

# Brightons Parish Church

Scottish Charity Number SC001385

Appendix to Parish Profile

Appendix 3:

Extract from Superintendence Report to Presbytery in  
September 2017 following 5-yearly visit in May 2017

## **SUPERINTENDENCE COMMITTEE REPORT 5<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **DELIVERANCES**

Presbytery receive the report

#### **B FIVE-YEARLY VISIT TO BRIGHTONS PARISH CHURCH - MAY 2017**

1. Commend the Minister and Office Bearers for their flexible and inclusive approach to worship.
2. Encourage the Minister to continue to seek ways in which Study Leave might be helpful to his ministry.
3. Commend the congregation for the breadth of activities that are available within the church for all age groups, encouraging interaction with the community.
4. Commend the congregation for their support for, participation in and development of prayer groups and for leading worship in appropriate situations.
5. Note the increasing number of homes to be built in the area and commends the office bearers for their positive foresight in their approach to this development and their thoughtful and prayerful consideration of change in general.
6. Give thanks for the clear targets expressed by the Office Bearers for the future development of the congregation and its presence in the parish and community, particularly in relation to considering new ways to "do Church."
7. Encourage the Office Bearers in their planned development of a Stewardship Programme.
8. Give thanks to God for all that Brightons Parish Church does in His Name.

#### **B FIVE-YEARLY VISIT TO BRIGHTONS PARISH CHURCH - MAY 2017**

##### **VISITING TEAM**

Mr Arthur Priestly (Larbert West) – Team leader, Rev Ian Black (Minister Emeritus, Grangemouth Zetland), Mrs Isabelle Patrick (Falkirk Trinity), Mr Eddie Colliar (Grangemouth Abbotsgrange).

##### **MEETING WITH MINISTER, TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 6:30PM**

Murdo Campbell has been Minister at Brightons since 2007 and this has clearly been a very successful ministry. Murdo answered the prescribed questions, indicating that he was aware of the Church of Scotland's provision for pension, financial assistance and housing loans, but noting that to provide the same pension in his retirement would cost him considerably more under the new arrangements than under the old scheme. He noted too that pastoral support was available to him both from the central church and from the Presbytery of Falkirk, including contact with other members of the Braes Fraternal. On the subject of Study Leave, Murdo stated that he was aware of the facility but, while recognising its potential value, he did not have any plans to use it at the present time. He is regularly reminded by his Kirk Session of the existence of Study leave and encouraged to use it. Murdo feels that the administrative skills of members of his Kirk Session outweigh his own efforts and he is well supported in that area. In terms of a Vision for the next five years, Murdo feels that securing the assistance of a youth worker would be valuable, and that they are considering a financial stewardship programme as well as improving their online presence. Murdo feels thankful to have around him a gifted and able team with whom he gets along very well on the whole. There were no private issues which Murdo wished to discuss with the visiting team.

##### **MEETING WITH KIRK SESSION AND DEACONS' COURT, SAME EVENING AT 7:00PM**

The Team met with the Kirk Session and Deacons' Court together. There was a good turnout and most office bearers contributed to the discussion. The office bearers confirmed that they had been involved in compiling the answers to the questionnaire.

##### **WORSHIP**

Morning Worship takes place each week at 11:00am and Evening Services monthly from September to June, sometimes led by different groups within the Church. Other Services are held at appropriate Seasons or to recognise specific organisations or groups. Separate Youth Services were held in the past and although these are not taking place currently, they may be explored again in the future.

There are rotas for members of the congregation to be reading the Scripture lesson, leading the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession and giving the Youth Message.

No difficulties have been experienced with the Sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion is offered "formally" four times a year (morning and afternoon Services) and Home Communion is also offered in appropriate cases.

### **OFFICE BEARERS**

There are 37 Elders (10 female, 27 male) and 16 Deacons (9 female, 7 male) with an age range from 35 to 80+ overall (but skewed to the upper ages). The absence of office bearers in the younger age groups has been noted and is being considered. Not every elder carries out the same duties and the particular gifts of each individual are taken into consideration to allow them to serve in areas where their strengths contribute to the work being carried out. With the exception of those elders who have health or other problems or commitments, each elder has a district to care for. Individual Elders are involved in groups covering Worship, Stewardship (including Social activities), Discipleship, Education, Outreach or Pastoral Care. There is an acknowledgement that they are short of younger people who are able to take on the commitment of eldership and they are working to encourage them to do so while recognising time and family constraints which are experienced in today's society.

Office bearers view the National Church as an Institution but see the local church as the Body of Christ and his family in this place. Asked for words to describe the church they came up with "people / link / care / relations / Murdo / community / outward looking."

### **CONGREGATION**

At the end of 2016 the congregational roll stood at 623, and showed a small but consistent reduction over the last few years of which the office bearers are aware. Having said that there is also a consistent flow of new (and transferred in) members, but, as with most congregations, the dominant factor is the significant number of deaths of members. Over 200 children are involved in the work of the church in some way, and they are well catered for, but there can be no reliance on any suggestion that these children will stay within the church as they become adults. About 42% live outwith the parish boundaries. There were 20 funerals last year and 4 weddings.

There are a large number of groups operating within the congregation including a crèche, three departments of the Sunday School, FLAIM (S1-S3), Waitforit (older young people), Boys' Brigade (three Sections), Girls' Brigade (three Sections), Holiday Club, Pre 5s, Friendship Plus (older members and residents of care homes etc), Fellowship Groups (five), C of S Guild (62 members), fortnightly Prayer Meeting, and Friends of Jesus (adults with disabilities).

There are three paid members of staff: the Pastoral Assistant, the cleaner and the organist.

The Team were impressed by the Young Leaders Programme which runs as part of the Holiday Club and by means of which 8 of the young folk who do not qualify as fully fledged leaders are encouraged to participate in the running of the Holiday Club. This fosters a transition from attendee to potential leader within the Holiday Club set up and is to be commended as a very worthwhile initiative.

There is also a Choir of 23 and a Praise Group of 41 who are well known for their concerts throughout the district.

Asked how God had blessed the work of the congregation, the list included the growth of the pre 5s, the Friends of Jesus, the Friendship Plus Group, children positively encouraged to stay on into teenage years, stability of ministry, sound finances and many others using the skills and talents of members of the congregation in the service of the Church. The Prayer Life of the congregation is strong with multiple opportunities to meet together for prayer, including "taster" sessions to encourage people to take part in a "non-threatening" way.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Form SG11 (2017 version) had been completed satisfactorily. There is a Safeguarding Panel in place to assist the Co-ordinator and they are monitoring the training needs throughout the congregation.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

The list of organisations and groups above adequately demonstrates the extent of opportunities for Christian Education across the congregation and outwith that number and reports provided to Session following elders' visits specifically include reference to the subject. Clearly the answers to the question on office bearers' commitment to personal growth and maturity will vary from individual to individual, but office bearers participate in Services and undergo training and attend groups and conferences to further their understanding of the Christian faith, including bible study and prayer.

## **MISSION**

Brightons Parish church is situated fairly centrally in an area with lots of new housing and more to come, and it offers a range of spiritual outreach to the community at many levels. HMP Polmont Young Offenders Institution is also nearby and the congregation have grasped the need for support there through their own efforts and supplementing the efforts of other groups. Members of the congregation are also active in The Cross coffee shop and drop in, near the church, and in visiting St Margaret's Church of Scotland Home. Members also volunteer and support Falkirk Foodbank and the congregational A Place at the Table project which supplies food to local families experiencing poverty. There are, in the parish, care homes, a large Primary School, a Secondary School, two Community Centres, a large Tesco, and the local railway station. The list of missionary involvement projects carried out directly or through the involvement of some members is much longer but it has been truncated for the purposes of this report. The "Bright Lights" Congregational Magazine is produced quarterly and delivered to homes by the elders.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE**

Congregational finances have remained relatively stable and viable over the last number of years but this has been brought about by good financial management and the congregational income has not significantly increased. Efforts continue to promote giving by Standing Order and the use of Gift Aid. Regarding other aspects of Stewardship, a "vacancy list" has been established, highlighting staffing needs across the organisations, groups and functions within the congregation in an effort to encourage participation in such groups, and also encouraging regular attendance at Church. The last formal Stewardship Programme was conducted before 2007. The "vacancy list" helps to mitigate the effects of the absence of such a programme.

## **FABRIC**

Buildings consist of the Church (c.1850), the Halls (c.1980) and the Manse (c.1970), effectively on the same site. All buildings are kept in good order and all essential work from the last property survey has been dealt with. Routine inspections are carried out at least annually by the property committee, as required by the Church, and professional help employed as needed. A group of members meets twice a week to carry out repairs within their capabilities. The Church and Halls are almost fully occupied by congregational activities and there is little opportunity for use by external organisations other than those in which the church is a stakeholder. Local Primary Schools use the premises for end of term Services and class visits and the Halls are the emergency evacuation point.

## **FUTURE PLANNING & VISION**

The continuing demand for house building in the area is recognised by the office bearers and they have discussed the possible strains which that may put on the eldership in terms of pastoral and bereavement support, on demand for accommodation and on other local facilities such as Schools and Medical Practices. Office Bearers are aware that the current Presbytery Plan allows them to call a minister without restriction, but they are aware of the situation of other local Church of Scotland congregations and the possible need for support at some time in the future. The Session

noted that they could not depend on “family succession” and that the congregation needs to reach out to those who are moving into the area. They are considering a proposal to employ a youth worker at some time in the future in order to touch the lives of the many more young people who will reside in Brightons and the surrounding “villages”. They believe that they should prepare to be “surprised and challenged” by change but if they do not face up to these situations they will be “denying their belief in God’s love, care, protection and help for those He loves and who trust in Him.”

Specific aims for the next five years include:

- Increase and enhance the prayer life of the congregation, seeking God’s direction and having Him as a reference point for all that they try to do.
- Expanding the range of how they “do Church”; recognising the need to be a church in the community; being in the community rather than waiting for the community to come to them.
- Carefully managing the God-given resources they have – their Minister, people skills and time, space and facilities and money. Employing good stewardship of all God’s gifts, including the great wealth of experience which many members carry with them.

### **CIVIL LEGISLATION**

The Deacons’ Court and Kirk Session keep up their knowledge of the requirements of civil legislation through material sent from the Church’s offices, General Assembly and Presbytery. Procedures are all documented and relevant notices clearly displayed. The Fire Safety Officer has carried out audits and an evacuation plan is in place. One of the members is qualified to conduct PAT testing. Provision is made for disabled access, and for those with hearing and seeing difficulties, including ramped access, appropriate toilet facilities, hearing loop systems and spaces in the sanctuary for wheelchairs. The projection screens in the sanctuary also display large, clear, understandable icons to help people follow what is happening during a Service. Office Bearers are well aware of their obligations and responsibilities under Charity legislation and have recently received a presentation on this subject..

### **MORNING WORSHIP, SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 11:00AM**

The main diet of worship is within the Church at 11:00am and on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May, this was led by Mr Priestly, Mrs Patrick and Mr Colliar, all of whom took part, with Rev Ian Black giving the message. The attendance was probably over 150 together with an excellent turnout of enthusiastic children, from babies to teenagers present for the first part of the Service. There was a strong choir who began with an Introit and led praise along with the organist. Mission Praise is the main source of hymns, supplemented from elsewhere as appropriate. There is a Praise Band employed at appropriate times during Worship and adding to the feeling that we were participating with joy and enthusiasm in offering praise to the Lord. The busy-ness of the congregation was reflected in the intimations on the pew leaflet and a well-attended social time for tea and coffee followed the Service.