

# **CARLOPS PARISH CHURCH**

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**The report of a working group appointed by the Kirk Session,  
approved and adopted by the Kirk Session**

**July 2007**

## CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	3
Purpose and intent	4
Church attendance and services	6
Congregation and community	9
Supporting deserving causes	13
Environmental work	15
The church building	17
Finance	21
Implementation and monitoring progress	24
Recommendations	27
Appendix: Model syllabus of services and church-related events	28

## FOREWORD

A proposed development plan was presented to Carlops Kirk Session on 18 June 2007. After considering it carefully, the Session welcomed the proposed plan and offered advice about how some elements might be improved. This text of the plan reflects the Kirk Session's advice and the amendments it suggested, and the Kirk Session has approved it for adoption, implementation and publication.

This plan was commissioned by Carlops Kirk Session and addresses the environment of Carlops in its specifics, but it sits in the context of the linkage that embraces the three churches of Carlops, Kirkurd and Newlands, and St Andrew's, West Linton, and the intention is to implement it in a manner that contributes to the linkage as a whole.

The linkage supports all three congregations and offers opportunities for exchange of experience, mutual support and synergistic working in partnership. Each church in our linkage has particular experience and strengths; if we share that experience and pool these strengths, we will enhance our capacity to serve our communities.

Questions or suggestions about this plan may be directed to the person charged with co-ordinating its implementation: Rennie McElroy, Marfield View, Kitleyknowe, Carlops EH26 9NJ; telephone 01968 661 042; email [rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com](mailto:rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com).

## PURPOSE AND INTENT

The congregation of Carlops Church is small, close-knit and energetic. Members take pride in the welcome that the church extends to people and in its openness, flexibility and informality. Such characteristics can benefit any organisation but should be accompanied by a clear understanding of what one is trying to achieve, and how.

At Carlops however, people would ask in informal conversation “Should we ...?”, “What’s happening about ...?”, “When will ...?”. Some people were unsure about how to put issues on the church’s agenda. A few elders felt that they lacked a full understanding of their role. The discussion at the Eco-congregation assessment in October 2006 showed that the congregation had no confidently shared view of what work and projects should be tackled in future and how these might be managed.

Together, these factors indicated that there was no explicit view of future plans, or of strengths, opportunities and options, that everyone understood and shared. This was undesirable because lack of congregation-wide discussion about plans denies the church ideas about what might be done, and a perceived lack of communication and involvement might impair people’s commitment. Moreover, organisations that we might approach for support will expect us to have a coherent forward plan and be able to explain how any one project contributes to it.

A proposal to the Kirk Session in December 2006 suggested that an explicit plan be drawn up and such problems (their existence confirmed by comments made during subsequent consultation) addressed. The Session responded by appointing a working group to propose a development plan for Carlops Church: Jo Blackburn, Janet Burke, Rennie McElroy (convenor), Sarah Macquaker, Gavin Marshall, Anna Woolverton.

The working group met five times to discuss issues and generate ideas. It consulted widely to ensure that people knew about its work and could contribute to it. The Eco Group and the Property Committee were represented on the working group and were invited to suggest ideas and comment on early proposals. Draft objectives for the plan were published in the church *Newsletter* and readers were invited to comment and suggest how they might be achieved. A meeting was held at which the congregation discussed ideas and offered suggestions. A leaflet recording what emerged from these exercises was distributed to everyone known to attend the church and again, comment was invited. The Treasurer was consulted, and advised on financial issues. The convenor of the working group discussed work-in-process with the minister on two occasions. This plan reflects almost all that was said in consultation.

The convenor of the working group studied the minutes of the Kirk Session for the period May 1996 to December 2006 and affirms that the plan neither omits issues discussed by the Session during that period, nor runs counter to decisions taken by it.

The working group was driven by good intention, honest analysis and commonsense. Anything which offends against individual self-esteem or Kirk protocol (in which the group is not versed) does so unintentionally and the group’s convenor apologises unreservedly. The working group had three broad intentions in preparing the plan.

1. To improve communication with and within the congregation, especially about our church's development needs and policies, and their enactment
2. To offer an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses, and of the opportunities available to us, along with objectives for the future and a bank of ideas to help us achieve them
3. To create a clear sense of direction about the church's future work, to channel the energy and talents of our congregation into activities in which people wish to participate, and to establish simple but robust structures for implementation and monitoring progress

The last of these will require a degree of formality but will make policy explicit and process transparent, improve communication with and within the congregation, and so address the uncertainties identified above. Everyone will know what we are trying to achieve and how well we are doing. Everyone will know how to put issues on the church's agenda, how to become involved and how to make the contribution with which they feel comfortable.

The plan addresses six areas: church attendance and services, congregation and community, supporting deserving causes, environmental work, the church building and finance. It offers objectives and an ideas bank of activities for each of these areas. People can select from or add to the ideas bank at any time, so the plan is flexible and hospitable to new ideas, needs and opportunities. It is an *à la carte* menu of options, not a list of things which must be done. Equally, there is no question of rejecting some desirable activity because it is not in the plan.

We do not propose that existing activities should be withdrawn, but that additional things should be done and that clearer procedures should support what we do. Some of what is proposed is being done already; the working group knows that and wishes to publicise and encourage the good that is being done. Some of what is proposed *may* be being done already, but no one told us so and no one on the working group was aware of it.

Much of what is proposed may seem self-evident; almost all of it is relatively simple. But the key to success is doing simple things well and in a cohesive manner. What is novel is that the plan identifies these simple things, makes them explicit and suggests how they might be implemented, managed and monitored.

Three over-arching objectives influence the entire plan and therefore, all that we do.

1. To attract more people into the life of the church, to services of varied pattern and to other events which benefit individuals and the community
2. To serve the community and demonstrate that the church is an active, caring organisation which offers a warm welcome, intellectual and spiritual nourishment, and a range of activities in which all may participate
3. To communicate and promote our work actively and to inform the congregation and the community about policies and opportunities, and how to become involved

## **CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND SERVICES**

### **Situation analysis**

The data reported below are not scientific and may contain a small number of errors, but they are the best available short of a protracted survey and are reliable enough to support decision-making. They derive from the observations of four people who have attended our church some 40 times per annum for between eight and 40 years. A frequent attender is one observed to attend church six or more times per annum; an occasional attender is one observed to attend at least once in two years. The data exclude children and those observed to attend only the Christmas Eve carol service.

Our congregation is enthusiastic and able, but small. Church attendance on Sundays ranges from 15 to 30 people, averaging about 23. Viewed over some ten years, a total of 32 people attend church frequently; 69% of these are over 60 years old. The 2007 Communion Roll lists 69 people; 23 of these attend frequently and 12 occasionally. A further nine who attend frequently and 16 who attend occasionally are not on the Roll. Sunday School meets about three Sundays out of five; attendance on any one Sunday rarely exceeds five; about 12 children attend in total. There is no Youth Fellowship.

These numbers give cause for concern but conceal an interesting positive feature: the ratio of average Sunday attendance to size of Communion Roll at Carlops (0.33:1) is 14% higher than the average of a straw poll taken recently across five other, larger churches (0.29:1). Nevertheless, absolute numbers are low and deserve attention.

The age profile of our active congregation is statistically similar to that of the parish as a whole. There is a significant gap between congregation and total population in the 31-50 years age band, but that gap narrows as one moves upwards through the age bands. The majority of new recruits to our congregation in recent years have come from the 51-60 years age band. Despite the natural instinct to target youth, that age band may represent a more fruitful target for any recruitment campaign.

Our congregation is a close-knit, hard-working group, within which the capacity and will to make additional contributions in kind are high. All who attend the church, even occasionally, comment favourably on the warmth of welcome offered, the fact that a range of people lead services and the quality of music and singing. We should build upon such strengths to attract more people to the church and we should give clear people opportunity to contribute to what we do. In particular, we could increase the variety of services and we could be more proactive about outreach, inviting people to attend church and church-related events.

### **Objectives**

1. To offer a greater variety of models of church service
2. To inform people about the pattern and themes of services

## Proposals

### To offer a greater variety of models of church service

In making these proposals and championing their potential value, the working group acknowledges that developments in this area must respect the fundamental purposes of the service, the role of the minister as the leader of teaching, and the individual (perhaps differing) views of all who lead services for us, and whose contributions we value. We should proceed in an evolutionary, not a revolutionary manner; possible changes should be discussed, but should not be imposed upon those who lead services. Service leaders should be invited to become involved and consider change, but not instructed to change against their will. In such a positive, tolerant context, we believe that planned, occasional, but regular (six times per annum?) variation in service patterns may enhance worship and attract people to join us.

Members of the working group are not expert in the design of church services but, to illustrate our proposals, we suggest some patterns that may repay exploration.

1. Debate services, where a debate or discussion forms part of the sermon, or takes the place of the sermon. Given the depth of experience represented in our congregation, subjects could range widely, eg
  - 1.1. Christianity – faith and way of living; can it be either, must it be both?
  - 1.2. Faith and the nature-nurture debate
  - 1.3. Science and religion; contradictory or complementary?
2. Topic services, where a talk or opinion piece on some subject takes the place of the sermon, as in the *World Day of Prayer* service; topics might include
  - 2.1. Achieving social justice; the big picture and in personal life
  - 2.2. General Assembly issues (we should want to know!)
  - 2.3. How Christian Aid works; what happens after donation
3. Contribution services, where, in place of a sermon, several brief expressions of experience on a common theme are invited, then the service leader sums up and draws a lesson; themes should be simple, but core-life issues, eg
  - 1.1. Getting involved and making a difference
  - 1.2. Motherhood
  - 1.3. What Carols means to me
4. Nine lessons and carols service, where the model traditional to Christmas is adapted to other occasions, eg Easter, harvest

5. Sung services, devoted to an extended series of hymns on one theme
6. Week-day service, linked to morning opening of the church, or followed by lunch
7. Baptismal roll services: invite all those on Carlops Church baptismal roll, and their families, to a special service followed by lunch
8. Age group services, eg under fives (perhaps linked to Carlops Village Centre's *Babies and beyond*), 8-16s, 25-50s – our weakest adult age band. Some of these could be held mid-week, be based on a specific theme and incorporate singing, stories and activity appropriate to that theme.
9. Joint services with churches in the linkage and other churches

**To inform people about the pattern and themes of services**

10. Ask more people to lead services, try to include women amongst our service leaders and in addition, invite anyone who might be willing to lead services to discuss the prospect with the minister in confidence.
11. Invite members of the congregation to propose themes for services. The working group found it easier to *make* this suggestion than to give it the substance of a list of topics!
12. Publish the themes of services or a group of services in advance, so that people can choose to attend a specific event. We rarely visit a theatre without knowing what is playing; the church could offer advance information to attract people.
13. Explain how service themes reflect the pattern of the Christian year; some know this well, others do not, apart from the major festivals of Christmas and Easter; better information and understanding may attract people.
14. Promote the minister's Bible study groups as an intellectual and spiritual supplement to services. As with services, advertise the themes in advance and invite people to propose themes which interest them.



## CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY

### Situation analysis

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some people in Carlisle perceive our church as moribund and anticipate its near-future demise. People are not always aware that it is the church that is behind some particular activity. More significantly, not everyone has a clear, adequately detailed understanding of what the church does and what it stands for. We need to correct this if our church is to prosper and continue to make its proper contribution to the community.

Our key assets are the skills and experience of our congregation, their caring for others, the welcome they extend and their willingness to work hard. Members of our congregation make a valuable contribution through their everyday work and the way they live their lives. We should recognise this, celebrate it and capitalise upon it to serve the community and increase the number of people who have links to the church.

We need to make people aware that our church is active and energetic, by offering enough activities for participation in them to become an established part of people's schedule and by doing things in which people wish to participate. To achieve this, we should do more and we should publicise what we do better. The church may not do things primarily to gain credit, but if it is to demonstrate that it is alive and active, and convince people of its energy and worth, it needs to receive the credit for what it does.

We need to persuade people that we are engaged in interesting, worthwhile work in several fields, where the common themes are care and service to the community. We need to persuade people that our interests go far beyond what some might view as a narrow practice of religion on Sundays. We could begin by explaining what we do believe, in all its variety. We may do this best by talking to people, explaining our views and motivations, engaging them in a range of activities and enabling them to influence some of what we do. The Christian Aid team and the Eco Group have made a substantial start on such work. Our proposals are designed to build upon that; they embrace the notion that a policy of seeking to attract with variety and openness can and should be balanced by direct canvassing.

We need to ensure that our members' natural concern for others is supported by discreet, reliable communication and information systems that alert us to instances where our support is needed. We know that some of this has implications for confidentiality, but sensitive handling of the issue is better than well-meaning avoidance of it; the key is to obtain the understanding and agreement of the person who is the focus of concern before action is taken.

### Objectives

1. To offer a wide range of activities, some in partnership with other groups in the community and churches in the linkage, thereby demonstrating that our church is active and interesting

2. To extend and publicise our outreach and pastoral work, thereby demonstrating that our church is caring and supportive
3. To make the best use of our members' skills and interests in carrying out the church's work and to help people to enhance these skills

## Proposals

**To offer a wide range of activities, some in partnership with other groups in the community and churches in the linkage, thereby demonstrating that our church is active and interesting**

1. Offer a range of activities in addition to services throughout the year, focusing especially on events that take place in the church and benefit from its particular ambience and facilities, eg
  - 1.1. Question-and-answer meetings for the congregation and the community at large about our beliefs and motivations, addressing such questions as: What *do* Christians believe? Does everyone have to believe the same thing? What *do* churches and their members aim to do? Never tried church and afraid to go? Can *anyone* find value in involvement in the church and its work?
  - 1.2. Discussions led by members of the congregation, preferably in partnership with other churches in the linkage and Carlops Village Centre. Some events might consist of a 20-30 minute presentation, discussion and summing-up; at others, a "brains trust" model could be employed. Topics could include
    - Conserving and restoring works of art
    - Estate management; economic-environmental balance
    - Evolution, research and medical ethics
    - Gardening; fun, beauty, food and environmental responsibility
    - How the Bible was brought together
    - Interesting buildings and relics in our parish
    - Local weather and climate
    - Pharmaceutical research and interest in herbal medicines
  - 1.3. Musical events
    - Organ recitals
    - Chamber music
    - Carols through Carlops; invite individuals and groups in the parish to join in the singing; Christmas reception in the church afterwards
  - 1.4. Dramatic productions, eg
    - *Joseph and the amazing Technicolor dream coat* by 8-14 year olds
    - Nativity play to complement the established Advent garden ceremony
    - Passion play at Easter
  - 1.5. Poetry readings and other literary events

- 1.6. Exhibitions, eg photography, children's crafts, wood-carving
- 1.7. Project with children, perhaps via a Carlops Village Centre workshop
- 1.8. Workshop for children to create an Easter garden and display it in the church
- 2. Publish a syllabus of services and events throughout the year (see Appendix).
- 3. Research and publish histories of, eg the congregation and the church building, the organ, the origins of the Harbour Craig service.
- 4. Publish a new, illustrated welcome leaflet after the church has been refurbished.

**To extend and publicise our outreach and pastoral work, thereby demonstrating that our church is caring and supportive**

- 5. Organise social events to support specific purposes and charities, eg coffee and/or lunch in the decorated church before Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday.
- 6. Open the church mid-week to provide a greeting, information and coffee, thereby demonstrating that it is open, active and welcoming.
- 7. Aim to speak to every frequent attender outwith church at least twice per annum and to every occasional attender outwith church at least thrice.
- 8. Support the minister in visiting the infirm, lonely, needy and sick.
- 9. Visit those who drop out from church to offer help and encourage their return.
- 10. Make sustained efforts to involve people from outwith the active congregation, partly by doing difficult, face-to-face things, like canvassing, partly by showing concern. Target all ages, but note that needs and interests vary with age-group.
- 11. Ask people who come to a coffee event, "If you enjoyed this, why don't *you* come to church on Sunday?" Show them the services and events syllabus!
- 12. Invite a friend to church, perhaps to a special service or other event.
- 13. Visit people who move into the parish to welcome them and invite them to church; involve the minister in such visits.
- 14. Continue the Eco Group's programme of greetings cards and supplement it with personal visits where possible.
- 15. Improve communication by delivering the *Newsletter* to every known church attender every month and throughout the parish three times per annum.
- 16. Refresh the church material on Carlops Website regularly to retain interest and to encourage people to consult it frequently.

**To make the best use of our members' skills and interests in carrying out the church's work and to help people to enhance these skills**

17. List the work and skills needed to undertake the activities proposed in this plan. Create a database of congregation members' skills and what they are prepared to contribute. We have extensive talent and experience; we should record and tap it.
18. Review regularly who does what in the congregation and invite others to become involved, rather than waiting for them to volunteer (which some regard as pushing oneself forward).
19. Encourage all who are willing to contribute to the church's work. Group people by what they are good at and comfortable with: leading services, managing projects, pastoral visiting, playing music, providing transport, serving tea, etc; we need all these skills, and more.
20. Organise a congregational seminar to identify the key characteristics of "the caring congregation"; decide which of these we demonstrate already and consider how we might improve in other areas.
21. Reinstate pastoral visits, involving any member, not just elders, in visiting people informally or inviting them to tea and talk. Reach out to the whole parish; do not restrict those visited to members of the active congregation;
22. Provide more and easier opportunity for members of the congregation to meet and talk to the minister informally, eg
  - Ask him to remain in church after Sunday service more frequently – subject to "fair shares" across the whole linkage and to resolving pulpit supply issues.
  - Publish a time when he would be available (not necessarily at Carlops) to anyone wishing to speak to him on a drop-in basis, perhaps on issues of less substance than would merit arranging a meeting in the manse
23. Help members of the congregation to understand better the difference between a linkage and a union (in Kirk and parish organisation), the relative merits of each, and the criteria and mechanisms by which decisions on these matters are made.
24. Review and update the Communion Roll. 34 of the 69 people listed attend rarely, if ever; some have left the parish. A further 24 people who attend regularly and support the church financially are not on the Roll; we could invite them to join in some capacity. Today, formal church membership and inclusion on a communion roll may matter less than formerly to many people and some find public profession of faith intellectually difficult. We could employ an informal "Friends of Carlops Church" list alongside the Roll, to mark people's support and show that we value them. This would be in accord with an "open table" policy, but we would need to inform people that formal membership controls access to some decision-making.
25. Offer informal short courses, help-sessions and guidelines on such skills as speaking in public, leading discussions and meetings, visiting and conversing, and organising events. These should be optional, available to those who want them.

## **SUPPORTING DESERVING CAUSES**

### **Situation analysis**

We demonstrate care for people in our parish, but our record outwith that community seems less strong than that of some churches. Many individuals in our congregation support charities financially and with work-service, but we do relatively little as a congregation in this field – our Christian Aid work, gift services at Harvest and Christmas, and the Christmas Eve plate collection. Given the attitudes that prevail amongst our congregation, it is unlikely that this is due to lack of caring or will.

Elsewhere, we note the value of engaging with people in the wider community as a way of explaining the church's work, beliefs and attitudes. We could attract such partners readily to this area of activity; our proposals are designed to that end. This area also offers opportunity to work with other congregations in our linkage. They have experience and have enjoyed considerable success in pursuing projects designed to bring practical aid to clearly defined communities; we could learn much from them.

### **Objectives**

1. To maintain and develop our existing linkage Christian Aid work (which should remain our principal charitable effort) and other charity-related work
2. To establish a programme of funding and practical support for selected causes, in our own community and internationally

### **Proposals**

#### **To maintain and develop our existing linkage Christian Aid work (which should remain our principal charitable effort) and other charity-related work**

1. Support our linkage's Christian Aid team in what they do, especially their efforts to extend the door-to-door collection element of the work, which generates 75% of the money raised.
2. Continue to support existing beneficiary organisations with Christmas and Harvest gift and cash collections.
3. Establish closer personal relationships with these organisations so that we may understand their needs better and thus, support them more effectively.

#### **To establish a programme of funding and practical support for selected causes, in our own community and internationally**

4. Contact those engaged in such work in our linkage partners to learn from them. Contribute to their projects and support them in ways that they deem appropriate.

5. Select one local and one overseas cause, project or community that we will support regularly as our “core causes” and try to develop strong, personal relationships with them in the medium- to long-term.
6. Use local knowledge and involve other groups in the community in selecting these core causes, in order to gain commitment through involvement and to persuade others to join us in fund-raising and practical support work. Invite all who express interest to contribute in any way with which they feel comfortable.
7. Focus efforts directly on specific, practical projects, so that our small community can make a worthwhile impact and help a readily identifiable group of people. Sums of money that are small in UK terms can generate a considerable effect elsewhere in the world, especially if delivered directly to carefully selected projects. We should adopt this small-scale, direct action strategy.
8. Focus on apparently simple, but actually strategic, long-term projects such as clean water, basic sanitation and adult female education.
9. For the overseas project, employ the twin town concept to identify and support a deserving community similar to Carlops in, say, Africa, India or south-east Asia.
10. Later, try to arrange for some of those that we help to meet our congregation and community, to share experience with us and assist us to help them more cogently.
11. Prefer this closely targetted approach to contributing to relatively anonymous “big charity” activity (apart from our Christian Aid work, which, as noted above, is our principal charitable effort and must be maintained), where any effect generated by the Carlops input will be unidentifiable. Avoid competing with large, professional charitable support organisations in trying to raise funds for broad aims.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL WORK**

### **Situation analysis**

The working group consulted the Eco Group in preparing these proposals and hopes that they reflect broadly the views of both groups.

The Eco Group has made the congregation and the community more aware of environmental issues. It interprets the concept of the environmentally-aware congregation in a broad manner and makes a major contribution to outreach work. Its work was recognised with an inter-denominational Eco Congregation award in 2006.

This topic attracts widespread interest and support, even if levels of action can be disappointing. We may attract support and partners from the wider community readily if we promote interesting, worthwhile work in this area.

### **Objectives**

1. To be environmentally responsible in all that we do
2. To promote the understanding and adoption of environmentally sound practices throughout the community
3. To contribute to the beauty of the parish, in partnership with others

### **Proposals**

#### **To be environmentally responsible in all that we do**

1. Audit the environmental credentials of all that we do in church, eg
  - 1.1. Use native plants as in-church flowers to reduce “flower miles”.
  - 1.2. Continue to support Fairtrade products.
  - 1.3. Factor environmental considerations into refurbishment plans.
2. Organise cleaning schedules, rotas and work parties to share church cleaning fairly and ensure that major tasks are tackled on a regular cycle.
3. Encourage the use of local plants by organising plant sharing, making seedlings and cuttings available for exchange.
4. Organise a flower festival, perhaps in partnership with Carlops Village Centre.
5. Ensure that Harbour Craig and similar services respect the needs of wildlife.

**To promote the understanding and adoption of environmentally sound practices throughout the community**

6. Publish a statement of the Eco Group's purpose and objectives; launch it at a meeting to which the whole community is invited.
7. Spread the Eco congregation message to other churches in the linkage and the region and encourage them to establish their own eco groups and programmes.
8. Publish an "Eco leaflet" jointly with Carlops Village Centre – a checklist giving practical advice on environmentally sound, everyday living.
9. Establish an advocacy group to lobby MPs, MSPs, councillors, and governmental and other agencies on environmental issues; a standing group could research topics and prepare drafts for discussion and submission to appropriate quarters.
10. Hold a special church service to mark World Environment Day.
11. Encourage people to maintain a local wildlife and eco diary and stage an exhibition of highlights.
12. Host an Eco seminar for south-east Scotland; invite other Eco congregations to participate.
13. Show Al Gore's film *An inconvenient truth* in conjunction with the Pentlands Film Society.
14. Mount an exhibition at Carlops Produce Market highlighting a linkage activity relevant to the local environment.

**To contribute to the beauty of the parish, in partnership with others**

15. Clean and enhance the well at the south end of Carlops, jointly with Carlops Village Centre, Carlops Community Council and Scottish Borders Council.
16. Lobby Parliament, local authorities, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, "VisitScotland" and other bodies to provide adequate, affordable support for groups trying to improve their local environment.
17. Given some success with the previous element, repeat the village litter walk; offer coffee and lunch, and invite Carlops Village Centre to share in the work.
18. Review and extend planting around the church, using native plants where appropriate and being sympathetic to wildlife.
19. Offer improvements to facilities in the "Rock field", in partnership with others in the community.



## THE CHURCH BUILDING

### Situation analysis

The Property Committee believes that a thorough refurbishment of the church should be undertaken as a matter of urgency, for three reasons.

1. It is incumbent upon us if we would value God's work and honour his house
2. It is prerequisite to developing our church's community service and outreach work successfully
3. It is necessary to preserve the physical integrity of the church building

The working group endorses the Property Committee's view. Refurbishment is required for its own sake and is necessary if what is proposed in this plan is to be implemented successfully. The working group consulted the Property Committee about early ideas for the plan; the Property Committee supported these and will reflect them in decisions about refurbishment. The working group hopes that what follows reflects broadly the views of both groups.

The building is a valuable resource which requires active care, management and exploitation. It is structurally sound and well-loved by members, but it is in poor decorative condition. It needs major work to return it to an acceptable standard. The heating is failing; the windows are broken and distorted; the plaster needs repair; the paintwork needs renewal; some furnishings are worn out; there is no audiovisual or information technology provision.

To remedy shortcomings and make the church a welcoming, inspiring centre for the whole community, more is required than can be achieved by patchwork, make-do-and-mend projects. The latter will merely make the repaired and repainted contrast with the worn-out and shabby, emphasising what has not been done. Such an approach will not make the church appealing to regular church-goers or visitors and will not help us to attract people. On the other hand, if we adopt a holistic, whole church approach, no further major interior work should be required for 25-35 years.

In 1996, some pews were replaced with chairs to make the space more flexible and hospitable to different types of event; this has been highly successful and should be extended. At the same time, the interior was repainted, the floor sanded, the light fittings replaced and the felt wall-hanging commissioned. In 2005, the new vestry was opened, improving facilities and resolving long-standing flooding problems.

Nevertheless, a thorough renovation of the main worship space is due and, if done well, will last a long time. Some aspects of the vision expressed here may seem ambitious, but what we do now must be sufficiently forward-looking and imaginative to be hospitable to changing patterns of use and technologies for at least 25 years.

Refurbishment will preserve the building and improve functionality and appearance. These will be enhanced by completing the restoration of the organ; it is a fine

instrument which enhances our services and could be a major asset in pursuing community and outreach goals, but it needs repair and restoration. Together, holistic refurbishment of the building and restoration of the organ will enable the church to host more, and more varied, events, showing it to be a live, energetic organisation that makes a valuable contribution to community life. Both areas of work are necessary and both must be completed within the same period of time.

In addition to enhancing our worship environment and enabling the church to offer a wider range of activities, refurbishing the church will make a valuable addition to Carlops' community facilities, providing a venue where quality of design and furnishing complement and extend the facilities of Carlops Village Centre.

## **Objectives**

1. To make the church attractive, inviting and quietly inspirational, so that regular church-goers and others perceive it as a desirable location for worship and for major family events, eg marriages, baptisms
2. To make the church flexible in layout and hospitable to a range of activities, and thus able to serve as an accommodation facility for the whole community
3. To adopt a design that takes account of the needs of young people as well as adults and adapts readily to changing needs, patterns of use and technologies
4. To implement a quality of design and equipment which reflects the importance we attach to our church, enhances worship, supports the activities we wish to offer and helps us to attract more people into the church's life and work

## **Proposals**

1. We need a vision for the church's appearance, ambience and facilities. This requires professional advice and further discussion with the congregation, so it is too early to be prescriptive about what the church should look like when work is complete. At this stage, no concept should be rejected as unthinkable and none insisted upon as essential until advice has been received and options reviewed.
2. Some works that could feature in a refurbished church are outlined below. These are in no particular order and the presence or absence of any element does not imply a decision already taken. More ideas will emerge as thinking, design and planning progress. Everyone can contribute ideas, but we should not pre-empt the role of the architect by trying to design the refurbished church ourselves.
  - Renew and enhance heating, ventilation and insulation
  - Renew and enhance electric wiring, power provision and lighting
  - Repair the windows

- Renovate the wainscotting
  - Complete the restoration of the organ
  - Repair the plaster and paint the interior
  - Replace the remaining pews with chairs to make the space more flexible
  - Redesign the area for pulpit, communion table, lectern and font
  - Create a new, glazed inner porch to reveal the interior of the church when the outer doors are open and to offer dignified access for weddings, funerals, etc
  - Create a quiet area and small meetings zone; this need not be a separate room
  - Sand and seal the floor, or carpet it
  - Use colour and materials to generate an ambience of warmth and character
  - Give particular attention to the (currently excellent) acoustics
  - Consider what audiovisual and information technology provision would support the target use of the church building, for services and other events, and provide at least the necessary infrastructure, more if and whenever possible
  - Provide proper display facilities, notice boards and storage space
  - Establish an informal library of books on faith, philosophy and life-management
3. The natural complement and conclusion to refurbishment, and an important project in its own right, is landscaping the space between the church and Carlops Village Centre. This should be undertaken in partnership with the Centre's management committee. Engineering, environmental, legal and safety issues should be defined clearly, and objectives for appearance, patterns of use and maintenance should be discussed and agreed. Only then should all of these issues and objectives be used to inform a final design.
4. The Property Committee should lead the project on behalf of the Kirk Session; the process (already part-completed) will include:
- 4.1. Seek ideas from the congregation
  - 4.2. Consult professional advisers
  - 4.3. Visit refurbished churches to gather ideas and learn from their experience
  - 4.4. Appoint and brief an architect to prepare design options

- 4.5. Consult the congregation about design options
- 4.6. Obtain approval from Session, Presbytery, General Trustees *et al* (see also paragraph 5, below)
- 4.7. Architect prepares final designs, specifications and work schedules
- 4.8. Agree contracts and commission the work
5. Drawing upon his experience of refurbishment projects in other churches, our minister has provided this listing of the formal approvals that we need to obtain as design progresses and before work begins:

“Agreement in principle  
     Kirk Session  
     Presbytery  
     General Trustees  
     Department of National Mission  
     Parish appraisal  
     Consultative Committee on Artistic Matters  
 “Planning consent from the local authority, if required  
 “Building warrant  
 “Formal agreement  
     Kirk Session  
     Presbytery  
     General Trustees  
     Department of National Mission  
     Parish re-appraisal”

6. The project must be controlled rigorously; decisions should be considered carefully, but adhered to once taken. We should not tinker with the design after decisions have been made – remember the Scottish Parliament building!
7. If we make design decisions in 2007, we could vacate the church in 2008 for work to be done and re-dedicate a refurbished church in autumn 2008. This timetable is ambitious, but still achievable. While work is ongoing, we could worship in Carlops Village Centre and hold some services in other churches in the linkage.
8. The Treasurer believes that we have sufficient funds to pay for refurbishment, although we will need to regenerate a prudent level of reserves during and soon after such a project.
9. The Treasurer is preparing a financial strategy for refurbishment, identifying costs, targets and activities. The Kirk Session has received a provisional draft of that strategy and an outline budget; they involve drawing upon funds from all of grants, donations from individuals and organisations, fund-raising events and our reserves. The strategy includes plans for regenerating adequate reserves.

## **FINANCE**

### **Situation analysis**

The working group sought advice from the Treasurer about financial matters. What follows represents the views of both the Treasurer and the working group.

The church's accounts for 2006 show a small excess of income over expenditure. This was achieved only because 75% of offerings were made under Gift Aid, allowing us to claim an additional £2,000 approximately from HM Revenue and Customs. Some years have shown a small deficit. This pattern of a small excess or deficit has been established for some time. Deficit budgets are not desirable and have been tolerable only because we can draw upon our reserve funds and the interest they generate to offset occasional deficits.

The Communion Roll for 2007 lists 69 people. 21 people (16 on the Roll plus five others) contribute under Gift Aid and provide 83% of General Fund income. A further 22 people (13 on the Roll plus nine others) contribute almost all of the remaining 17% of General Fund income via open plate collections.

Analysis of expenditure for 2006 shows that 73% of our income was devoted to pulpit supply ie, our share of the cost of the minister and of providing additional people to lead services throughout the linkage. Carlops pays a reduced share of pulpit supply costs in recognition of the number of service leaders that our congregation provides. A further 18% was spent on church maintenance, heating, insurance and our one-third share of manse Council Tax, insurance and maintenance. Thus, 91% of our income was required to cover fixed costs. The books balance, but the amount of discretionary income available to us to devote to work of our own choosing is very limited.

In 2007, we are committed to contribute to the cost of essential repair and renovation works in the manse. In 2007 and 2008, we plan to refurbish the church. We have sufficient funds to cover the cost of these works but will need to regenerate appropriate reserves during and soon after the refurbishment project. The level of reserves to be regenerated has yet to be decided, but good practice in financial management suggests that it be equivalent to between one and one and one half of one year's turnover; this is significantly lower than the level of our present reserves, but will nevertheless require us to engage actively in fund-raising.

### **Objectives**

1. To ensure that funds are managed rigorously and applied to considered ends and agreed priorities, and to maintain prudent contingency and reserve funds
2. To broaden the base of giving, implement a programme of fund-raising through plate collections, appeals and special events, and seek grants actively
3. To keep the congregation informed of the church's financial standing and needs

## **Proposals**

### **To ensure that funds are managed rigorously and applied to considered ends and agreed priorities, and to maintain prudent contingency and reserve funds**

1. Apply good professional practice, probity, prudence and rigour to managing the church's finances and to its charitable and support work.
2. Observe the accounting and financial requirements of the Church of Scotland, HM Customs and Revenue, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator *et al.*
3. Take steps to avoid deficit budgets in other than exceptional circumstances.
4. Ensure that projects are properly specified, planned and managed, and are completed on time and within budget.
5. Maintain a medium term view of relative priorities and apply it to new proposals.

### **To broaden the base of giving, implement a programme of fund-raising through plate collections, appeals and special events, and seek grants actively**

6. Be creative about fund-raising so that it is enjoyable and satisfying for donors and always reaches a little further into the community.
7. Raise funds by appeal to the congregation and to other people and organisations throughout the community.
8. Raise funds by organising events and activities, eg
  - 8.1. Sell a Carlops Church Christmas card, eg
    - Drawing or photograph of the church or of Carlops
    - Photograph of the felt hanging in the church
    - Nativity-related sketch (Sunday School project?)
  - 8.2. Concert of the Carlops Christmas carols, sung in our church by our congregation; CD of concert?
  - 8.3. Organ recital when organ is restored; CD of recital?
  - 8.4. Sponsored walk; Rullion Green to Harbour Craig on 28 November, the anniversary of the battle and the subsequent flight to Harbour Craig
  - 8.5. Sponsored fun run; a point-to-point around local places of interest
9. Monitor grant-awarding bodies and opportunities and seek grants diligently. We should not be diffident about seeking grant-aid. Grants are made available to help organisations achieve certain aims; we should use them to benefit our congregation and community when our policies and needs match the aims of grant providers.

### **To keep the congregation informed of the church's financial standing and needs**

10. Brief the congregation on the financial relationships between Carlops Church, other churches in the linkage and the Church of Scotland. Explain how their giving supports our own projects and the wider work of the church, as well as balancing the books.
11. Explain the implications of the church's charitable status, the benefits and responsibilities that such status brings, and the role of the bodies whose advice and regulations influence it
12. Publicise the benefits of, and promote opportunities for, donating by Gift Aid and by direct debit, eg *Newsletter* article, seminar, informal conversation.
13. Clarify the aims of fund-raising activities (eg charity, outreach, improving church facilities) so that donors can target their giving as they wish and learn more about the work of the church at the same time.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROGRESS**

### **Situation analysis**

What is proposed here will not happen of its own accord; we must put mechanisms in place to ensure organisation and action. No one proposal is intrinsically difficult, but the plan embraces several themes and this creates an apparent complexity. Therefore, we make recommendations for implementation and monitoring progress. The pattern proposed implies some formality, but is inherently simple and satisfies four criteria.

1. Subject to the authority of the Kirk Session
2. Simple yet robust; clear lines of communication and accountability
3. Involves several people; open to all who wish to participate
4. Builds on existing structures; establishes new ones where necessary

### **Proposals**

The plan falls into clearly defined areas. A team of people should be charged with managing and delivering each area. Each team should comprise a leader appointed by the Session and three to five members who are invited by that leader and/or volunteer. An individual may play more than one role if he or she can demonstrate that each role will receive adequate attention. Thus, someone could lead one team and serve as a team member on another.

The Session should also appoint a co-ordinator to integrate implementation overall, support team leaders, ensure communication and a balance of activity between areas, identify new needs and opportunities, and arrange regular performance review. The co-ordinator must be a good organiser with a full understanding of the plan's purpose, good verbal and written communication skills, and the ability to work with others.

The team leader's role is to design and propose a programme of events to the Session annually and, once it is approved, to organise and deliver it. Team leaders will have an interest in and/or experience of the area they manage, and be energetic, organised and able to make things happen, generating ideas and thinking them through to detailed action plans. Leaders will set an example and work well with other people.

The team member's role is to undertake the practical organisation and delivery of events and systems, to ensure that things happen as planned and to work with people throughout the community and the linkage in doing so. Team members need to meet targets and deadlines, and use initiative to get things done; some should be prepared to take personal charge of a sub-area in the medium term.

Existing groups and officers – Eco Group, Property Committee, Treasurer – should manage areas relevant to their sphere of responsibility and activity. If two or more areas have a natural affinity, they should be managed together. If an area has natural



subdivisions, the leader should reflect that in selecting the team. In this context, we propose specific areas, groupings of areas and potential leaders for each of these.

Lest this seem top-heavy, we should explain that we envisage teams meeting three, at most four times per annum to think and plan (some will require fewer meetings); thereafter, people would be authorised and expected to act, rather than meet and talk.

1. Church attendance and services. Services are “events in church” (see below), but worship should have its own place, though communication with those arranging other events is essential.
2. Other events in church (first element of “Congregation and community”), sub-divided into children’s events, cultural and intellectual events, and social events
3. Outreach (second element of “Congregation and community”) *and* Environmental work. These areas are brought together because the Eco Group has a record of interest and achievement in both environmental and outreach work.
4. Congregation involvement and development (third element of “Congregation and community”)
5. Finance *and* Supporting deserving causes. These areas are brought together because both involve raising, managing and targetting financial resources.
6. Church building and refurbishment

### **Proposed work flows**

1. Initially, the Session appoints a co-ordinator and team leaders.
2. Annually, the co-ordinator and leaders prepare an integrated programme for a year and obtain Session’s approval for it; they then have authority to act and are expected to do so without constant referral to the Session.
3. Co-ordinator and leaders agree a balance of activity between areas and deliver a busy, but not overcrowded year.
4. All leaders form a team of three to five people to assist them, so that several people are involved in the church’s work. They explain their group’s activities to the congregation and accept volunteers, as well as inviting individuals.
5. Biannually, the co-ordinator and team leaders report progress to Session.
6. Biennially, the co-ordinator arranges a review of performance, emerging needs and opportunities, by staging an open, critical discussion between co-ordinator and team leaders, and a group appointed by and from the Kirk Session – perhaps the minister, the Session Clerk and two further members.

## **Initial timing**

We believe that the analysis and proposals set out in this plan are critical to our church's medium- and longer-term future and should be enacted with purpose and expedition. This does not mean that we should try to do everything tomorrow! The staged approach outlined below may produce better results.

For timing purposes, the areas delineated may be grouped into three broad elements.

1. Pastoral work focused upon supporting people in the parish, and environmental charitable and financial work
2. Activities in the church; services and other events
3. Refurbishing the church building

The first element is not place-dependent and can be undertaken almost anywhere, not least in people's homes. Therefore, it can and should be begun as soon as adequate plans have been prepared by those who will lead the activity. Such plans should be in place before the end of 2007 and substantial achievement recorded by the summer of 2008.

The second element is intended to attract people into the church, to services and other events. We could run events in Carlops Village Centre, but that would be to miss the point – that the *church* is active, interesting and *open*. Refurbishing the church is prerequisite to success in this area and, as that refurbishment is imminent, we suggest that these activities should not begin until it is complete. We will lose impetus and credibility if we promote a series of events between September and December 2007, then cease activity until September 2008 or later. All this is not to suggest that we do nothing until September 2008 – quite the contrary. The time should be used to plan the first year's activities so that we can start with a flourish when the refurbished church is dedicated and sustain a level of activity through the first few months that will impress itself upon people.

The third element is refurbishment. All analyses indicate that it should be pursued expeditiously. Having decided to refurbish, we should drive the project energetically and ensure that everyone understands that "R-Day" is in September 2008; this includes the Property Committee, the Kirk Session, the Presbytery, the architect, the eventual contractors, those engaged in restoring the organ, and the congregation. In every refurbished church that we have visited, people have said the same thing, "Plan thoroughly and keep your project on time and within budget". Several months have passed since the congregation agreed in principle to refurbish; we should inject momentum into the project and maintain it thereafter.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Kirk Session approve this plan and agree to its implementation, subject to such advice as it wishes to provide and to amendment reflecting that advice
2. That the Kirk Session appoint Rennie McElroy as co-ordinator to deliver the whole, integrate activity and arrange regular, transparent performance review
3. That the Kirk Session appoint the people listed below, each to lead the designated area of the plan, working with the co-ordinator and a team of their own choosing
  - 3.1. Church attendance and services: Brian Watt
  - 3.2. Other events in church (first element of “Congregation and community”): Jo Blackburn
  - 3.3. Outreach (second element of “Congregation and community”) *and* Environmental work: Nan Buchan, Convenor of the Eco Group
  - 3.4. Congregation involvement and development (third element of “Congregation and community”): Rennie McElroy, advised by Murray Campbell, Session Clerk
  - 3.5. Finance *and* Supporting deserving causes: Mary McElroy, Treasurer
  - 3.6. Church building and refurbishment: Janet Burke, Convenor of the Property Committee
4. That, before the end of 2007, the Kirk Session decide whether and how budgets might be developed to assist those managing the plan’s implementation
5. That the plan be published, distributed and promoted to the congregation
6. That a summary of the plan be published on the church pages of the Carlops Website, [www.carlops.net](http://www.carlops.net)
7. That the Kirk Session encourage team leaders to talk to the appropriate people in the other churches in the linkage about the plan, to seek comment, exchange experience and explore opportunities for working together

**APPENDIX**  
**MODEL SYLLABUS OF SERVICES AND CHURCH-RELATED EVENTS**

This is not a proposal, merely a model of what could be done if we hosted “something different” in the church once or twice every month – services on Sundays and other events. The purpose is to demonstrate that the church is active, a place where people are made welcome and where varied, interesting things happen. In practice, there are too many events in the illustration; this would be an overcrowded year!

<b>Month</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Other events</b>
January	Debate service; where a debate or discussion forms part of the sermon, or takes its place	Poetry reading on the theme of winter
February	Joint service with Kirkurd and Newlands Church	Seminar, debate or discussion
March	Mothering Sunday contribution service, with several people saying what mother means to them	Exhibition of children’s handwork, with games and competitions Organ recital; choral support
April	Easter service; nine lessons and carols format	Easter breakfast Egg painting competition Children’s Easter garden Litter walk through Carlops with coffee and lunch in the church
May	Spring thanksgiving service; a parallel to Harvest	Community singing to celebrate spring and renewal
June	Baptismal Roll service followed by a family lunch Harbour Craig service	Seminar, debate or discussion
July	Topic service; where a talk takes the place of the sermon	Fun run; a cross-country point-to-point around local places of interest
August	Debate service; where a debate or discussion forms part of the sermon, or takes its place	Summer concert of organ, chamber and choral music
September	Harvest thanksgiving service	Harvest coffee and lunch in the decorated church on Saturday
October	A sung service of hymns suggested by the congregation and others in the community	Exhibition of drawings, paintings and photographs on the theme of green Carlops
November	Topic service; where a talk takes the place of the sermon	Walk; Rullion Green to Harbour Craig, followed by a service (23 November is the anniversary of the battle and the first such service)
December	Nine lessons and carols service Christmas Eve carol service	Advent garden ceremony Nativity play Advent lunch for produce market Carols through Carlops followed by a reception in the church