



**GUIDANCE NOTES
ON COMPILING
PARISH PROFILES**

**Produced by the
Ministries Council**

June 2016

Church of Scotland

The General Assembly agreed the section in the deliverance on the Report of the Special Commission on Tenure and the Leadership of the Local Congregation that training and resourcing on the content of parish profiles was a crucial part in helping the local church as it worked to discern what its mission should be as part of the work of calling a minister. The Report emphasised that there needed to be a rigour and thoroughness in this process which reflects the intimate connection with the core calling of the Church to be the people of the way in a particular place at a particular time.

Accordingly, the following is offered as an indication of what are the essential components of what should be in a parish profile; the compilation of the parish profile is the responsibility of the Kirk Session, and further information can be found in Act 8 2003 on Vacancy Procedure, available on the Church of Scotland website at

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/6674/2003_act_8.pdf

These notes should also be read in conjunction with the guidance for Kirk Sessions, Presbytery Advisory Committees, and Nominating Committees, which can be found on the Church's website at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/subjects/ministries_resources#interimmods

Please note that the following is a minimum, and charges are encouraged to make it relevant to the local context, and to add further information to offer a fuller picture. It is better to offer too much information, rather than too little, without the profile extending to become too unwieldy.

Where a charge comprises two or more linked congregations, congregations are encouraged to create a single unified profile, where each congregation presents itself, with common core content, rather than two (or more) separate profiles.

A parish profile should have a Contents page, which should include the following;

1. Introduction.
2. History of the Charge/Congregation, including a statement, if applicable, that it has decided to depart from the historic and current practice in order to permit the ordination, induction or appointment of a minister or a deacon who is in a civil partnership or a same sex marriage.
3. Community profile of the congregation.
4. Worship Life.
5. Pastoral Care.
6. Christian Education.
7. Ecumenical Context.
8. World Church.
9. Stewardship and Finance.
10. Staffing.
11. Church, Manse and Halls.
12. Web links for further information.

For further guidance on what each of these sections should contain, please see below.

1. Introduction

Include the reason for the vacancy – retirement/translation/demission/other.

2. History of the charge and/or congregations

If applicable, include a statement that the charge/congregation has decided to depart from the historic and current practice in order to permit the ordination, induction or appointment of a minister or a deacon who is in a civil partnership or a same sex marriage.

- How long has the charge been in existence?
- What are its roots and history?
- Does the congregation have a Vision or Mission Statement? If so, how long has the congregation had such a statement?
- How does the Kirk Session assess whether the vision and/or mission are being lived up to?
- What is the mission context?
- What are the strengths/ needs/challenges for the congregation at this time?
- How does the charge/congregation see its spiritual life – healthy/needing awakened/other?
- What outreach takes place?
- Size of Communion Roll.
- Average weekly attendance at worship.
- Age profile of congregation.
- How many have joined, or begun participating, in the last five years?
- What are the five key points arising out of the most recent Local Church Review (LCR)? If there hasn't been a recent LCR, please consider doing something along the lines of Future Focus (further information from the Mission and Discipleship Council at mandd@churchofscotland.org.uk) or some similar form of church audit.
- What does the Presbytery Plan envisage for the charge beyond this current ministry?
- Describe the basis on which the charge/congregation(s) operate – quod omnia, model constitution, deacons' court/board of managers, unitary constitution.
- Kirk Session and Board/Financial Court:
 - Number of elders on Kirk Session.
 - Age profile of Kirk Session.
 - Gender mix in Kirk Session.
 - What sub-committees of Session operate?
 - How often is the membership of Kirk Session Committees reviewed?
 - When were elders last ordained/admitted to the Kirk Session?
 - Size of Congregational Board, if there is one.
 - What groups or organisations operate under the oversight of the Kirk Session?

3. Community Profile

- Does the charge/congregations regard itself as urban, rural, remote rural, priority area, town, village, suburban?
- What community facilities exist – schools, hospitals, community centres?
- School chaplaincies – current or historical.
- Socio-economic profile.
- What scope is there for workplace chaplaincy in the charge or parish(es)?

4. Worship Life

- What is the weekly pattern of worship ?
 - On what days and at what time does the congregation gather for worship?
- How would you describe the worship style – formal/ liturgical/ contemporary/other?
- What are the priorities in the worship life of the congregation?
- How often is the sacrament of Holy Communion celebrated?
- What is the involvement of children in the celebration of Holy Communion?
- How many baptisms have there been in the last five years?
- What special services take place?
- Who is involved in the preparation, planning and leading of worship?
- Is there a printed order of service?
- Is data projection used?
- What musical resources are used – projection/CH4/ Mission Praise/other?
- Organ/Praise Band/Keyboard/other?
- Is there a regular organist/musician who accompanies worship, or is it a pool of leaders?
- Is there regular all age worship?
- How does the charge/congregation define all age worship?
- Are there joint services with neighbouring congregations, whether Church of Scotland or other?

5. Pastoral Care

- How does pastoral care operate in the congregation?
- How is the minister kept informed of pastoral issues?
- What involvement do elders and other members of the congregation have in this ministry?
- How does the congregation care for the Manse family?
- How many funerals have there been in each of the last five years – both congregational, and parish?
- Are there residential homes where the minister has normally been involved and, if so, to what extent?

6. Christian Education

- What arrangements are in place for Sunday School/Christian Education for young people?
- What youth organisations exist, including uniformed organisations?
- How many children participate in Sunday School or its equivalent?
- What is there by way of Christian Education for adults?
- What other youth work takes place?

7. Ecumenical Context

- Is there a local clergy grouping? If so, are clergy other than Church of Scotland ministers involved? How frequently does the group meet?
- What other denominations are there in the surrounding area?
- Are there joint services?
- What are relations with other denominations like?
- Is there a local grouping of churches together?
- Is the congregation a local ecumenical partnership?

8. World Church

- Are there partnerships with overseas Mission Partners? How do these function?
- Does the congregation have relationships with Christian Aid or Tearfund?
- Is the congregation a Fair Trade congregation?
- How does the congregation/charge engage with the world church in other ways?

9. Stewardship and Finance

- What was the surplus/deficit in the last two years?
- What is the Ministries and Mission contribution?
- Is the congregation/charge participating in the National Stewardship Campaign?
 - If so, which of the three aspects is being explored at the time of compiling this profile?
 - If not, how is stewardship explored and developed within the congregation?
- What were the results of the most recent environmental audit?
- Does the congregation/charge participate in the Eco-congregation programme?

10. Staffing

- Is there an MDS staff member?
- How does the congregation offer administrative support to the minister – is there a church secretary?
- How are church officer duties carried out?
- Are there other locally employed staff?

11. Church, Manse and Halls

A copy of the most recent survey should be available for those who are called for interview.

- Describe the manse, and include pictures: how many rooms, how is it heated, is there a garage, are the gardens manageable?
- Does the congregation have any other property, beyond church, church halls, and manse?
- Please give details of any major issues which the congregation is aware of with regard to property.
- What is the pattern of use of church halls, where these exist?
- How many external organisations make use of the halls, and how are hall lets managed?

12. Web Links

Please provide a hyperlink through to each of the following on the web:

- Church of Scotland Census data on the charge (through *find your local church*, on the Church of Scotland website Contact Us pages – http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/church_finder/)
- Congregational website/s (if any).
- Facebook page, if there is one.
- Twitter feed, if there is one.

You may also find the contents of the following book helpful:

Pedrick, Claire, and Blanch, Su: **How to Make Great Appointments in the Church – Calling, Competence and Chemistry**, SPCK, London, 2011.