

Birse and Feughside Church

Parish Profile of Birse and Feughside Church | 2018





Introduction



A community path leads from Finzean School to the Church and village.

A New Challenge

Birse and Feughside Parish Church, in the Presbytery of Kincardine and Deeside, has been granted permission to call a minister on a 50% basis, that is 20 hours per week.

This is a new challenge for us as a congregation, but one we are excited about. The congregation has been for some years very willing to take part in worship, music and pastoral care, and we realise that with a part time minister, it will be important for us to continue to help with the work of our church. We have every confidence that this will be enthusiastically embraced.

Our church statement 'Walking in Pilgrimage, United in Faith' says a great deal about the attitude in our church. We aim to be friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental, searching, and outward looking. We are not afraid of trying new and experimental ways of doing things. We would hope to come to a happy agreement about how our new minister would like to divide their time.

Additional Note

We have decided to depart from the historic and current practice, in order to permit the ordination, induction or appointment of a minister or deacon who is in a civil partnership or same-sex marriage.

History of the Charge



The union of three rural parishes, Birse, Finzean and Strachan, in 1987 created the parish of Birse and Feughside.

Efforts were made in the early stages to enable the three churches, one in each community, to be kept open, but eventually it was decided to be realistic and focus on the geographically central church at Finzean. The sale of Birse Kirk, its adjacent hall and Strachan church, in addition to a successful application to the Church of Scotland's Millennium Grant Fund, enabled us to imaginatively extend and refurbish the church at Finzean. The building work was completed in 2005 and opened officially by the then Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Very Reverend David Lacy on 22nd September 2005.

The communion roll at present is 205 members with a regular worshipping congregation of 30-60.

The congregation is mainly in the 50 to 80 age group, though we do have a number of young families who regularly attend church. Messy Church has brought more young parents to be involved in church life.

There have been no new members by profession of faith in the

last 5 years, but 9 members have joined by certificate. There are 15 members on the Kirk Session, 7 men and 8 women. We are planning to admit new elders soon, which has not happened since 2009. We operate under a unitary constitution so have no congregational board.

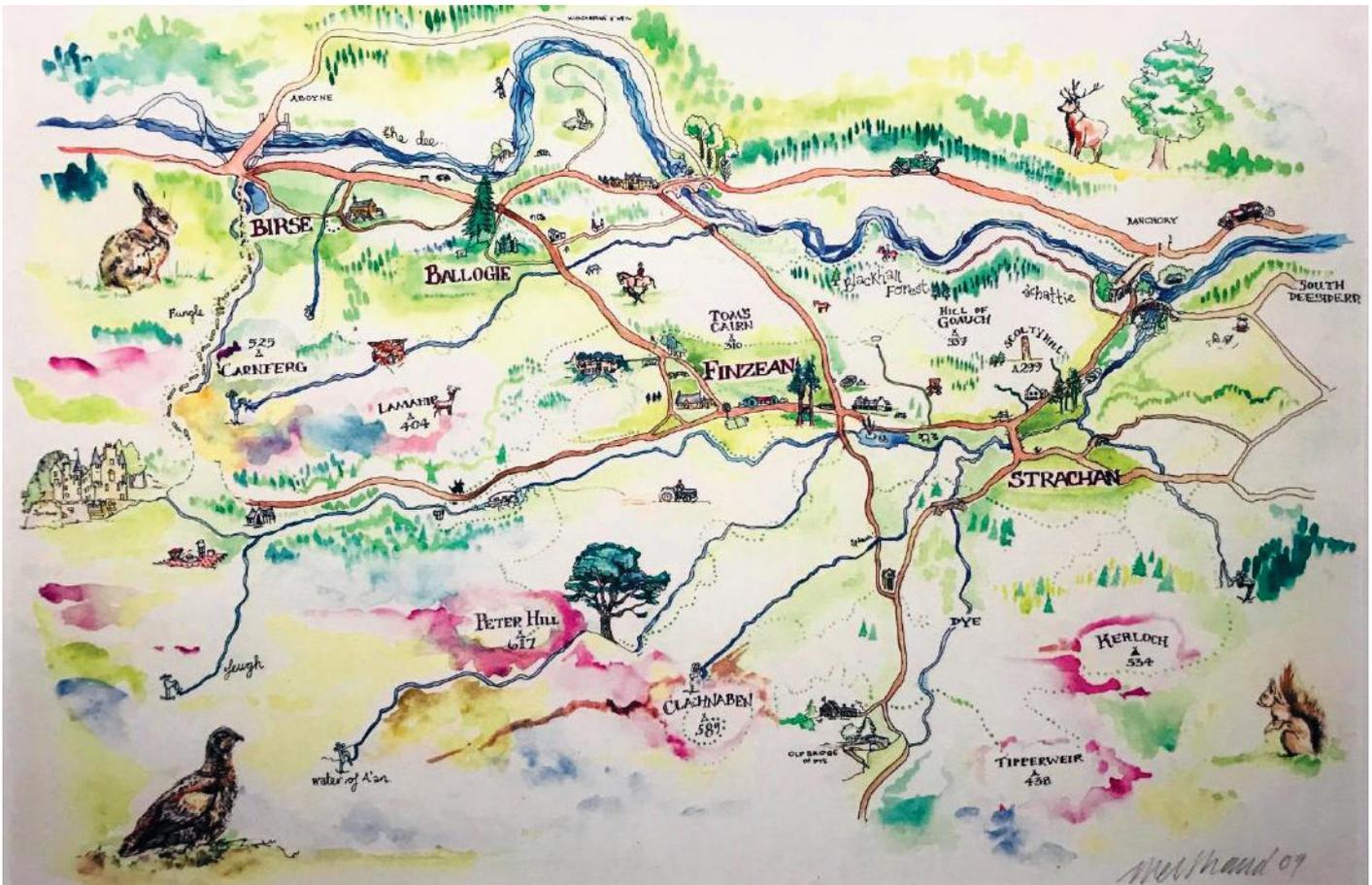
Our vision is to be 'a sustainable church in a rural community, where everyone is welcome and everyone is needed.'

Our mission is to connect the church to the life of the community and encourage members to be involved in all aspects of the community and pray for its needs. We are part of the global church and we are bringing that awareness to the people of the parish.

We aim to be good stewards of our environment and we are an Eco- congregation and a FairTrade place of worship.

We are a worshipping community, secure in living out our Christian Faith.

Now our focus will be how to make part- time ministry work for the congregation, the parish and for the new minister.



Birse and Feughside Parish. Image reproduced by kind permission of Mel Shand



Community Profile

Our Community

The Birse and Feughside Parish is an area of some 140 square miles on the south side of the river Dee between Banchory and Aboyne. The river Feugh joins the Dee at Banchory.

The population is approximately 1,400 with 480 households. The principal settlements are Birse, Ballogie, Finzean and Strachan. They retain their unspoiled rural character, but have grown in recent years with considerable new building, particularly in Strachan. There is now a good mix of young families, some new to this area, as well as more established families, born and bred here.

Lying in glorious countryside, there are many small farms, forestry and upland moorland.

The location of the parish means that there is easy commuting into Aberdeen, some 25 miles away from Finzean. Many people living in the parish work in the oil and gas industry and young people can attend the college of education in the city.

Aberdeen is a vibrant multicultural city with a population of over 220,000. It has a rich cultural heritage with two universities, Robert Gordon's and Aberdeen University.

There is a range of museums, an art gallery, theatres, concert venues, shops and restaurants.



Village of Strachan

There is a good bus service into Aberdeen from Banchory.

The local towns of Banchory and Aboyne have good facilities for shopping and recreation. There are medical practices in Banchory and Aboyne, and both have community hospitals.

There is a swimming pool and other excellent sports facilities at Aboyne Community Centre, and a swimming pool at Banchory Academy shared by the school and community.

There are village halls at Strachan and Finzean and a small hall next to Birse Church. All are used for various community events, exercise classes etc. on a regular basis.

There is a busy farm shop at Finzean, serving coffees, lunches and afternoon teas, retailing fresh and frozen produce, books and other gifts, and displaying art by local artists.

There are well- respected secondary schools in Banchory and Aboyne, and a local primary school in Finzean, as well as local nursery schools.

The previous minister was chaplain to the local primary school and part of the chaplaincy team at Banchory Academy. She also visited the local nursery at Ballogie (roll 24)

The school uses the church regularly for well attended end-of- term services, plays and concerts.

The parish has active community councils, and many sports, musical and social groups.

Despite being in a rural area with a relatively small population, this is a very lively place to live.



The Tom's Cairn Trail Race is held each year, starting and finishing at the Church, and in aid of our local school'



A morning service and Junior Church are held each Sunday at 11am with additional services during Holy Week and at Christmas.

Messy Church began under our previous minister's leadership and has continued monthly, run by members of the congregation. It has proved very popular within the community.

Our style of worship is welcoming, inclusive, varied and supportive, varying from traditional services, to Songs of Praise services organised by our musicians and the congregation.

Our priority is to demonstrate Christ's compassion and love in action.

Junior Church joins the congregation when Holy Communion is celebrated, usually on the first Sunday of the month.

There have been seven baptisms in the last five years.

The minister is assisted by our musicians, readers from the congregation, a rota of leaders for Junior Church and two members who prepare projection material to support the services.

We also have two worship teams drawn from the congregation who continue to take occasional services. During the vacancy we have been fortunate to have services led by a retired minister, Rev Bill Wallace, lay preachers, and our Interim Moderator Rev Dr Alan Murray.

A weekly newsletter is prepared by a team from the congregation and distributed at the Sunday morning service. This includes the order of service and other information about the church and parish activities. There is a short 'Fireside Reflection' written by members of the congregation.

A computerised multimedia system with screen, projection and links to adjoining meeting rooms was installed in 2005 and is routinely used to support our worship and singing.

We are supported by two talented musicians on digital piano/organ and violin and sometimes harp. There is occasional participation by members including children, playing guitar, mandolin, violin and the Finzean ukulele group which is based in the church. Various percussion instruments are keenly taken up by the young people for their special hymns!

Music is a very important part of our church life and worship. We embrace a mixture of modern and traditional music, bringing a vibrant and joyful atmosphere to our services, often commented on by visitors.

All-age worship occasions mean that Junior Church stays in for the whole service and the worship style is modified to include the young people. This happens particularly on Christmas day, Easter day and Harvest Thanksgiving, as well as our Christingle Service.

Junior church is always welcomed for the first half of our regular morning service, but leave before the sermon.

Birse and Feughside Church usually joins with other churches on Deeside for the World Day of Prayer.





Pastoral Care Christian Education Ecumenical Context

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is considered an important part of our ministry, and our dedicated team of four people makes every effort to provide all the support they can to the Minister, the Manse family and to the parish.

Elders and members of the congregation are encouraged to inform the Minister or any member of the team of any Pastoral Care issues. Pastoral Care meetings, which the previous minister attended, are held bi-monthly. The team keep in regular contact by e-mail. Hospital and home visits are carried out by the team, supported by the Minister.

Twice monthly, a small group provides music to the residents of Praesmohr House in Birse, the only residential care home in our parish.

On average our Minister officiates at 9 funerals per year. One of our congregation has trained to conduct funerals.



Ecumenical Context

In Aboyne and Banchory, there are Church of Scotland churches, Catholic churches and Scottish Episcopal Churches. There are also bi-monthly Quakers meeting in Banchory.

The congregation for several years joined with the 'United Aboyne Churches' during Christian Aid week and had very successful big tea parties, raising a good sum of money for Christian Aid and enjoying meeting people from other churches and denominations.

Christian Education

An annual meeting is held at the beginning of September for all volunteers who take part in Junior Church and Messy Church activities. The purpose of this meeting is to plan the calendar of events and themes for the year.

5 children regularly attend Junior Church on a Sunday morning, and 20 to 30 youngsters attend the Messy Church sessions.



A Messy Church activity in progress.



The traditional Easter Breakfast, held before our Easter Sunday Family Service.

World Church and our links with the Wider Church Finance and Stewardship



The view from the Manse garden.

World Church and our links with the Wider Church

In 2008, we set up a twinning partnership with Icariri Presbyterian Church in Kenya. Since then, three successful visits have taken place- two when we hosted our Kenyan friends, and one where 3 members of our congregation visited Icariri and were warmly embraced by their very active church. We are in regular contact and are looking to strengthen the bond between the two congregations.

Throughout the year, we support a wide number of charities.

There is always a collection during Christian Aid Week and our Harvest Thanksgiving service supports Tearfund.

We Have a food bank collection in the church which is delivered to 'Instant Neighbour', a charity working with people in Aberdeen.

Recent Lent Box collections have supported the leprosy Mission Scotland (2015) The World Mission build a House in Nepal (2016) and Charlie House and Shelter (2017).

We have also supported Mary's Meals and the Shoe Box appeal distributed by Blytheswood Care.

We have very close links with a local charity 'The Forget Me Not Club' which supports people with dementia and their carers throughout Deeside. A weekly musical afternoon with teas is held in the church. There is also an annual Christmas party for 'Forget Me Not' in the church.

The church is used for concerts given by the Deeside Orchestra and by visiting chamber musicians.

Finance

The church continues to be financially sustainable having made surpluses of £5,058 in 2017 and £1,588 in 2016.

The church is extremely fortunate to have a substantial portion of the annually assessed Ministry and Mission contribution paid through endowments as follows:

Ministry and Mission Assessed	2017	2016
LESS:		
Endowments	15,033	14,798
Glebe Rent	844	720
Vacancy Allowance	6,340	
Net Ministry and Mission	9,956	17,654

Stewardship

The church participates in the Church of Scotland Stewardship Campaign. The most recent event focussed on the talents and abilities available in our congregation.

Environment

We are a FairTrade Church

The church achieved Eco Congregation status in 2010.

Staffing

There are no staff employed.



Church, Manse and Halls

Our refurbished church has a main sanctuary with flexible seating and full audio-visual services including an induction loop system. The adjoining multi-purpose meeting room also has audio visual services, and there is a vestry, fully equipped kitchen and modern cloakrooms/toilets.

There is underfloor heating throughout, making the building very comfortable and cosy.

The flexible nature of the whole building makes it ideal for a variety of uses both for worship and in the wider life of the community.

Adjacent to the church is the fine Victorian manse, now modernised and providing comfortable accommodation.

The granite and slate building sits in a stunning location with impressive views of Clachnaben and the other hills of Deeside to the south.

On the ground floor there are two public rooms, a large kitchen, utility rooms and a toilet.



Upstairs there are five good sized bedrooms, a bathroom with a toilet, and a separate shower room also with a toilet.

Heating is from an oil-fuelled boiler. There is an open fireplace in the lounge.

Outside there is a large firewood/coal shed and a single timber garage.

The large garden has mature pine trees on three sides and red squirrels, deer, and many garden birds including woodpeckers can be seen. Rabbits help to keep the grass trimmed, but for a keen gardener, installation of appropriate fencing and the addition of a polytunnel would offer great scope.

We have a property convener who will liaise with the minister about any issues or difficulties encountered with the manse. We aim to be a very open and helpful congregation in this respect.

Web Links

Visit our website at www.birseandfeughside.org

