

Church of Scotland Kincardine and Deeside Presbytery

LOCAL CHURCH REVIEW

for

Stonehaven Fetteresso Church

March 2016

Minister: Rev Fyfe Blair

Review Team: Mel Griffiths

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Date of Congregational Visit: Sunday 23rd March 2016

A Congregational Review was undertaken for Fetteresso Church Stonehaven in January, in accordance with the requirements of the Act Anent Local Church Review 21st May 2011.

Review Forms LCR 1, 2 and the Congregational Plan, along with Statistics for Mission provided a range of information. This information is offered in the Appendices.

The Congregational visit consisted of: -

- Attendance by the visiting team at a Sunday Worship service led by the minister.
- Shared fellowship with the congregation after the service in the halls.
- A meeting with the congregation, with time spent in conversation around those aspects that matter most to the congregation and Session.
- A meeting with the Kirk Session (This was held without the minister being present).
- A formal meeting with the minister in the Manse.

Recommendations from the review are contained on Page 24 of this report.

Fetteresso Local Church Review

Kincardine and Deeside Oversight

Preamble

2012 marked the 200th Anniversary of Fetteresso Church in its current building.

In the past 10 years the congregation has continued to see changes - whilst declining in membership, it has perhaps seen a greater growth in those attending. Alpha has been run over these years and continues to be a useful mission tool for the congregation's witness. Training courses have been offered in evangelism and other courses such as a Marriage Course, Parenting Course, Bereavement Griefshare course, etc. There was a change in minister (2009), as well as the coming and going of people, which in turn has brought about adaptive approaches to the shape of how the congregation operates. We are blessed to be able to build upon ministries that have worked for so long. Present transitions; while asking fundamental and hard questions continue to build and adapt to mission context today, as previous ministries have.

As of the 6th June 2010, the church is administered in accordance with the terms of the Deed of Unitary Constitution. This change was made to support and release the potential for ministry and mission.

Changes have taken place within Stonehaven with the forming of a linkage between Dunnottar and South; St James Episcopal has become vacant and is likely to remain so for the future; and City Church South has opened a church plant at Mackie Academy.

Over the last 5 years, the congregation has continued seeking to realise their mission vision. Due to a variety of factors impacting on congregational life there have been significant periods of '*transitions*' which have led to changes in leadership. In particular, there has been a continued move to organise mission; key ministry areas being - Pastoral Care, Discipleship and Mission, Hospitality, Children and Youth, Finance (Stewardship).

Positively, the congregation has made fantastic responses to needs that have enabled them to better face the financial and ministry challenges. While there is a decline in numbers in membership, continued growth is seen in attendance at worship and new people of varied ages have come to worship and then into membership. In addition, the Session has seen changes in leadership roles including that of Session Clerk and Treasurer and the other various teams.

We took the decision that we needed to refresh our leadership, something that has not been done for a considerable number of years. We incorporated the younger families into the body of elders. This allowed some of our existing elders to retire after many years of service. The change has had a positive impact in our church life.

In 2013/4 due to unforeseen issues at the rear ground of the hall, a major project was developed and undertaken. The hall was out of use for a year. A leadership team worked hard on all aspects of this including seeking funding. Even with substantial funds sought, a significant financial cost remained on the congregation. Matters were clearly and deliberately presented to the congregation for this project, highlighting that the work undertaken was more than within the larger financial aspects of the congregation's life. A giving day was held and subsequently much to the astonishment and delight of the leadership team they managed to clear that debt. To date, the Kirk Session has begun to seek to re-dress their deficit from the hall Project and the ongoing funding of the Project among children and youth. In September 2015, six Sundays were focused around the Kirk Session's vision and action which presented a realistic picture of the needs and ministry of the congregation.

We still found ourselves questioning some areas of life and ministry, but we have been greatly encouraged that the leadership we have been blessed with at this critical juncture, as well as the congregation, has remained faithful and responsive to these changes. In particular, the congregations' financial response was outstanding. We initiated a two-stage fundraising campaign in November of 2014, which sought to pay both for the costs of the hall (which had been covered up to that point by running down of reserves and a loan from the church of Scotland), and to cover our running costs into the future, (including the continuing employment of our Youth Worker). The congregation gave very generously – and both fund-raising campaigns achieved their targets.

In 2014 we were accepted as one of the projects across Scotland. *Scientists in Congregations, Scotland* is a new grant programme funded by the John Templeton Foundation that seeks to explore the interface of contemporary faith and science, and to foster a much deeper and better-informed conversation between scientists, clergy and congregations. Our project was **Hearing the Word, Seeing the World:** ‘Creation’ in Christian theology and in contemporary science. Our programme involved a range of speakers to engage in conversation and run a Creation Cafe for further discussions. We also had an artist commissioned for 7 art works and a musician compose a new congregational song. A book publication of reflections and more is being explored.

Far & Wide celebrated 20 years mission in the town in 2014.

With the adoption of a Data Protection Policy across the congregation, Session has initiated a review of the Communion Roll. Letters have been sent out twice and a final check on individuals will be held in 2016 which may well see a reduction to our Roll.

In our strategy update 2015 we have fulfilled in some key areas what we had hoped to achieve. Other things have re-directed our focus and things we could not have dreamt of have happened and are part of the fabric of our ministry and mission. We enjoy also vibrancy in worship and have continued to see new people of various ages come and join us.

The time has been one in which as a congregation and leadership we recognise a need to discern all that was unfolding. Importantly, rather than rushing ahead and trying to fill gaps, we prayed, we had conversations, asked questions and took time to piece things together and discover the way.

The road travelled has taught us of late to walk in faithful obedience together and to not be afraid to ask the hard questions in working towards realizing our mission vision.

Current Status - Our Mission and Vision

	Goal	Outcome
Worship Both short term and medium term goals met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday Mornings and evenings to continue to develop worship and participation: e.g. a list of available people to lead prayers in services as required. Worship leadership to train for evenings. (Short) • Preaching: in the first instance begin to gather and train a small group in a preaching ministry for evening services. (medium) • Explore and develop Communion – in the mornings to have all ages at the Table reflective of importance of whole congregation and our ethos. Consider the possibility of Communion available Sunday evenings in a simple format. (Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship takes place at 10.45am each week. We have been developing an inter-generational portion in worship each week with occasional all age services. The basis for this is ‘sticky faith’ across the generations. • We have moved to a season pattern for the evening services - 6pm from around October to Easter then 7pm Easter to October. • 6 forms of liturgy (evenings) form a rhythm over the weeks. • participation in worship- we now have a number of Service leaders and also a small group of preachers has been trained and are involved each Sunday evening and occasional morning services. • in the morning services all ages gather at the Table, this happens every 2 months. In the evenings Communion is available in a simple format once a month.

	Goal	Outcome
Discipleship and Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to encourage and help people into small groups and promote the Gathering model. Develop a communication strategy to promote Gatherings. Aim to establish a second Gathering. Develop and train new Gathering leadership that can also extend into other areas of the church. Have activities of service opportunity. Work alongside minister in preaching questions for Gatherings to use even seasonally). Organise opportunities for fellowship e.g church weekend away, celebratory events, guest speakers, etc. • Develop a format and delivery of Welcome Café and Explore. In time to develop a small team around these areas that help newcomers towards membership. (Short-Medium) • Contemplative Prayer: review of space/location and timings – will adjust in August to 45min Monday afternoon (first Monday of month) and 3 Tuesday of Month 1hour. Location/ space yet to be decided. • Continue to offer Advent, Easter/Pentecost retreats. Look at widening this as last Pentecost retreat. Explore and develop a men's retreat opportunity. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gathering model was reviewed and ceased fulfilling a season of encouraging people in discipleship. A new small groups ministry has been created. Several new groups have begun. • 2 Church weekends away have been held at the Nethy Bridge Activity centre. • Welcome Cafe format has been honed and links better with Alpha. The Cafe brings in newcomers and all who have committed in membership via Certificate or Special resolution. Alpha offers a springboard to exploring membership of the congregation further. • Contemplative Prayer runs regularly in homes with shared leadership. • Retreats Advent and Easter ongoing. Iona pilgrimages every 2 years. • No men's retreat developed, but a Women's Ministry (2014) conference is now being run open to other churches in the area.

	Goal	Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7: establish a cycle for this prayer over the year. Specific focus in each e.g. late August/early September prayer over Stonehaven and for congregation ministry and mission. Suggestion that throughout the year each month has a focus for prayers. This will involve liaison with various teams and groups. • Move Sunday 10am prayer to 6pm as the weekly time for prayer. Make use of different methods of prayer to keep this fresh. Hold in the Board Room. (Short) • Offer some prayer ministry training for having a pool of people available to lead prayers e.g. intercession to healing. (Medium) • Continue to create opportunities to encourage relational evangelism through Messy church, etc. Offer Alpha Course in church and Youth Alpha in Mackie Academy with possibilities of running these in other venues. Build team around this area. Continue to offer support for Drug proof your Kids. Consider the Parenting Course. Host with other churches a wider messy church summer event. Look at Advent/Easter outreach events. Liaise with other team areas as necessary. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional seasons of prayer, e.g. Lent have been held. Due to capacities we have not planned as regular cycles. • Prayer time moved to 6pm. With changes to evening patterns of worship and wider congregational transitions this will be reviewed. • As part of Sunday services people are involved in prayer leading. In addition, the evening services offer prayers for healing using Iona prayer circle format. In 2016 we will add a prayer stations liturgy. • Alpha is offered each September in homes. • Drug Proof your Kids continues. • Parenting Course is offered once a year. • A new Mum's and Bumps is being offered in 2016. • Through Far & Wide, a Listen Well foundation Course was run in November 2015. Further courses will be offered in 2016 with Listen Well Scotland.

	Goal	Outcome
Pastoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Pastoral care policy. • Engender care across the congregation. Strengthen the welcome teams through training. • Broaden the Tuesday Focus programme and build the team. • Create a small team of suitable gifted people to work with the minister in bereavement visiting and follow-up. • Maintain Sunday bus and driver training. • Establish celebratory aspects of care with card, etc. • Explore the options to establish a group to support and care for those with learning disabilities. further similarly for those who struggle with depression and mental health issues. (Short - Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Policy is now in place. • Welcome Team ministry is monitored and a conversation is being hosted to review this in early 2016 • A good team serves Tuesday Focus around a programme. • A small group work alongside the minister in bereavement visiting. A training is to be held early 2016 for adding to the group. • Sunday Bus continues and is monitored. • This and flower ministry ongoing. • A group has started - The Haven and run monthly throughout the year. This has good relations with the wider community and is highly regarded. • No group regarding depression or mental health. However, Heart for Art (Crossreach) project started engaging and showing compassion for those with Dementia and their carers.
Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday School (Jigsaw) • Family events - engage and work with families in planning/organizing events for kids/families beyond church every 4-6 weeks. Messy church to be held monthly and a special jamboree with other churches. (Short) • The recruitment of a Parish Assistant with specific role with children and youth ministry and mission. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jigsaw and now Fuse for older children is provided weekly on Sunday mornings. • Messy Church was reviewed and has become Friday fun church. • Sub and supersonic groups have ceased. • 2 new midweek groups started in the past 2 years - Ignite and Impact for upper Primary and Secondary pupils. • A worker has been employed and this is under review in relation to future funding. • To develop work in this area a project 'Generate' has been developed. This encompasses congregation, schools and community links.

	Goal	Outcome
World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek possibility of a link church and explore other options for furthering our world perspective. • Offer materials to help educate and raise profiles of need, etc. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to capacities this team ceased to run and we are looking to host a conversation on world mission in 2016. • Meantime, we continue to have some aspects of world mission continue and we do still engage in world matters.
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Sunday coffee roster, etc. Team building with volunteer training evenings on specific topics and practicalities. • Involve and give opportunity to men's role in hospitality. • Host occasional fellowship opportunities for the congregation. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership has changed and they continue to develop and monitor all aspects of kitchen needs, etc. • A man now leads this team.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is vital to envisioning the whole congregation. We recognize the need to vastly improve both internal and external communication. (Short - Medium) Internal - Sundays ;Web; Session updates ;Team areas news / challenges ; Between ministry areas • External - Web – how; Mearns Leader / STV new web page with Church of Scotland being launched. May help expand our mission. • Roll- quarterly mag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bulletin is now offered weekly. It also includes prayer sheet updates. It is available online. • Following Session meetings an A5 news update of the essence of the meetings is provided inside the bulletin. • The web page has had problems. We have had ongoing conversations with Sanctus Media and a new web page should be launched early 2016. This will help internal communication in addition to external. We have given careful thought to how we communicate and language we use externally as we develop the new web site. • We ceased our news in the Mearns Leader and opened a Facebook page. For some generations this is the best means fo communication and we are learning to use it more effectively. • While some attempts have been made at an easy Mag format to go out to the Roll membership it has not been sustainable.

	Goal	Outcome
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to put in place leadership (Eldership) with leadership qualities and gifts, passion that enable the church's ministry and mission activity to develop in a manner that also reflects the diversity and age range of the congregation as a whole. (Medium) • Identify ministries that require representation Identify potential leaders in key areas. Include age diversity in considerations Redefine the role of the elder and communicate Consider leadership roles from former Board members. • Consider if at some of our Session meetings we ought to specifically spend some part, in certain meetings as we start not only in prayer, but reflecting and considering what eldership/ leadership is and to learn and grow, to encourage and build up one another as leaders. • Explore possibility of participating in Lead Academy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • This process was begun and completed in 2015 with the appointment of new elders. A lengthy process of conversations sought to explore adaptations that would best deploy leadership for our present needs and as we brought new elders on board. This included much of what was outlined in 2011. These stalled and while new elders have been ordained and serve we have not yet addressed all future matters of leadership in adaptation to capacities and context. For instance, team areas without conveners to co-ordinate the team oversight of ministry and mission areas to best use of leadership time and energies. • Annual retreats permit Session to take time in fellowship as well as to prayerfully discern ways ahead and critical aspects of our ministry and mission. • We did not pursue Leadership Academy.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing list and begin rolling programme of review and refreshing list. • Undertake the necessary steps towards the new PVGA system. • Put in place a Safeguarding team, rather than one person. (Short-Medium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review takes place. • new PVGA is being implemented. • an additional member was added. With this person moving away we are seeking a new member.

The following is a report on a Session Retreat held in September 2015:

Navigating the reality of Change

At the Session retreat in 2015 (September), we undertook a conversation to begin to move towards action. We considered the changing environment of both our wider context and that of the church today. A range of factors such as trends affecting us as a church as well as other internal factors gave us a wider picture of the realities of our environment for ministry and mission.

We then used Luke 10 to explore mission, including a sermon series -['Impossible talk, Impossible walk: the life we are called to']. This challenged us to learn to trust God and do some things differently.

The Session has now begun a process that will run throughout 2016 to consider key strategic conversational aspects not only as a Session, but also to engage with those in the congregation who are interested, by hosting cafe style conversations. These will be formed around Welcome, World Mission, Prayer, Communication, and Community engagement. The aim is to gather information and insights together so as to inform discernment and decisions for future action in the key areas identified.

1. Life of the congregation

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?**

Morning Services:

Generally follow the format below:

Intimations & Invitation to Worship

Songs: x2

Prayer of Adoration and confession (& Lord's Prayer)

- ☐ *Worship Journey: teaching on various aspects of faith, life for children, families, all ages.*

SONG: [children leave before reading]

Reading:

Sermon/Talk: Engage the story

Offering (Choir sing)

Thanksgiving & Intercession prayer

SONG:

- ☐ [occasional stewardship in action slot for sharing stories]

Sending: Hear now this call to service....

SONG:

Blessing

- There is organist and a choir each Sunday (approx.20); small worship band used early worship (3/4 in group); praise band occasional mornings and/or at celebration Sundays. Plans now for some of youth beginning to be part of worship band mornings.
- Participate in rest homes Edenholme and Clashfarquhar 2 X month.
- Other worship pattern during Advent retreat, Holy week morning and ecumenical evening services. Occasional Pentecost services
- We have been developing our morning worship. Recent shifts have been to operate with an inter-generational approach early on in the service. This has meant adjustments to communion and baptism wordings and participation. `Always a work in progress.

Evening Service

Styles vary. In January 2016 onwards we will add another format - Prayer Station.

- Also a range of options in evenings with variety of band, solo, etc.
- Use of projection of songs and other liturgical responses, video or artwork for reflection, etc. is used. Good sound desk and equipment.

Range of involvement of gifted folks musically, inclusive of younger folks too. Some lead prayers, we have been developing and building up service leaders to serve mainly evening services each week (and mornings occasionally). Also training of preachers is in progress and we have 6 available to share the evening preaching slot.

Examples of Evening Service Style

- ☐ **Celebration Service** – Mostly worship songs – prayers, reading and a short talk.
- ☐ **Reflective Service** – Introduction talk - Contemplative Reading/Prayer – fewer Songs.
- ☐ **Table** – Songs – Talk – Communion.
- ☐ **Healing** – Songs – Talk – Healing Prayer (Iona circle).
- ☐ **Youth Led** – Similar to Celebration service – but designed & led with members of our various Youth Groups.
- ☐ Prayer Station

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 to start to become Christians?**
- **Communication;**
- **Anything else you would like to tell us?**

- As a congregation we regard each person as being a witness and seek to encourage them in relationships/friendships offering encouragement through services and sharing stories to making available likes of Alpha course. We also see additional ministries as exercising a witness to what the Gospel is in the ways we show compassion and care. Eg pastorally and groups such as Heart for Art, The Haven and the like.
- We have brought together our Discipleship and Evangelism teams into one team who co-ordinate Discipleship and Mission. This seeks to improve the means that enables transitions into small groups and wider congregational life when people finish Alpha.
- We seek to maintain visibility in the town by participating in a range of community activities, for example, handing out Easter eggs in the Market Square during Holy Week. We also maintain a church website with up to date information about services and events.
- We seek to engage with the youth of Stonehaven through Project Generate. This is a Youth outreach project with an evangelistic aspect in its scope in schools and community.

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?**
- **Are you involved with school or other chaplaincies?**
- **In what ways are you involved with social issues?**
- **In what ways do you share responsibilities with community groups or agencies and/or mission partnerships at home or abroad?**
- **Anything else you would like to tell us?**

- Pastoral care is overseen by a team who co-ordinate the various parts of ministry - Welcome on Sunday mornings and bus, Flower and visiting, The Haven (for those with learning disabilities), Heart for art (dementia), bereavement visitors. We do not have elder districts. We did have a contact and care system. In recent years we moved this to encouraging care across the congregation recognizing that this like any other means is not perfect. We are currently putting together a housebound/elderly list for visitation with a view to possibilities of small groups and others, having a more strategic role and approach.

- Response to the needs of the parish is made through members in various ways:

- We also have Far and Wide. This is a very successful charity shop which works closely with Social Services to support those in need in Stonehaven.
- We were active in support of flood relief efforts in 2012-3.
- We have a bereavement group support the minister in care around grief.
- We have shared responsibility with Pillar for an allotment project. The Haven works in relationship with other agencies; Heart for Art is aligned with Crossreach.
- We host a Mothers and Toddlers group 3 times a week.
- We maintain mission contacts with missionary in Laos, India Village Ministries, Riverside trust working in Romania.
- A number of fundraising activities are carried out including Christian Aid, coins for Africa and Church of Scotland projects such as Syrian refugees.

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

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

- Creche, Jigsaw and Fuse (Sunday children’s ministry), and midweek youth groups (Ignite and Impact).
- Resources for these activities are sourced by the group leaders – and include both bought in material and internally developed material.
- Weekly prayer notes are produced to encourage people to pray for the needs of the congregation.
- UCB notes are made available. We have folks who produce reading notes in house encouraging personal devotion. We offer regular prayer diary, have run seasons of prayer, a prayer gathering each week and contemplative prayer 2x a month am and pm groups.
- Personal prayer and reflection is also supported in a wide range of groups, large and small – for more detail see notes under “Fellowship” below.

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 tell us?**
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- Each Sunday there is opportunity over coffee/tea in the hall. There are a range of ways we have encouraged people gathering to share meals in homes, e.g. during Lent.
 - Outwith worship people meet in a wide range of groups. There is a very successful group for Young Mums (STOP)
 - There are roughly 10 regular home group/bible studies. We hold regular women's ministry events "Fill my Cup", which are attended by 60-80 people.
 - There is a men's groups which goes on regular walks.
 - There are prayer groups of various kinds – including a monthly "contemplative prayer" meeting.
 - We have begun to hold Saturday morning "Café Conversations" – to discuss church issues with interested members of the congregation – this was launched in 2016 – with a conversation on "Welcome".

2. Congregation and Wider Church

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

- **How would you describe your relationship 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 tell us?**
 - **Tell us about Ecumenical relationships**
 - **Tell us about any partnerships you have with the World Church**
 - **Tell us about your involvement with organizations like Christian Aid.**
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- **We have a good working relationship and have several people involved in committees of presbytery. A local reader also helps cover across presbytery.**
- Minister serves on Joint Emerging Church Group - a Ministries council involvement. Within this there is particular involvement on the Pioneer Ministry Training Group. He also serves with Place for Hope working in conflict transformation work.
- Ecumenical relationship with local Catholic and Episcopal and Baptist churches. Separately, via Far and Wide committee.
- We have partnership with CMS in SE Asia and links via 2 members to a mission involvement in Romania.
- We participate in Christian Aid week each year. We continue to support Fair Trade through promotion and our own purchases.

3. Resources – people, buildings, money

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 tell us?**

- **Minister, Parish Assistant – Children & Youth, Administrator, Cleaners for hall and church, Organist, Church Officer (presently vacant)**
- Through staffing team each employee has a line manager. Training is encouraged as necessary. They undertake all appraisal, etc.
- Minister now takes regular study leave annually. Other training such as first aid for some staff and CPD for Project worker is also a part of contract.
- There are a large number people who participate in teams, which coordinate the ministry and mission aspects and are involved in the whole life of the congregation. Making room for others is always key.

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

- **How are your premises used and when was the last full inspection?**
- **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 tell us?**

- Facilities are all well used by the congregation in its ministries each day. Occasional outside lets are granted where we have a relationship.
- The sanctuary is fit for purpose with us being able to move chair and adjust to suit the particular service or use such as Haven, Friday Fun Church and like.
- The office is undergoing a move to relocate upstairs. Storage is also now being addressed.
- A new property plan is being undertaken by the team. A new convener has just been appointed and this is a work in progress.

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 tell us?**

- Currently the work is financed mainly from congregational giving.
- Stewardship focus has been undertaken annually. In 2015 it was scaled up recognizing the demands and crises we faced arising primarily with the rear hall matters, but also departures of some people from the congregation due to C of S decisions on same-sex or otherwise. In 2015 we had 6 Sundays focus on stewardship - vision and Action.

4. Presbytery Plan

Presbytery Plan – A Plan for Presbytery 2012-2022

- The Plan for Presbytery interim steps for your congregation and forward conclusions are as follows: Unrestricted Tenure.
- The mission priorities and suggested partnerships are:
- *None within the Presbytery plan as dated.*
- How do you see the above being worked out?
- Anything else you would like to tell us?

There is a recognized need that with wider vacancies and adjustments that between ourselves and Dunnottar-South there are pressures on local ministry. There is a potential need for some form of additional ministry that primarily ministers in the rest homes and provides support to the large number of funerals across all 3 congregations. This would be supportive of ministry but also seek to advance ministry among the elderly. The form of this we would like to consider options.

5. Communication

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 us?

- It is printed on the weekly bulletin and on the web/Facebook page.
- Session updates are provided following meetings through an insert to the regular bulletin.
- We have a website, utilize Facebook, have a Sunday bulletin on paper, also available online; there are PPT notices roll each week on screen. Recently we have undertaken Bulletin extra is an additional means using video news update and will place this online weekly when the new website becomes available.
- We use the above means to advertise, as well as posters in local locations and seasonal invites e.g. Christmas.

Review Findings

Our initial meeting with key members of the Kirk Session proved to be useful and indicated that considerable thought had gone into the planning of the visit to the congregation.

A clear plan of action had been thought through and after discussion the following format was agreed:

- Attendance of a service of worship on Sunday 13th at 10:45 am.
- Informal meeting with groups of church members after the service.
- A brief meeting with the Kirk Session on its own directly after that meeting.
- A working lunch with the minister at the manse.

Various other items of interest were offered and subsequently submitted.

It also became clear that the Kirk Session had already walked a long road in planning for the future for which they must be commended.

The Review Team then attended morning worship on Sunday 15th march at 10:45 am and would like to append the following impressions:

Worship Service

The congregation proved to be a lively mix of all ages including folks from The Haven. Youngsters shared in the first part of the service and it was evident that they enjoyed the actions songs; coming up to the front to share in the worship.

The atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming and there was a real buzz about the place with open rapport between those leading worship and the congregation.

Children were very much part of the worship experience and were clearly much at home in the church environment.

Worship on the day included traditional as well as contemporary music with organ, guitar, keyboard, vocals (and drums ?); although we have been told that a variety of worship formats are used especially during the evening worship session with various members of the congregation sharing in the preaching, and we understand that there is consideration to formally attest them at Presbytery level.

Preaching by the minister was thought provoking and tied in with the Lenten season.

Worship was further enhanced by the choir rendering an anthem during the uplift of the offering.

We noted that whole families attended worship together.

Congregation

At the end of the worship service the congregation retired for refreshments in the hall and the Review Team had an opportunity to meet with various groups which provided a valuable insight into the dynamics of the congregation.

Members spoke warmly of the various initiatives and programmes run by the church and commented on how much it meant to them.

Folks expressed the opinion that this was a People's Church.

The refreshment break proved to be a real family affair.

One of the team took the time to meet with the Sunday School and was suitably impressed with the facilities provided for this vital ministry.

At the same time it became clear that the Youth worker proved to be a valuable asset, working not just with young folk at the church but also within the schools as well.

Session

A short meeting was held with the Kirk Session where a number of issues were discussed and clarity sought.

It was heartening to see a blend of senior and young elders working well together.

It was opined that the decision not to adopt elders' districts had had a positive impact on the take up of the eldership.

A frank exchange was held over this decision and how it influenced the care of the lapsed in the congregation.

The Kirk Session noted that the issue of Elder's District had been dealt with in a previous ministry in 200/1 and was therefore not a key issue in reflections in recent years.

Minister

The visiting team retired to the manse to enjoy a luncheon provided by Gillian the minister's wife; which was greatly appreciated.

She noted her contentment within the life of the congregation and her freedom to exercise her own gifts.

Over lunch the team had the opportunity to explore something of the minister's vision and ministry within the congregation.

He appears to be well content but carries a heavy load in terms of funerals.

He also confirmed that he makes an effort to take time off from a very busy schedule and enjoys vacation breaks.

He is commended for taking Study Leave to nourish his soul.

He is also to be commended for giving space to members of the congregation to exercise their gifts.

General Comments:

As can be seen from the above, this is a very busy and lively congregation with much to commend it but there is a danger that busyness could also be its Achilles heel.

1. The Review group wish to commend the minister and Kirk Session for the welcome they received and the attention to detail given to accommodate their visit.
2. Presbytery commend Fetteresso church for the evidence of careful planning in its mission.
3. Presbytery commend Fetteresso church for the many programmes and initiatives put in place.
4. Presbytery commend Fetteresso church for its ongoing discussions on outreach to Stonehaven.
5. Presbytery commends the minister for his labour of love and his commitment to encourage the membership to exercise their gifts.
6. Presbytery encourages Fetteresso church to always root all its programmes in prayer.
7. Presbytery commends the Kirk Session for the work done on refurbishment of the hall and for creating space for the youngsters to make their venues their own.
8. Presbytery finds the congregation in good heart.

Recommendations:

1. In light of the decision to adopt an alternative model to Elder's Districts in earlier years and entrust this outreach into the parish population, it may be wise for the Kirk Session to reflect whether an elder or another with suitable gifts should be set apart to oversee this work because so often 'everyone ones work becomes no one's work.
2. Presbytery encourages the Kirk Session to find ways to reach out to the lapsed in the congregation by identifying those who have gifts as pastoral visitors; this being a perennial problem for every parish.

3. We would draw the attention of the Kirk Session to the perception that there are some in the Guild who feel that they are forgotten and further note that there may be other groups who may feel the same.
4. We welcome the fact that the ministry of the minister and his family are deeply appreciated and would encourage the Kirk Session to continue to make the care of the manse family a priority in its life and work.
5. We would encourage the Kirk Session to allow for times of fallowness when the Spirit may minister to those so heavily involved in ministry.
6. We would encourage the Kirk Session to have exploratory conversations with Dunnottar l.w. South in respect of effective outreach in Stonehaven.
7. In view of the heavy work of parish funerals and nursing homes the Kirk Session is encouraged to think creatively concerning additional part time support.
8. Fetteresso Church is encouraged to continue to transition and adapt as they seek to mobilize the whole congregation for ministry and mission.
9. Fetteresso Church is encouraged to continue its initiatives in youth work and to sustain the financial commitment for the work.

Session Response to the Oversight report

General Comments

“It feels to me as if the review has focused mostly on dissecting the past and recognising and consolidating the present strengths of our Church, when I had expected it instead to also identify our weaknesses and challenge us in them with the focus very firmly on our future. I would be interested in the review team’s thoughts on our weaknesses and their input on improving in these areas as well as how they feel we need to move forward as a Church.” (A comment from one of our younger elders).

Overall we feel that, although the report says some very positive things about our church we would like it to have a greater focus on future direction in areas for ministry and mission. In this spirit we would like to suggest the following amendments to the findings and recommendations of the report.

The Findings

There were a few minor points where it was suggested that the wording of the findings could be altered:

- 1) Several Elders felt that the comment regarding elder’s districts did not fully reflect what was discussed. One sample comment: *“We adopted a strategy not to continue with visits. The reason for this is that our communication with those who are part of the church is good and it was proving to be poor value to be chasing after people who only wanted to be country members. Our strategy is one of mission where we are devoting our energies into servicing our adherents, fellowship and outreach to the poor and needy.”*)
- 2) In the section on “Minister” we noted the comment about the feelings of the Minister’s wife, and understand that it was positively intended, however we were not sure if a comment of this nature was appropriate in this document.