

## Stirling : Park Church



Park Terrace, Stirling FK8 2JH Telephone:01786 462400

SC 001414

# Parish Profile August 2021



## Introduction

**Come and Join Us - to be our new minister!**

**Park Church is a new congregation. A new beginning full of exciting opportunities and challenges**

### We Can Offer You

- \* Friendship, fellowship and support from the Kirk Session and members
- \* Commitment to work together to make our new Church relevant in the community, using the faith, experience and talents of all.
- \* A forward looking congregation, keen to adapt and committed to providing practical and active support

### What We Seek from our New Minister

- \* God's calling to be our minister
- \* An enthusiastic spiritual leader and teacher
- \* Willingness to get involved in the life of the congregation and relate to all ages
- \* A living faith that leads to a vibrant ministry for the whole congregation
- \* Openness to blending traditional and modern worship with sensitivity
- \* A Caring Pastor



Baptism 2018

## About Us

### Strengths and Opportunities

- \* An exciting new union of the neighbouring former Allan Park South (APS) and St Columba's congregations which came together on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020
- \* Building on strength and talents of the previous congregations
- \* Agreed Vision and Mission Statement building on discussions and workshops pre-union and in the first year with clear practical goals
- \* Agreed practical short-term actions subject to review with a new minister.
- \* Positive initiatives continuing in vacancy and lockdown
- \* A Unitary Constitution with 43 enthusiastic elders/trustees and effective committees
- \* 376 members on the active roll
- \* Open to new ideas
- \* Existing community and ecumenical partnerships
- \* New student flats opening in the Parish September 2021

Ladies Group Coffee Morning 2018 (left)

Stirling Kirks Together Soup & Sandwich HIV Lunch with team of helpers from five congregations





## Challenges

- \* **Building the new congregation's identity and shared purpose as we come out of lockdown**
- \* **An ageing congregational profile**
- \* **Reaching out to teenagers and younger adults**
- \* **Increasing technical and social media expertise**



Junior Church group using library room for a snack after their time together

We had a challenging start due to lockdown starting 12 days before the union. APS and St Columba's had been in vacancy since April 2018 and November 2018 respectively due to the translation and retirement of their Ministers

Both former congregations had long histories of worship, service and a similar heritage.

It was decided last autumn that the former APS church building was not essential and it was sold in July 2021. Outreach activities can be accommodated in the Peter Memorial Building (the former St Columba's building) in Park Terrace which has been designated the principal place of worship for the new congregation. Many activities were paused or curtailed due to Covid pandemic restrictions, but we developed alternative initiatives to support the vulnerable, elderly and young people.



Stirling Park Church from Park Terrace—April 2021

Looking to the future, our **Vision Statement** is:

**"Park Church is a welcoming and inclusive church, serving and engaging with our community and the world in Christ's name"**

Our Stated Mission is to share the Love of God in a modern world

**Agreed goals are**

- \* **To love God and demonstrate what we believe in our daily lives**
- \* **Love others and demonstrate it by our mission and outreach**
- \* **Encourage all in the congregation to engage and share in delivering care to others**
- \* **Work with others outside the congregation to grow and look forward in faith**

In-person Worship services at Park Church resumed within the appropriate restrictions as soon as permitted and numbers have slowly built up.



Christingle service Christmas Eve 2020 led by Minister with children –Christingles to take home

Approximately 50% of the congregation live within the parish boundaries and most of the remainder within 2-3 miles. There are around 370 active members

**In consultation with the Session and wider membership over several months, we have identified several achievable short term steps and practical actions. These include:**

- \* **Re-launching a church pre-school play group**
- \* **Identifying and making better use of the talents of member**
- \* **Expanding our contribution to "Stirling Kirks Together"**
- \* **Renewing contacts and partnership with Hall users such as Scouts and various choirs**
- \* **Reaching out to University Students**
- \* **Reviewing and revival of many of the outreach activities for younger people.**

**We also appreciate that, as a union formed in lockdown, we need to get to know each other better as we seek to further God's Kingdom in Stirling in a pandemic recovery phase.**

**The Kirk Session**, which normally meets every month, has 16 men and 27 women. Most of the detailed work is done in between session meetings by committees (Finance, Property, Youth, Communications, Mission and Outreach) which report regularly. We have two Safeguarding Co-ordinators and a Data Protection Lead. Two elders have undertaken Worship Leaders Training.

**Self-assessment for a local church review** identified and highlighted our willingness to work with others to take forward mission in addition to the strengths and weaknesses identified in this profile

**The Presbytery Plan** envisages an eventual union with the other City centre churches of Holy Rude and Viewfield in a grouping with Stirling St Mark's.

We already have very good working relationships with them and Stirling St Ninian's Old through the informal "Stirling Kirks Together" network to deliver Schools initiatives, Messy Church, Friendship lunches and Holiday Clubs.

The Kirk Session voted in terms of the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act to depart from the traditional approach followed by the Church of Scotland and to consider applications from ministers in same-sex marriages or civil partnerships.



## Community Profile

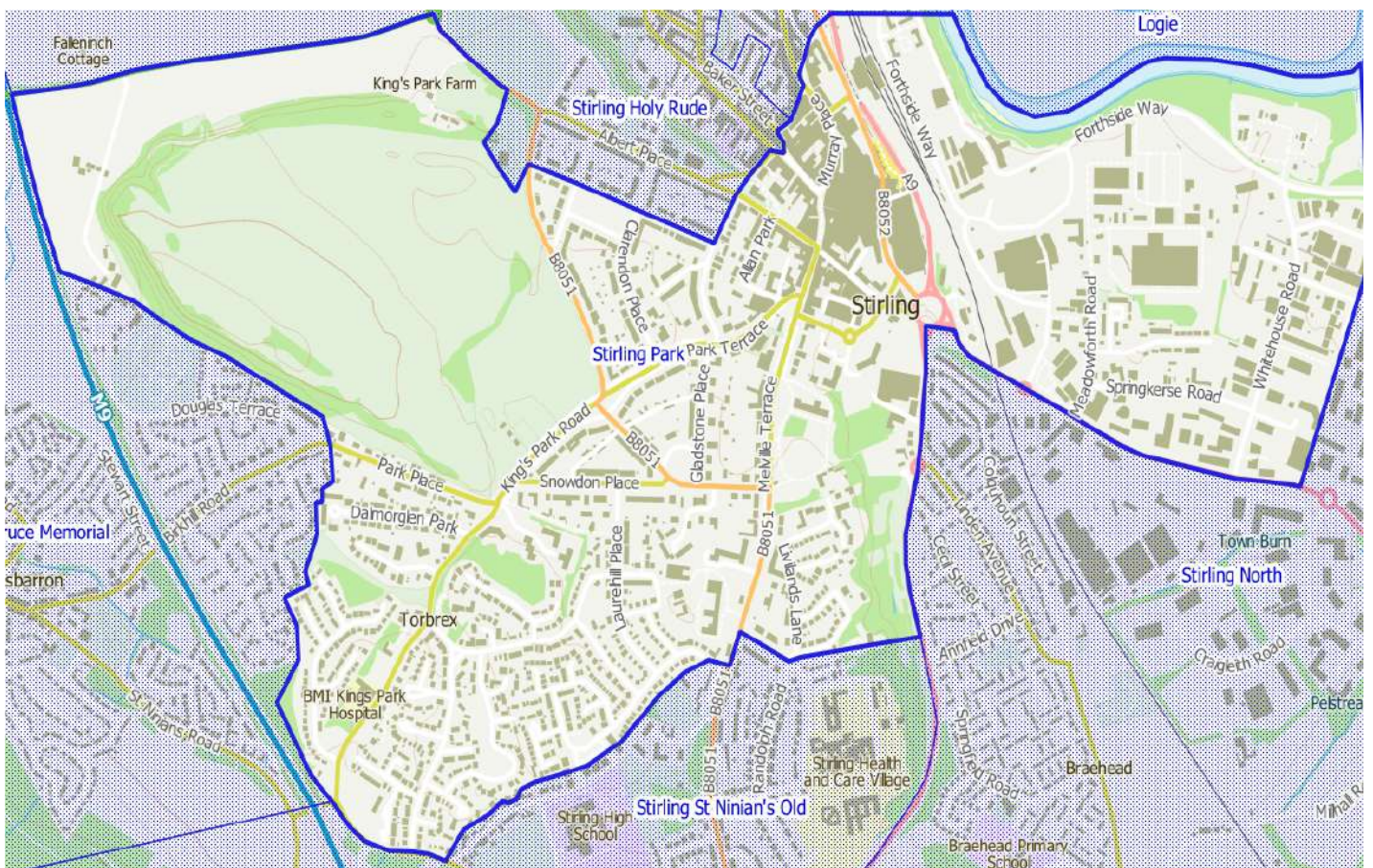
Stirling is a very attractive city in the heart of Scotland, with notable historical and visitor attractions and a top class University. It has excellent transport links and is surrounded by varied countryside, as well as providing good schools, sports facilities, leisure activities and cultural opportunities.

The Park Church parish covers much of the shopping and business areas of the Stirling City Centre, including the Thistles Shopping Centre, local council and police headquarters, and the railway and bus stations. It also includes most of the King's Park and Torbrex residential areas. The residential areas within the parish are largely owner-occupied, but also include city centre student residencies.

Community facilities include the King's Park with its sport facilities, Stirling Central Library, Vue cinema, and the Engine Shed building conservation centre. The Central Scotland Islamic Centre is in the parish.

In the Church of Scotland's Statistics for Mission data, the Park Church Parish had a total population of 3,984, made up of 512 children, 617 students and 2,855 adults.

Although they lie outside the parish, there have been past school chaplaincies with Allan's Primary and Stirling High Schools.



## Worship

Park Church holds weekly services at 11am every Sunday to worship God and enjoy fellowship. We have been used to a fairly traditional service and greatly enjoy the contribution of our organist and choir.

However, we have adapted to some new ways of worship after our union and the recent lockdowns have lent a different perspective.

We now have a mixture of traditional and new hymns and we are actively seeking new ways of worshipping God. Although we certainly do not want to alienate folk, it feels like a time for change and we are open to new ideas.

Until the union, St Columba's had quarterly Communion Services and a monthly informal communion. Elders and the Youth Group lead occasional services.

Age appropriate activities take place all year round.

We have a crèche and our Junior Church and Bible Class are an important part of our worship.



Younger members of Junior Church showing their Eco church poster



The Bible Class actively helped the congregation to remember others by taking part in the Harvest, Christmas and Spring services and supporting Water Aid, Christian Aid and Women's Aid (Christmas present collections for families in Stirling area)

**There are strong links with a local care home where we lead monthly services on Sunday afternoons which are well-attended.**

**We aim to make all visitors feel very welcome, included in our worship and usually enjoy fellowship over tea and coffee after the service.**

The service is recorded on CD and over the twelve months we have started piloted live streaming for those who cannot attend in person.

In recent years we have had an active Bible Study Group which is keen to resume in-person and a Prayer Group which focuses on requests for help from the congregation.



## Pastoral Care-

Most members are contacted or visited regularly by district elders. One elder has special responsibility for members in local care homes and a sheltered housing complex who are visited weekly.

For the last year "**Friendship Bags**" with prayer cards and a small gift (e.g. home-made marmalade or chocolate and sometime flowers) have been delivered monthly to around 60 older or housebound members.



Pentecost bag delivered with packed tea from the church to celebrate the birth of the church



A ministry of flowers delivers church flowers after the Sunday service to bereaved, sick or isolated members.

There is an ongoing review of pastoral care and districts to ensure support to those most in need.

One elder is designated to care for the manse family.

We try to ensure no one is forgotten!

## Christian Education-

**We have an enthusiastic, creative and dedicated Youth Committee, ably supported by congregational volunteers. We are open-minded, outward looking and willing to get involved with new ideas.**

**Our work has involved Junior Church, Messy Church, Holiday Clubs and thrice yearly Schools initiatives( "Bubblegum & Fluff, Easter Code, and Popcorn & Cake" ) involving 120 primary children from 3 local primaries each time.**



The whole building is used for youth outreach as can be seen in these photos

**We are keen to encourage and restart these again as areas where we can reach out to a wide variety of children and families.**

## Ecumenical Context

Park Church has good working relationships with surrounding churches and denominations and is involved in an eco- congregational network with Methodist and Episcopal colleagues.

We play an active role in the Informal "**Stirling KirksTogether**" network with Holiday Clubs and monthly all-age "Friendship Lunches" which have a team of helpers from five city congregations including the UF.



Helpers and attendees singing carols at Christmas Friendship Lunch (left)

Catering team for Messy Church in Park kitchen

Other ecumenical initiatives include United Free, Free Church, Roman Catholic and Baptist colleagues e.g. Easter Friday "Walks of Witness", school chaplaincy, World Day of Prayer, ChristianAid and Prison Initiatives.

Stirling Street Pastors are based in Park Church.





## World Church

We have an active partnership with our Mission Partners, Joel and Fiona Hafverstein, in Nepal.



Hafverstein family with Rev Elinor Gordon after they took the service and Spoke to Junior church children about UMN and climate change at visit in 2019

**We are also twinned with the congregation of Pentemont-Luxembourg in Paris, with whom we have exchanged visits, shared information and during lockdown enjoyed virtual discussions on eco- issues and Messy Church.**

**Park Church has annual fund-raising campaigns for Christian Aid and Water Aid. Christmas service collections are divided equally between overseas and local charities.**



Visitors from Paris twinned congregation with Rev Alex Miller and their host families after service

**The Eco-group has recently been revived, having achieved eco-congregation status in 2016.**

**People are becoming more aware of climate change and we would aim to add a spiritual dimension to the call for action: we are caring for God's wonderful world and everything in it.**

**By joining with colleagues from other churches, we are able to share ideas and present a common front.**

## **Stewardship and Finance**

The congregation has a strong history of sound financial management and fund raising. Over the years, there have been a series of successful stewardship campaigns which have both increased regular giving and funded specific projects or challenges- most recently Sanctuary Renovation and building up the Youth Fund.

**Voluntary Giving** has remained high since the pandemic despite loss of income from hire of halls, ensuring that there are funds available for mission and outreach particularly among young people.

### **Fabric and Manse Funds are healthy.**

The net proceeds from sale of the former APS Church building in July 2021 are held in account for Park Church by the Church of Scotland and will supplement funds already in the manse fund with the Church of Scotland to purchase the new manse

- **see property Section.**

## **Ministry and Mission**

In 2020, Park Church and its two parent contributions paid a total of £58,741 in Ministry and Mission contributions (after deduction of vacancy allowances) and will pay a net £57,655 for M&M in 2021.

**An extract from the audited accounts for 2020 are available as an appendix at the end of this document**

## **Staffing**

A part-time Church Administrator provides support to the minister and office-bearers, particularly regarding letting of premises, roll keeping, printing of orders of service and other documents, liaison with users, sharing of information and general support.

The church also employs an organist/choirmaster.

Cleaning services are contracted.

Additional support is provided by many volunteers.

## Church Building, Halls and Manse

The Church and Halls are joined in the Peter Memorial Building in Park Terrace. Originally built and opened in 1902, they have been well maintained, frequently renovated and are in excellent order. The main hall with adjoining kitchen and toilet block were extensively modernised with good energy efficiency (a heat pump provides under floor heating) in 2014 following a stewardship campaign and funding including a grant from the Climate Change Fund. There is a further large hall upstairs and five meeting rooms. There is good wi-fi coverage throughout. Extra groundfloor storage space outside has been ordered to facilitate the work of the Park Church Pre-School Group being relaunched in September 2021.



Above : Interior of sanctuary and stairs to belfry Below: choir practising in Main Hall and BB concert

The halls are very well used by both church groups and activities; and by outside bodies such as Scouts , Community and City choirs and NYCOS, Stirling Chess Club, a Martial Arts group, a Stage School, Scottish Recorder Orchestra and various other charities.

Stirling Presbytery also uses the premises.

The spacious Sanctuary was last renovated in 2018 after a further stewardship campaign. Even with one metre spacing a maximum of 200 people could be accommodated. Prior to lock-down, special services e.g. on Christmas Eve we accommodated 250-300 persons easily. The current layout is traditional with pews. The organ made by Binns in 1902 was extensively renovated in 1990 and is still in excellent condition.





## **Manse**

The congregation is in the process of purchasing a modern detached villa in a cul-de-sac in 24 Laurelhill Gardens, Stirling FK8 2PT and entry is expected by late autumn. This house has 4 public rooms and 4 bedrooms, is well appointed and in good order.

The congregation also owns the former Allan Park South Manse, a property in 22 Laurelhill Place, Stirling which had been rented out, but which will be vacated in December.

Both properties are within the parish.

## **Communications**

The Communications team deliver a full colour professionally printed quarterly newsletter which is circulated in print, large print, e-mail and on line to all members and users of the church website. Weekly services are audio-recorded and CDs produced and circulated to members and care homes in the parish.

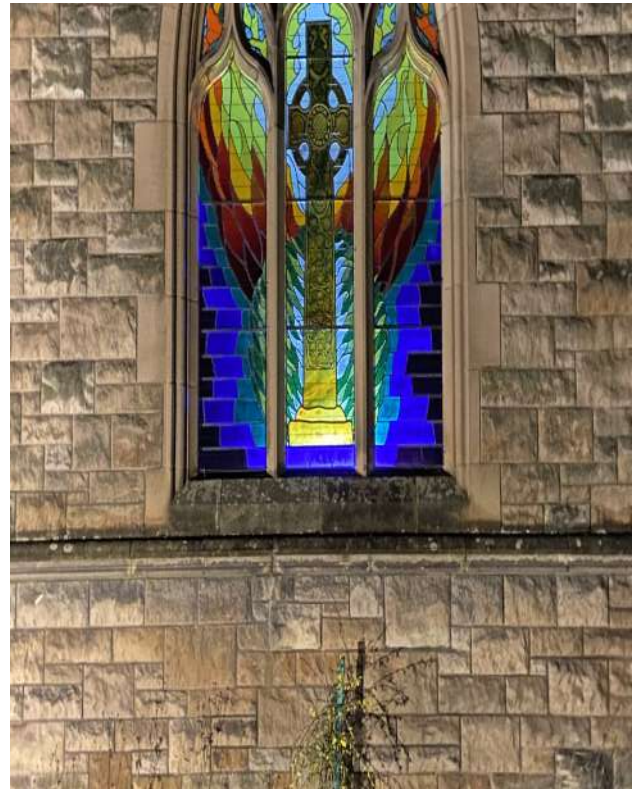
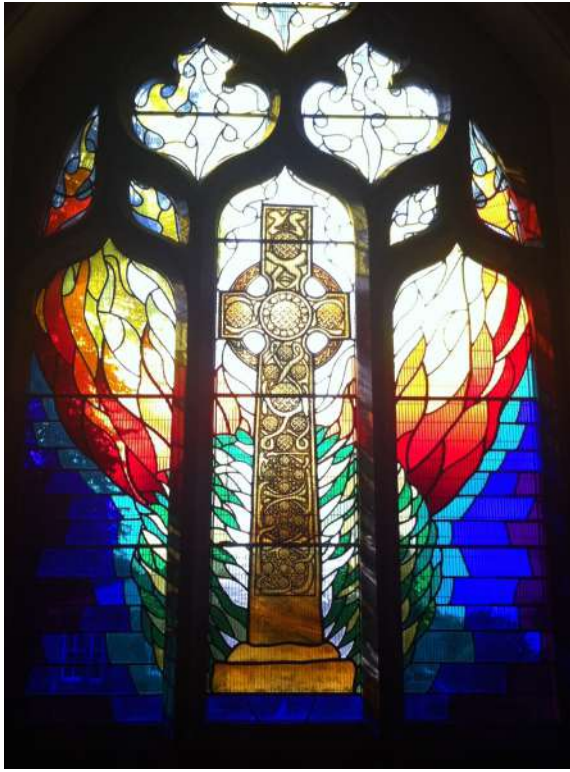
Live streaming of some services is undertaken.

Website redesign has commenced and a professional IT service engaged to assist in maintaining the site. Social media links exist but are not yet heavily used.

We recognise that there is a need to review the audio –visual systems throughout the church building and halls.

[Link to summer edition of the newsletter:](https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:612dc80c-6132-4aba-b9c9-af46cda416f4)

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:612dc80c-6132-4aba-b9c9-af46cda416f4>



**During lockdown Park Church illuminated the Millennium Window every night to show that although the church could not open for worship the light still shines in the darkness**

**This Parish Profile has a picture from the Christmas Eve Service on the front page and it closes with one from the Nativity Play 2019 which included young people from 2 to 14 years old. This year we hope to be able to return to full services and welcome our new Minister: are you called to join us?**



The Park Church, Stirling website is  
[https:// www.parkchurchstirling.org](https://www.parkchurchstirling.org)

**Further information available from**

- **Interim Moderator- Rev Alan F Miller**  
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E.-mail : [amiller@churchofscotland.co.uk](mailto:amiller@churchofscotland.co.uk)
- **Convenor of the Nomination Committee:**  
Mr Ian Ritchie  
E-mail : [ian.ritchie4@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.ritchie4@btinternet.com)
- **Secretary to the Nomination Committee:**  
Mr Hugh Buchanan  
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## **Extract from the Trustees Annual Report year ended 31/12/2020**

The Trustees have prepared accounts on the receipts and payments basis. There is no requirement in the constitution or by funders to prepare accrual accounts. Any comparisons with previous years would be of very limited value as the previous figures for SC001414 relate to the smaller former Allan Park South congregation. Preparation of these first formal accounts for the newly united congregation has been a complex process. It has involved bringing together information from three bank accounts, two different accounting systems SAGE and OMEGA, two different accounting methods (Allan Park South used "Accruals" and St Columba's "Receipts and Payments") and 23 different APS charity accounts. We owe huge thanks to Dr Brian Walker, Mrs Margaret Crombie and Mr Edward Morton for their tireless work on behalf of the Finance Committee, as well as to our Independent Examiner, Mr Alan Skilling.

The main source of income for the year continued to be from voluntary giving from members. Income from rent of premises ceased after lockdown. The impact of the pandemic was mitigated by the Government Furlough scheme as well as various Covid related grants, although these were mostly for restricted funds.

Unfortunately as the former Allan Park South Church building was found to unsafe to open as well as surplus to requirements, insurance costs of the building are considerable and the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland are now marketing this in our behalf.

If the £22,833 excess of receipts over payments from 1/1/20-31/3/20 for the St Columba's congregation is added to the balance for the APS congregation for the same period and that of Park Church for the rest of the year, it is clear that Park Church ended this extraordinary year with an excess of £10799 over the sum in its two parent congregations at the start of 2020. This is a tribute to the generosity of its members.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Trustees' policy is to hold sufficient reserves to meet the ongoing requirements and maintenance of the church and would wish a minimum figure of £60,000. The bank account and deposit balances at 31.12.20 were

£125,756 which includes £520 in the Church of Scotland Investors Trust Deposit Fund. Going forward, restricted funds have been rationalised whilst ensuring their use reserved for the designated purposes.

**Receipts and Payments Accounts from 1st January 2020 to 31**

	<u>Funds</u> 2020 £	<u>Funds</u> 2020 £	2020 £
Receipts:			
Donations - Note 3	70922	58749	129671
Activities For Generating Funds (Coffee, Social & Ladies Group)			
Bank & Deposit Interest	38		38
Investment Income	209		209
Rental of Premises Weddings & Funerals Bequest	21867		21867
Youth Fund Receipts			
Organ & Music fund Receipts			
Overseas			
Car Park Receipts			
Flower Receipts	50		50
Life & Work Donations	77		77
miscellaneous receipts grants	2926		2926
Tax Recovered on Gift Aid Tax recovered on GASDS	5671		5671
Total Receipts	101760	58749	160509
Payments - Note 5			
Charitable Activities	124467	48076	172543
Total Payments	124467	48076	172543
Excess of Receipts over Payments for the year	<u>-22707</u>	<u>10673</u>	<u>-12034</u>

**Statement of Balances**

	<u>Total</u> 2020 £
Assets:	
Included in Funds:	
Bank Accounts:	
Royal Bank of Scotland Account	91346
Bank of Scotland Account	33889
Church of Scotland Deposit	521
	125756
Manse	264047
	<u>389803</u> See Note 2
Not included in Funds:	
1580 Units In C o S Investors Trust	
Growth Fund	
Held by Church of Scotland	407715 See Note 6
Gift Aid to be Received in 2021 will be included in the 2021 Accounts	<u>0</u>
Liabilities:	0