Nurture and Discipleship MALs in conjunction with the Minister) and these cover all members and adherents including those who are not regular church attenders and have very tenuous links with church. Ten of the 18 groups have within them a "small group" (i.e. house/fellowship group). An additional 'group' that offers

mutual support and fellowship, particularly for older members, is the Monday Club (previously the Guild).

Less formal pastoral care is provided in a variety of ways. The groups involved in these areas provide a large informal network of pastoral care and liaise both with each other and Pastoral Care groups as pastoral concerns arise. They are volunteers covering a broad spectrum of the congregation.

- magazine distribution across the parish. This area needs encouragement and some improvement and is currently being looked at e.g. to improve the element of personal contact where possible.
- Wednesday lunchtime service and lunch. Transport (minibus) is provided and allows frail and housebound members, their friends and non-members to attend worship. It also provides an important social outlet for individuals who would otherwise be very isolated and has proved over the last 7 years to be an important outreach to the wider parish. It is free and open to all.
- There is a large group of volunteers within the congregation (including elders, pastoral visitors) involved in visiting the elderly, those ill at home or in hospital, care home residents, and young families providing support to individuals and their families
- The flower distribution team provide an important informal visiting service and liaise with pastoral care groups where nurture areas are identified
- The church has facilitated Parenting Children courses using Relationship Central material. This is seen as an important area of nurture both for families within the congregation and in our local community. It is an area under development.

Addressing the needs of others in the parish and beyond

In addition to the pastoral care outlined above, the church's extensive premises provide an area for outreach in the local community. Central to this is The Sycamore Tree, the café situated within one of 2 halls. Open 3 days per week it is staffed by volunteers and is a significant area of outreach, nurture and evangelism. It is well used both by church members (including those using the Wednesday minibus) and the local community. The 'regulars' include quite a number who come alone - many of whom are of an older generation - and some working people such as nurses from various practices across north Edinburgh.

From time to time events are organised (e.g. "Coffee and Cake") to support volunteers i.e. looking after those who are looking after.

Over the last few years the church has been involved in other ways of reaching out to the local community - parenting courses and Holiday at Home (a very successful summer scheme for the over 55s, particularly those who may be isolated or unable to go away on holiday). We are about to run our first Parenting Teenagers course. The Holiday Club (a week long Bible based activity club for primary school aged children) has been running for around 20 years and around 100 (sometimes as many as 150) children attend this for Bible stories, games and crafts. We support other congregations hosting such clubs through

help with materials, sharing experience or in person.

Within the congregation there are 4 trained counsellors who support Christian counselling agencies. This is an area under development: we are investigating the possibility of providing on-site counselling.

School or other chaplaincies

Until 2014 our minister enjoyed being a regular (weekly) visitor to the primary school in his role as school chaplain. That changed with the arrival of a new head teacher and a changing view within society of the role of the church in the school. Although a less frequent visitor to the Royal High School, the same role as school chaplain was enjoyed. This has also changed. Both schools are working towards developing school chaplaincy teams representing more faiths and those with no faith. This remains a work in progress. Both schools have stable SU groups operating weekly with attendance of between 10 and 20 in both groups. Members of DMPC are involved in the leadership of those groups.

Involvement in social issues.

DMPC is involved in a number of outreach activities supporting organisations involved in the care and support of those facing hardship, deprivation, persecution or ill health. The congregation regularly supports charities such as Christian Aid and Tear Fund through its financial giving (see also 3.1) and also offers practical help through staffing the Care Van and Bethany's winter care shelter, food donations to Edinburgh City Mission's north Edinburgh Basics Bank and household donations to Fresh Start. Fairtrade coffee is used in the café. Some of our members serve as Street Pastors.

Youngsters within the church are encouraged to be involved in these activities and take responsibility in their wider community such as sorting clothing for the Care Van. More recently the church has started to involve our younger members in Operation Christmas Child, demonstrating that The Good Samaritan was not just a Bible story from long ago but is applicable in their lives too.

A 2014 booklet setting out the range of volunteering opportunities both within the congregation and beyond is on our website (The Life/Volunteering/We're called to serve), with information there too (What's On/Beyond here) about the range of organisations involved in Christian service that we support practically and financially.

Partnership with community groups or agencies and/or mission partnerships at home or abroad

The church facilitates a number of groups through use of its extensive buildings. These include toddler groups, mother and baby support groups, uniformed organisations such as Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Boys Brigade. Links with Boys Brigade have been strengthened recently.

With the input of our DML we have expanded our 'block bookings' in recent years with a focus on organisations that link with our purpose e.g. 'fostering

wholeness' through 'gambling concern', exercise, slimming etc.

From time to time church youngsters are supported in voluntary service overseas and at home (e.g. in Spring 2014 a 'Nepal Action Team' of young Christians was based for a week at Davidson's Mains following their service in Nepal the previous autumn). Organisations such as Pacific Partnership Trust and OMF are supported both prayerfully and financially. The former was established by one of our elders, currently 'inactive' in the congregation as he serves in full time ministry in New Zealand, and the congregation actively supported one of our members who worked in full time ministry for OMF in Indonesia until her retirement in 2013.

As mentioned, information about organisations we support is on our website (What's On/Beyond Here).

In our Parish Profile we note that we envisage the links with our community being strong, dynamic and fruitful in gospel terms.

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

- **How do you help people of all ages grow in their faith?**
- **In what ways do you promote personal devotions, private prayer and opportunities to reflect on life experiences?**
- **Which resources do you use? Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

Sundays: through preaching and hearing the word in church and in explorers, baseline and YF, and through sharing with others in fellowship afterwards.

Through the week:

- bible study, discussion, reflection and prayer in the 10 small ('house') groups. New folk are encouraged into these small groups.
- weekly half hour prayer during the vacancy;
- listening, sharing and serving around the premises e.g. at The Sycamore Tree
- leading SU groups in the parish primary and secondary schools.

Monthly:

- Prayer Breakfast and evening prayer meeting;
- TGIF – the Friday 'messy church' opportunity to participate and reflect.
- Power Point – the Edinburgh event for young people.

Periodically:

- 'Free4all's (social nights for P7-S6 with other churches invited)
- Bible reading notes for sale after the service (and promoted in the prayer update)
- Try Praying banner displayed, and the programme in some years more specifically promoted e.g. through the church magazine 'The Big Picture'.

Annually:

- Celebration of the Arts – encouraging people to recognise their and God's creativity through presenting and participating in workshops in art, crafts, sewing, guitar, singing, creative writing to name a few. We end the day with music, songs and worship.
- SU and other camps – children attending, young people serving as assistant leaders, adults serving as leaders and cooks
- Alpha – members attending or facilitating, both of which help people grow in their faith
- Easter prayer vigil with other local churches
- Easter Holiday Club – through the experience of leading, including the training day beforehand
- Coming Alive, Staying Alive, Forever Alive - locally written materials available for use individually, in pairs or in wider groups
- Youth weekend away.

Information on our website includes The Life/ Learning and growing; The Life - Small Groups. Our primary resource is the Bible. Youth leaders draw on SU and other materials.

Bespoke:

'Stepping Stones to Recommitment' from August 2013 was a specific programme of events, promoted across the congregation, to help us deepen our faith. These included 'Re-fresh', a chance to explore over 3 evenings what the Christian faith is about; 'Has Science buried God?', a short series of talks on the relationship between science and faith; and a number of special worship and social events. The series culminated in a Re-commitment weekend at the end of January 2014 when the opportunity was offered for each of us to renew our commitment to the person of Christ, the cause of the gospel and the people of God. People came forward to offer up their personal pledge cards (which remained in a sealed box in the sanctuary throughout 2014) and in March 2014 a congregational Saturday morning was held focussing on 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you'.

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

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

Responses:

Many of the activities already mentioned serve both to develop faith and to deepen a sense of fellowship. In summary:

Building relationships for young people: Sunday school, youth weekend away, SU groups, promoting SU events and holidays, Easter Holiday Club, 'Free4all's (Mixture of on and off premises)

Building relationships for adults: Refreshments before/after services of worship; encouraging to join 'small groups'; Monday Club (successor to 'The Guild'), volunteer ministries e.g. Sycamore Tree café, care van; hobby groups e.g. badminton (both on and off the premises), banner making, scrabble club; biannual working days (coming together to attend to maintenance of the premises (May & Harvest)); Holiday @ Home for over 55s (3 day club and half day outing in summer); Hogmanay Ceilidh; Harvest Weekend – shared celebratory food on the Saturday evening (this year Tear Fund Big Bake).

We recognise that we could do with more opportunities for adults/families eg film/social nights and more opportunities off the premises.

3. Congregation and Wider Church

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

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

Responses:

For many years Davidson's Mains has played a full part at Presbytery and its

committees. Three elders at DMPC are on Edinburgh Presbytery. Graeme Small is Presbytery Elder, John MacLennan is an assessor for candidates for the Ministry and Craig Duncan is the Presbytery representative on Edinburgh City Council's Education Committee. Our previous Minister served a term as Convener of the Business Committee. Martin Pearce, an elder at DMPC, is on a LCR team and is an active Reader in the Presbytery, with a steady involvement leading worship across the city and a recent period of service as 'locum' at St Nicholas, Sighthill.

Though one of our members was for eight years on the board of what is now Crossreach, there is currently no DMPC representation on General Assembly Councils. At the General Assembly itself, various DMPC members act as stewards, whilst John MacLennan has, for the past 11 years, been the steward to former Moderators. One of our members supports the work of Crossreach Counselling Lothian as a counsellor and the church hosted the Annual Crossreach service in 2013.

DMPC has a strong relationship with the local Episcopal Church, Holy Cross. We have a number of joint services throughout the year and support them practically through their use of our print room. We have together in the last two years sung Christmas carols one evening in the local pub at its invitation. Their rector leads our Wednesday lunchtime service once a month and joins in the lunch, and this year we are co-hosting Alpha. In Holy Week, joint services are held with the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches. Three of our trained counsellors work with counselling services provided by churches of other denominations in the city.

We seek to work closely with other local churches in our youth work, for example through Free4All, and would like to develop stronger ties with other local churches particularly with young people.

DMPC has assisted over the years other Church of Scotland congregations, including adjoining parishes, e.g. through the 'loan' of personnel (e.g. to serve as Treasurer or (currently) as Property Convener at Slateford Longstone) or the support of holiday clubs (such as a Slateford Longstone, Stenhouse, Muirhouse St Andrews and London Road).

Beyond the immediate locality, as mentioned earlier, DMPC has involvement with Fresh Start, Edinburgh City Mission, & Bethany Care Trust, and also the Street Pastors initiative. From congregational giving, the past few years has seen annual disbursements from central funds of £13k to a variety of Christian charities, including OMF; this being in addition to retiring offerings after Communion Services for Christian based charities, e.g. Barnabas Fund, Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Contact with the World Church is mainly limited to our charitable giving to many outside bodies, in particular the OMF and the Pacific Partnership Trust (PPT). While personal testimony about OMF's work in Indonesia stopped on Diana Frost's retiral, we hear personally from Nigel Pollock of the PPT on the occasions he attends DMPC when in UK. Tear Fund has for many years been promoted

and supported at our Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve.

During Christian Aid week, DMPC arranges a parish wide door to door collection (raising over £6000 in recent years) and members also take cans into the work place. DMPC members also organise the Poppy door to door collection for the local area for the British Legion Scottish Poppy Appeal and raise typically over £4,000 annually.

4. Resources – people, buildings, money

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

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

Responses:

We have adopted the unitary constitution and taken advantage of the recent innovations encouraged by the Church of Scotland to move to fixed term Kirk Session membership.

The Kirk Session currently comprises 18 members: the minister, nine “elected” members who are ordained as elders of the Church of Scotland and admitted to the Kirk Session for six year terms (three members appointed every second year) following nominations from the congregation, the Presbytery Elder, the Development Ministries Leader (DML), and 6 ministry area leaders (covering between them Nurture, Evangelism, Worship, Discipleship, Administration (including Finance) and Youth).

During the vacancy ‘locum’ services are provided by 2 ‘Ministry Associates’, one a retired pastor of an evangelical church & former senior staff member at the Scottish Bible Society, who is a member of the Kirk Session – Alan Campbell - and the other a retired Church of Scotland minister - Rev Shirley Fraser.

The organist and other musicians are part of the ministry team through a collaborative approach to worship preparation (e.g. organist involvement in

choice of praise) and worship itself.

The main admin support has been provided over many years by volunteers in the church office – by one for a long period, then by two reducing to one through ‘retirement’. Since the spring we have been in a period of transition with additional volunteers stepping in to allow the ‘secretary’ to give up. We intend to seek to appoint a church administrator while retaining volunteer input. The office provides admin support for much, but not all, of the church’s activity.

The DML is a full time staff appointment created in 2011 with responsibility for:

- development: translating the priorities highlighted in our DMPC vision into the increased use of our premises in the service of the gospel
- management: overseeing the day-to-day running of our premises to ensure efficiency and excellence
- co-ordination: promoting, equipping and co-ordinating the volunteer base to the above ends.

The responsibilities of this post have developed over the period and a review of the role is required.

Training and development - such as in-service training, study leave - is not something that has featured highly in our practice. This is something to which we will have to have more regard as we move into a new ministry.

At the Kirk Session Away Day on 3 May 2014 leadership was one of the topics we discussed, and releasing God’s people for ministry. A large number of members of the congregation volunteer in one way or another (estimated say 150). Yet we believe there is much more we could do. For example, at that Away Day we were of a mind that increasing the profile of our youth work is of paramount importance. The aim of our youth work is for our children ‘to develop an owned faith by the time they leave home’. We want to ask ourselves ‘would we go as far as employing a youth worker of some sort?’

Hence what is said in our Parish Profile namely that we foresee

- a ministry that is committed to shared leadership and team ministry, allowing us to embrace new models of leadership both ordained and lay.
 - o All members need to be equipped and encouraged to share in the congregation’s ministry.
 - o We envisage the possibility of having a larger ‘staff team’ on the basis of our understanding that no one individual carries all the gifts to deliver the vision across the board.
- a shift towards a more missional emphasis in our congregational life, although not at the expense of a committed pastoral ministry that is vital to our congregation.

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

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

Responses:

We are blessed with extensive premises, which have been faithfully developed over a number of years to reflect the evolving ministries and needs of the congregation. We desire to use them carefully in support of our threefold purpose. The sanctuary was built in 1843 and was extended in the 1960s.

'The beadle's cottage' next to the church has been a residential let for a number of years as we no longer have a beadle.

There are two sets of halls: the north hall has a reception area (used for Sycamore Tree café, prayer breakfasts etc.), kitchen, large hall with video projector and sound system, a small hall, a meeting room, pastoral office, Development Ministries Leader office, church office, toilets, disabled toilet and storage cupboards. The south hall has a main hall, lower meeting room with couches and other comfortable seating, "Upper Room" with similar seating, Queensferry Room which provides a further meeting venue, a small office, toilets, disabled toilet with shower. Heating is by gas with a boiler in each location in order to minimise hot water transmission losses.

The area used by the Sycamore Tree is not quite fit for purpose. There is no room for growth, a bottleneck at the access to the kitchen, and some 'segregation' because of the use of a separate hall for parents and toddlers. This is an area identified for development.

There is a modern detached manse in a quiet cul-de-sac approximately half a mile from the church. Built in 1989, it has gas central heating, a free standing brick built garage and paved car parking area. Downstairs it has an entrance hall, toilet, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, and study/further public room. Upstairs there are four bedrooms, one with en suite and a bathroom with over bath shower. There is a well-established garden to the front and rear. The manse has been redecorated throughout and upstairs carpets are being replaced.

A detailed survey of both the church premises and the manse by the Presbytery surveyor was carried out on 10 March 2015. There were no category A items

(Urgent – fix within 1 year). Category B items (Essential – fix within 3 years) are being tackled through a mix of volunteers and contractors.

We have a rolling plan for more major work for planning and budgeting purposes. In addition two work days (May and October) involving a large number of volunteers from the congregation (over 70 at the most recent one in May 2015) provide the opportunity to tackle both planned and reactive maintenance. Annual contracts are in place for roof inspections, gutter clearing, fire and burglar alarm systems, fire extinguishers, pest control, gas central heating.

4.3 Money – Income, reserves, stewardship, etc.

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

Responses:

- **Comment on your ability to finance all you are currently doing**

DMPC is financially robust and has seen consistent growth in offering and use of facilities over the past five years. Adequate funds are available both on hand and invested to meet the planned needs of our congregation.

- **How is the work of your church financed**

Our church is financed in the main from Offerings (64%) and associated Gift Aid Tax Recovery (14%). Our additional income (15%) comes from our use of halls, church group donations and our outreach facility the Sycamore Tree. Legacies are received with grace but play no part in the short or long term planning of our church.

- **Are you over-dependent on giving from any particular age group or individuals?**

Our offerings received are spread over a broad demographic and are not reliant on any one or multiple individuals.

- **When did you last address stewardship, what stewardship programme are you using and when will stewardship next be addressed?**

Our church developed its own stewardship campaign early in 2012, with an ongoing plan to focus each year on one of the elements of Giving. In 2012 the year focused on financial giving resulting in an increase of 21%. Subsequent years have focused on time and talent respectively and overall giving to our church and the use of our facilities has added greatly to our total offerings received.

5. Presbytery Plan

5.1 Presbytery Plan – A Plan for Presbytery 2012-2022.

- **The Plan for Presbytery interim steps for your congregation and forward conclusions are as follows:**



Davidson's Mains

History

Davidson's Mains traces its history back to the Disruption when it came into being as the Free Church of Cramond in 1843. It has since mirrored successive unions being at one point the United Free Church of Cramond before changing its name to Davidson's Mains United Free Church and then Davidson's Mains Parish Church after 1929. Worship has been offered on the present site since 1843.

The Parish

The suburban parish of Davidson's Mains lies to the north west of the city almost astride the A90 Queensferry Road which is the heavily trafficked commuter route from the North and Fife to the city centre. The church buildings are well located in the centre of the parish at the junction of the two principal roads and adjacent to Davidson's Mains Primary School.

Focusing on the old village of Muttonhole around Quality Street and Main Street the parish has been developed almost continuously from the 1920s to the present day. The inter-war years saw the development along the main roads together with the four-in-a-block flats at Corbiehill and the bungalows in House O' Hill between Main Street and Hillhouse Road. North of the old railway line Silverknowes was developed by Mactaggart and Mickel from 1930 through to the mid 1960s, while Hillpark, south of Hillhouse Road was built by the same builder from the

mid 1970s through to the present day. Barnton Park, west of The Royal High School was developed by Miller Homes in the 1960s. The vast majority of this housing was detached and semi-detached villas. Housing in the parish is therefore mainly modern, owner-occupied and low-rise and low density.

There are no major commercial centres or sources of employment in the parish.

Education is provided at primary level by Davidson's Mains and Blackhall Primary Schools and at secondary level by The Royal High School. Davidson's Mains Primary and The Royal High School are both located within the parish bounds.

The parish population was estimated in 2008 to be just over 5,600 people resident in some 2,400 houses. The population structure shows the parish to have slightly more children, fewer in the student and young adult groups, more mature adults and significantly more elderly than the presbytery area as a whole.

Mission

This is a both a parish based and gathered congregation. Its mission is being centred on Jesus, shaped by the Bible and committed to training leaders and its priorities are:

- the building of community within parish and congregation
- work with children, youth, (including school chaplaincy) and families
- outreach to the middle aged, and
- the continued development of new models of leadership and pastoral care.

Davidson's Mains has gifts to share with the wider church – e.g. their "intentional approach" to developing church life not to mention resources human and financial. It supports other Church of Scotland congregations in the neighbourhood, as well as cooperating ecumenically with Holy Cross Episcopal Church, St Margaret's RC Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church and with Scripture Union. It could share insights and best practice with other congregations within similar contexts such as Greenbank, St Philip's Joppa, Craiglockhart and Corstorphine Craigsbank.

Presbytery Plan:

Davidson's Mains should be led by one Minister of Word and Sacrament inducted on a Basis of Unrestricted Tenure.

- **The mission priorities and suggested partnerships are:**

-
- **How do you see the above being worked out?**
 - **Anything else you would like to say?**

Responses:

The answers to these questions can be found elsewhere in this LCR.

6. Communication

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

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

Responses:

Morning service live-streamed (audio) through website, with link to the words and ppt slides), plus archive.

Visual messages on the premises – banners, word art. Consciously developed over recent years.

Website – redeveloped over a period and launched in 2013.

Facebook (refreshed at least weekly)

'Loop' of notices – power point display before each of the Sunday services

Occasional promotional presentations before or within a service

Publications e.g. 'Shaping the Vision' the Kirk Session's blueprint for the coming years produced in 2013 and discussed at the 2013 Annual Meeting

Occasional 'coffee mornings' or similar to promote/discuss congregational life and witness (recent example – rolling discussion groups on faithful witness, church family, resourcing God's work and next generation at 2015 Annual Meeting in hall on a Saturday morning.)

Weekly Prayer update to members and beyond (email and hard copy)

Big Picture magazine (3 a year)

Easter and Christmas Cards to whole Parish

Church Notice Boards (events, minutes, rotas) - in various locations, visible to members and other hall users.

We are cautious for privacy reasons about sharing members' contact details. There is therefore no generally available membership address book. Connections are made personally or through pastoral care group leaders etc.

It's a challenge to communicate well with all age groups (e.g. electronic does not reach all our membership). We strive for a balance in terms of written/oral/visual presentation.

We are not strong at advertising church activities around the community. For example we could have a better presence in the local free magazine (EH4), at the local Gala, in the local shops etc. When discussing 'faithful witness' in the workshop sessions at our 2015 Annual Meeting, this was one of the suggestions. We could advertise our café more but changed opening times during holidays makes it harder - a more robust pattern of opening could be more effectively advertised.

We recognise that we need to do more to be 'out' from our premises into the community. The Kirk Session believes that God's call to us as a local church to proclaim Jesus, to foster wholeness and to serve others is as important now as it has ever been. We are excited at the prospect of working with our new minister under God's guiding and the Spirit's enabling to bring that vision to fruition in the coming months and years.

