

The Church of Scotland  
**PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH**

**DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARISH  
CHURCH**

**LOCAL  
CHURCH  
REVIEW  
ACTION  
PLAN**

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# 1. Congregational Action Plan

In all that we do here in Presbytery, mission is important to us. We want you to explore together under each heading aims and objectives for your congregation over a five year period. Once you have set your aims and objectives, tell us how these might be tackled and the timeframe for achieving them. It is important that you look at the resources required and any help you may need, this could be from neighbouring congregations, or Presbytery. This is a five year plan and we would expect to see a programme spanning this.

In the planning, we would like you to think backwards. We would like you to think not about where you are now and where you might go, but about where you would like to be, and how you might get there.

The Local Church Review is first and foremost, a local review. It is to do with your parish and the people you serve, not about the sort of church you think you ought to be, but about the sort of church your area needs. As a Presbytery, it helps us explore together how every congregation does the same things in their own way. The LCR process helps us to see how congregations achieve their aims and objectives, and this report is a first step on a journey, and in some areas, the continuation of a journey in other plans.

A plan of thought and action – where would you like to be, and how might you get there?

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## 1.1 Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new **Worship** initiatives.

Response:

*As with all the responses in this action plan, what follows may be subject to change and adjustment as we work alongside a new minister here at Davidson's Mains. Given the particular role of a minister in the Church of Scotland in preaching, and in leading and being responsible for worship, this is particularly so with this response.*

**In association with the new Minister** we would like to be in the place where all our services of worship are increasingly a vibrant and meaningful expression of our faith community's relationship with God.

By 2020 we would envisage an expansion to the involvement of members in the planning, preparation and in the leading and facilitating of our worship as well as to the vital support ministries i.e. welcome team, sound desk, audio visuals etc. We would see the worshipping congregation more readily involved in the service through interaction and responses, both formal and informal. While we would like our sung worship to continue to provide expressions of both contemporary and traditional praise we would like to increase our repertoire of the best of the more contemporary worship songs. We also envisage having a growing and developing group, particularly of young people, coming forward to

be involved in the music ministry. We would also see having opportunities to explore different styles of worship and in particular different formats to the more traditional order of service. As we see our worship becoming increasingly relevant and lively we expect to see real growth in our numbers and in our discipleship. Regarding our evening service we would see it having a more contemporary 'edge' and would be developing ways to be more 'open' to non-churched youngsters and others. We would envisage having the main sanctuary open for quiet reflection, personal devotions and worship at other set times in the week.

In order to get to this point, we will action the following:

- Within the next 18 months, begin to provide training opportunities in planning and leading worship services. We will arrange these 'in house' and give encouragement to as many as possible to attend. At the same time we will arrange practical workshops for those responsible for welcoming, sound desk and AV.
- Over the next 2 years, identify opportunities to introduce appropriate ways for the congregation to participate in the service be that informal interaction or more formal response
- As soon as is practical, commission a small group of musicians and others to look at the many available resources of contemporary worship and to come forward with a broad selection of new material that the congregation can learn and that will become part of our shared experience of worship into the next 5 years and beyond.
- Continue to provide the resources and personnel to encourage and promote a regular young people's band to play a significant part in the worship of the congregation – possibly including investing in professional instrumental instruction.
- Within the next 12-18 months, establish a worship team to explore different styles of worship and to identify alternative order of service formats that could be introduced on different occasions.
- By spring 2016 set up a prayer ministry team not only to ensure that all our worship is supported by prayer but to provide those opportunities to engage in one to one or small group prayer as needs and responses are made known.
- Before the end of next year, put together a small team to be responsible for the evening worship style and content and to develop a more contemporary edge.

**1.2** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new **Evangelism** initiatives.

Response:

Recognising that this is an area where there is considerable scope for development, **in association with the new Minister:**

Build momentum across the congregation to share our faith more in words as well as actions – enhancing across the membership a confident personal faith and a desire to share it;

Encourage and equip individual Christians to be active participants – developing individuals' competence and confidence in being witnesses to others of their living faith; and identifying and releasing those with particular gifts;

Tackle the barriers people face to progressing on the journey to faith – understanding our community further, seeing ourselves through the eyes of the community, using our premises still more with our aim in mind, developing our programme, in all its aspects, to do more to show the relevance of Christianity and to encourage a response.

This will involve

- building on existing opportunities such as the Sycamore Tree and the contact with local families through the Holiday Club (e.g. considering events perhaps 3 or 4 times a year for the Holiday Club parents and children),
- identifying possible tools for use across the congregation, for example in our small groups, to explore what sharing our faith means and to practise it;
- recognising that the crucial challenge is to move from 'respect' for the Christian faith to its 'relevance' and on to 'response' and prioritising the development of 'relevance building' and 'response building' 'opportunities'.
- reviewing the use of time on Sundays including services – types, content, participation, opportunities.

It will lead to

- learning to share our faith through teaching, practice, activities
- new 'relevance building' and 'response building' opportunities
- adjusted use of premises as appropriate; and
- recognition that evangelism will change the church, and preparing and planning for growth.

**1.3** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new **Service** initiatives.

Response:

We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our pastoral care arrangements (described in Pack 2), seeking to respond to the many and changing needs of our congregation.

We have found it difficult to find an appropriate 'tool' to assess the 'needs and wants' in our parish but will investigate the possible use of the Church of Scotland 'mission audit' tool. (We considered using the Tear Fund discovery tool, which is no longer available, but recognise that it was more focussed on areas of greater obvious 'need'.)

We will also continue to be alert, and respond, to needs and opportunities as they arise - for example as we take account of the increased incidence of dementia and of the youngsters among us with special needs.

From time to time we consider getting involved with Christians against Poverty; and we committed in our 'Shaping the Vision' to considering the provision of a counselling service from the premises, considering that support with financial and personal challenges could be of benefit in this community. We are continuing to explore making the counselling service a reality, perhaps within a relatively short time-frame eg on a pilot basis. We are also alert to the recent formation of a Credit Union by the Church of Scotland and other denominations and may seek to explore possible involvement with, say, a focus on the parish.

We want to find ways to foster stronger relationships with those for whom we provide a service by the provision of our halls for the use of their organisations. We also want to develop our administrative support, e.g. through the recruitment of an administrator, and to build on and expand the Sycamore Tree café, including through the appointment of a café manager to help deliver this key part of our outreach and service.

**1.4** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new **Discipleship** initiatives.

Response:

We recognise that disciples make disciples and we seek to continue and promote the small groups, where personal engagement and friendship provide encouragement on our journeys of faith. We intend to explore running discipleship courses (a feature through the years at our small groups), recognising the challenge of targeting these appropriately both in terms of who comes (beyond the small groups) and when to hold them. Members of the congregation have found attending (or helping facilitate) Alpha beneficial.

**1.5** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new **Fellowship** initiatives.

Response:

We would like to develop more adult/family social activities, including building on the connections with parents and grandparents begun through Holiday Club, as well as more off-site activities; and to encourage more home hospitality, in addition to that offered in and through for example the small groups.

We always have an emphasis on the welcome afforded to those who come about our premises, including on Sundays, and have recently formed a small group to see how we might improve further the welcome experienced on a Sunday morning.

We are also currently looking at how we might improve the way in which our church magazine is made available across the congregation.

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**1.6** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop your **relationships with the wider church**.

Response:

We recognise that our current links with the world church are not as strong as they could be. There is much to encourage us and challenge us from the experience of the wider church and, in association with our new Minister, we would like to do better at communicating this with the congregation. We also recognise the mutual benefits of congregational representation on national councils etc and will consider with the new minister how best to encourage involvement e.g. through making nominations to the Church of Scotland's nominations committee.

**1.7** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new ways to equip your **ministry team** and encourage more people to take up **leadership roles**.

Response:

We need to ensure that our staff and others in key positions have, and take, opportunities for training and development.

Many of our members have leadership roles (e.g. pastoral care group leaders, small group leaders, youth leaders, trustees on the Kirk Session, Ministry Areas Leaders, Development Ministries Leader). Many are involved in ministry (e.g. Sycamore Tree volunteers, flowers ministry, pastoral care visitors, music, helping with Holiday Club, Holiday at Home etc) and roles which underpin all our ministry (e.g. Safeguarding, treasurer and finance team, property team, administration (e.g. rotas for Sunday welcome, refreshments, AV etc). Of those who are active elders and no longer on the Kirk Session because of our streamlined structure, most are involved in one or more areas of ministry. Most of the Ministry Area Leaders are supported by other members of the congregation (e.g. Admin & the property & finance teams; Evangelism & the care van & Alpha teams; Nurture team; Discipleship & small group leaders). The Minister previously led the team that is all the pastoral care group leaders, and they met from time to time. There is much involvement and a structure that allows people to be free for ministry and not tied up in meetings and committees. We would however like to explore how we could do better still at ensuring that those able to be involved in ministry are. An example of development has been the recent involvement of a range of members in morning worship each week. We are also alive to the challenge that many of our ministry activities are during the working week when the pool of available members is limited and, for example, through the appointment of a Sycamore Tree manager, we will seek to address this in that context.

**1.8** Tell us how you plan to explore and develop new initiatives to maintain and enhance your **property/properties** so that they better support the delivery of your mission and vision.

Response:

We have developed the use of our premises, taking account of our purpose 'proclaiming Jesus, fostering wholeness, serving others' and plan to continue to ensure they are well-used and fit for purpose. For example, we have taken initial steps in identifying how we might adapt our hall to accommodate better an expanded Sycamore Tree. We also want to consider how best to use the cottage and to review once more the layout of the church building in particular the limited entrance area.

**1.9** Tell us what plans you have to promote **stewardship**.

Response:

We will continue to lay before the congregation the facts about our income and expenditure in word, figures and visuals, engaging with them in discussion at our Annual meeting and other congregational events.

We will also promote, once again, the concept of 'Giving Days' which have in past years been held alongside the work days/harvest.

**1.10** Tell us what plans you have in support of the **Plan for Presbytery**.

Response:

We are happy to share experience, expertise and good practice when invited or opportunities arise. We hope to continue the kind of resource sharing in which we are currently involved, e.g. through financial support ('Ministries & Mission'), programmes and personnel (e.g. re 'Nurture', Holiday Club, Holiday at Home).

**1.11** Tell us what plans you have to sustain and improve how you **communicate**.

Response:

Communication is an ongoing challenge. We would like to do much better in communicating and may consider giving specific emphasis to this as and when we refresh our NEWDAY structure. We find that word of mouth works best for many things, but ensuring consistency and clarity of message across a large multi-generational congregation is difficult.

Many people come about the premises during the week; but for others who are only around on a Sunday, or house-bound, it is harder to have a sense of what is going on.

We would like to do better at involving those of our eldership who remain active but are not currently on the Kirk Session, without losing the benefits of the – still relatively new – streamlined structure.

We have specific circulations that we will maintain, e.g. to the elders, those involved in Baseline, Explorer parents etc.

We plan to continue to hold the face-to-face opportunities to share together and exchange ideas, such as at the periodic Kirk Session 'coffee mornings' with illustrative boards, and the Q&A and discussion groups at the 2015 Annual

Meeting. The weekly Prayer Update is being maintained and refreshed, Facebook kept current, the website updated from time to time, the weekly 'loop' for the services kept lively and informative, and occasional 'verbal' announcements made before our worship begins. We plan to maintain all of this recognising that any communication reaches some, but not all, and not always all at the same time.

**1.12** Any other **actions/goals/aims** you would like to share?

Response:

Adjusting the balance between pastoral and missional/engaging with society

Refining NEWDAY (keeping the Ministry Areas (Nurture, Evangelism, Worship, Discipleship, Administration, Youth) but reviewing to ensure they cover what is needed e.g. possibly add communication and being clear how the DML role fits)

Developing new patterns of leadership to share ministry still more

Shaping the Vision (January/February 2013 & KS Away Day March 2014) – taking things forward (includes some redevelopment of the premises, possible counselling service, enhanced café experience etc).

**While we seek to continue to develop during 'the vacancy', we will review our plans with the new Minister, adjust them as appropriate, and take them forward together.**